

*Text 17. Judgment of God (49 p.).*

*Contents*

1. God's judgment.....	2
2. The judgment of the dead.....	4
3. Erotic religion among the kikuyu (mau-mau).....	6
4. Mastery of the soul.....	8
5. Secret Society.....	10
6. Leopard people.....	12
7. Incantation.....	14
8. The mythical snake.....	16
9. Rainmaker.....	18
10. Sexual initiation.....	20
11. Sexual initiation (continued).....	22
12. Ritual Rape.....	24
13. Funeral of a magician.....	26
14. Done.....	28
15. The mythical snake.....	30
16. Fate throw.....	32
17. Ancestry.....	34
18. God.....	36
19. Clitoris.....	38
20. There is phallus and there is wijfallus.....	40
21. Fetishes.....	42
22. A secret society of women.....	44
23. From mask to we-mask.....	46
24. judge as interpreter of a spirit.....	48

## 1. God's judgment.

### ***Bibl. st.:***

-- Th. Van Baaren, *Maze of the Gods*, Amsterdam, 1960, 195v

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique*, Paris, 1972, 126/128.

### ***Preconception:***

"An act that seeks to elicit in justice a direct decision of the deity." Van Baaren's definition, like the entire work, emphasizes "the deity." The event must be spectacular and miraculous such that the deity's power leaves no doubt. Do we test this against a model.

### ***The charge.-***

Already the denunciation moves us into the sacred and occult spheres, respectively. Lantier gives models: spitting three times in the direction of the sick person's hut, making threats with gestures that are ominous, going alone into the forest at night to dig up animal corpses, taking the guise of a dog to bark at the hut. To us moderns and postmoderns, these allegations sound incongruous but, in a culture still bathed in the sacred, such charges make perfect sense.

### ***God's judgment.-***

The dish kicks in.- The magician of the tribe prepares a mixture or syrup of several plants - logoniaceae or euphorbiaceae - and pours it into an earthen container. The people assemble. Accused is made to drink the drug.

The magician doses so that the effect is deadly only in one case out of three. The accused stricken with general paralysis collapses; his head swells, his eyes bulge, his thick and whitening tongue emerges from his mouth.

### ***Shifting.-***

If accused pees and gets a nosebleed, then he is innocent. If he dies, then he is guilty.

***Opm .*** - Lantier's description sticks to the externally observable. Whether a deity controls that shifting process is not apparent. What is clear from the context, however, is that Lantier prioritizes either the spirit or spirits of the plants or the fetish - e.g., the earthen vase - which is not there without the ancestor spirits (especially the primordial father), as a "cause" of a non-natural nature. That both are often distinguished from deities in the strict sense is certain. Consequence: Baaren's definition must be updated: instead of "deity" comes "a higher being" (which can be, among other things, a deity, of course).

***Opm .*** - Lantier emphasizes the many abuses that occur either because of the magician or the accusers. Especially the magician e.g. succumbs to the possession empires.

***Opm .*** - The Islamized cultures.- For example, in Nigeria. The social upper class is

Islamic (white but strongly mixed with black blood). This subjugates the animistic (mean: believing in the existence of souls, spirits and deities) and fetishistic populations of Negro-African origin.- God's judgment is the best means for that upper layer to get rid of members of the black population who pose problems. The Muslim village chief e.g. has in the local black clan followers or paid "agents" to betray and denounce whoever disturbs. In such cases, the magician plays a questionable role, possibly putting an accused to death.

*Opm .* - Steller, o.c., 128ss., sees a kind of evolution at work. What plants (and the higher beings attached to them) are in previous case, that shifts - says Lantier - to a fetish. Thus in Haute-Volta the "tirse. This is a clay jar bearing signs that the fetishist applied during a traditional rite. The archaic signs, according to the author, are an agreed language that opens onto the other world: they call upon the ancestors to provide the fetish with the ability to "see into the unseen. Once the signs are there, the magician smears the jar with his hands with a mixture of the blood of a chicken, a goat and a chameleon. That gesture with the sacrificial blood - according to ever-steller - is an appeal to sacred beings. Once the necessary and sufficient rites have been performed, the population is convinced that the spirits are obliged to respond to the people's proposals. The tirse can then be used to pronounce guilt or innocence, atonement or judgment, just as we saw with the plant mixture.

## 2. The judgment of the dead.

***Bibl. st.:***

-- *J. Lantier, La cité magique*, Paris, 1972, 130/132.

The corpse of a murdered young man was found in the wilderness. The culprit was not found. Therefore, the village chief ordered an investigation o.g. an interrogation of the spirits.

The villagers gathered in a circle around a carefully cleaned room. A jar that contained as a fetish the bones of ancestors stood ready. The village chief surrounded by his servants seated himself in a wooden seat near the ward jar. Masked men brought the corpse inside the circle and placed it on a mat not far from the jar.

The mage in his ornament began dancing through cries to summon the spirits. The ringing of bells echoed mightily with each dance step. The chief ordered the dance to end. The corpse was rolled into the mat and bound but with its head outside the mat.

Six men who had taken drugs lifted the dead man onto their shoulders. Leaping to the rhythm of the tam-tam, they carried him around within the circle. An insufferable smell spread. At the chief's command, the circumambulation stood still.

The mage went up to the dead man. In a solemn voice, he asked the dead man if he was being punished for a violation of the tribal rules. Whereupon the bearers began to walk a few meters only to stop suddenly : the corpse almost fell to the left but was caught in time.- The spirit of the dead showed itself : by falling to the left he meant that he had not violated any rule.- The magician then asked if he had been killed by someone from the village. The corpse fell to the right. Which was a confirmation.- The village chief presented a list of suspects. To the first two names, the dead man answered in the negative; to the third, the corpse fell to the right.

"The crowd thereupon raised a long howl, modulated in such a strange way that I shivered from it. It still heard this immeasurable outburst ( ... )" (o.c., 131). The circle of villagers suddenly closed around the unfortunate accused. At a gesture of the village chief, the circle opened. The accused - though violently horrified - ran away as fast as he could to disappear in the tall grass, uttering cries of anguish.

***Steller.-***

The Congolese who accompanied me said, "He went to die in the wilderness." "I don't understand you" I said incredulously. "The old times are over. If no one chases him to meet him, he can get as far as the city and find work". "No" replied my companion. "It serves to nothing. The spirits have now cut something in his head. Look the vultures are already flying above him. Such a thing is a sign that does not lie. In a few hours he will secrete walking. He will lay himself down with his nose against the earth. He will allow himself to die. The vultures are the messengers of our ancestors:

they will crush his skull and eat his soul"(o.c., 132).

**Opm .** - Steller, o.c., 126.- Primitive society knows peace only if the whole group very scrupulously observes the customs, i.e., the rules of conduct "sanctified" by tradition. This is the expression of the order that governs things. In matters of justice, archaic society has only two judgments : either the death penalty or banishment. This one is a worse punishment because it is the sentence of a slow and terrifying death. Since in his eyes the punishment is imposed by an invisible and mysterious power, the condemned person knows that he is banished from this world with necessity. And this even by e.g. his own children, who live through an unspeakable fear.

**Opm .** - The role of the fetish.- The fetish - in the case mentioned above, a sacred jar - possesses a power that is judicial. The district jar creates contact with the world of ancestors, especially the first ancestors. Often the ward jar exhibits signs that contain an appeal to those high spirits. The fetish comes into being by means of a consecration by a fetish man or fetish woman who, by means of sacrifices of all kinds, elicits the favor of the ancestors, yes, immortalizes it in such a way that the group can fall back on it again and again through the many circumstances.

### 3. Erotic religion among the kikuyu (mau-mau).

#### ***Bibl. st.:***

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique*, Paris, 1972, 273/286 (Une civilisation de la masturbation).

-- J. Kenyatta (1893/1978), the first president in 1964 of Kenya, wrote a book, *Au pied du mont Kenya*, Paris, 1967, in which, according to Lantier, he depicts a lot of mysterious ploys of the Kikuyu but they must be checked against the observations of serious observers, especially the missionaries.-- Noteworthy: the book is dedicated to "the entire disinherited African youth to immortalize the contact with the ancestral spirits."

*As an aside*, the Mau-Mau gained notoriety for their rebellion (1952/1956) which the British bloodily suppressed.

#### ***Myth.-***

A myth is a sacred origin or future story to which a "mythical" culture falls back to solve problems.- The primordial father of the Kikuyu is Lord Mumbere, the son of the Orgasm. Without the intervention of a woman, his sperm created the first human being, Kikuyu. As soon as he was on the earth, he made a statue out of clay in which he provided a cavity for his penis. Then followed a magical event: the statue became alive and became the first woman, Moombi ("the one who cries out with happiness"). From the gender communities of Kikuyu and Moombi emerged nine girls who in turn became the tribal mothers of the nine clans that still make up the tribe of Kikuyu.

#### ***Mythical sex culture.-***

The woman in that mythical framework has as her mission the kitchen and love.- This leads to what follows.- Politeness requires the man to lend his wife to the guest after a meal. If he has more than one, it is the first to bed the guest. But often she abuses her first rank and offers herself. This is because she is generally neglected by her husband notwithstanding the sacred "custom" that the husband is obliged to take turns with all women. As a brake on her abuse, several clans introduce as a custom that the first wife has no right to the sexual hospitality. Sometimes a man buys a young woman to live up to such hospitality. He chooses with great preference a woman with heavy buttocks and thighs, something that the Kikuyu strongly appreciate.

#### ***The true reason.-***

The preference for said female hind bodies is not dictated by the unification in Africa, which is very frequent, in the likeness of the apes. Here the only mode of unification is that of face to face. If a man were to approach his wife otherwise, he would be denounced either by his wife or by the inevitable peepers to which one must get used: with sticks and stones he would be chased out of the village only to wander around and finally die.

#### ***Ngweko.-***

This term can be translated by "ritual masturbation." This shows the myth, basis of

religion. Every village possesses a "thingira," a bulky hut dedicated to love. In this thingira hut - built according to local rules - all sexual acts either between couples or in groups are recommended except the general penetration of the penis. Young people enter the thingira in the practical certainty of meeting numerous partners there by day and by night. It is especially crowded at nightfall. Everyone should bring food and drink which they consume together. The male youths undress completely while the girls put on a protective apron made of goatskin to prevent the erect penis from penetrating. The girl is allowed to indulge in all the forms that her imagination inspires her, except the intrusion: the young man guilty of this is excluded from the clan.

During the Ngweko, the male youth are required to be respectful to the girls.

Thus they may only sleep facing each other. The young man may lay himself on the girl but the reverse is forbidden.- The basic insight is the virginity of the unmarried woman as an absolute duty: her womb is the shrine in which the primordial father deposits his semen while the love game is in progress.

## 4. Mastery of the soul.

***Bibl. st.:***

-- *J. Lantier, La cité magique, Paris, 1972, 87ss ...*.

Steller was in Cameroon, among what the Islamized Peul call 'Kirdi' ('nudes'). A healer claims he can "pull" the soul out of the body. Steller gets the privilege of attending the operation. He follows him into his "saré" where he sends two women and children to their huts. The room is square and the floor is paved with cow dung and shea oil.-.

"I will draw out the soul from a little boy who will die. When his soul shall depart, thou shalt see on the hut ( ... ) a bird. It will be his soul. Ye yourselves shall test it. Long will it not be if not I could not seize back his soul. ( ... )". The father asked for a thousand francs and so did the healer. Steller agreed.

The weatherman gave orders outside: a boy of about twelve offered himself. This one was to lay undressed on a mat. The man went into the next hut to return a good fifteen minutes later with a red-colored body. He crouches down on the mat to the right of the lad with a basket full of objects, stretches his arms over him, begins to murmur a series of rapid formulas. With a kind of white mush, he draws a circle on the skin in the stomach area. In the middle of it he places a berry which he crushes. With a knife he makes a cut at that spot. The boy lets out a loud cry and straightens himself with a leap. But the man forces him to lay down again. A little blood emerges, flowing together with the juice of the berry.

The man stretches out his arms again and utters incantations in a solemn tone. Suddenly he stops: "He is dead." Steller expresses his disbelief. Whereupon the man takes a whip and violently strikes the boy with it: the boy does not move. Steller stands up: the boy's hands are cold and limp. He opens the eyelids: the eyes are dead. No breath comes out of mouth or nose. The heart - steller listens - no longer beats.

"His soul is gone. I will show it to you". Steller follows outside: on the frost of the hut, a bird flies away and circles above. "It is the boy's soul". Steller in the opinion that he was deceived, asks, "And if someone kills that bird, what then?". "No one can kill such birds Have ye ever seen any like it? If they are black, they are magicians. One would want to kill them because they do evil but those who dared have died a repulsive death."

They go back into the hut. The boy still shows all the signs of death. The healer crouches down, draws eerie lines on the body with a red-colored substance, stretches out his arms, repeats his invocations. He takes out an antelope horn and through the taunt he speaks in a secret language. He places the boy's hand on his forehead: he gradually comes to, straightens up and leaves the hut as if nothing had happened. The man draws steller outside: "Thou seest it: there is no more bird."



*Opm . O.c., 86s ...* - A man hunting in the wilderness gets a long, black thorn in the buttock. Back home he tries to remove it but it penetrates even deeper resulting in a very painful inflammation. The man comes from a village in the mountains to Mora, town in Cameroun, to consult a healer. The buttock and leg are swollen. Apparently he is in severe pain. The healer asks him to stand straight against a tree and passes his hands in a smooth and light gesture over the leg from top to bottom.

After about ten minutes, he begins to utter incantations in an extremely guttural secret language. Thereupon he places the lips on the patient's buttock and performs movements with the arms as if he wanted to fly. He repeats his down and up movements with the hands over the leg for several minutes, clapping the hands, spitting three times on the earth. "To my great surprise, I see the thorn come out very alone and fall to the ground as if an invisible forceps were pulling it out. The healer grabs the thorn and without a word he gives it to the patient to whom he asks his fee. The man takes the thorn, takes a few steps, folds the leg, tests that everything is fine again and pays. I confess that I was nailed to the ground but I didn't want to show it" (o.c., 87). Indeed: steller is convinced skeptic.

## 5. Secret Society.

'Secret' is a society not because it is not known but because there is secrecy within it. *Th. van Baaren, Doolhof der gods*, Amsterdam, 1960, 81 vv., says that secret societies play a role in many religions.

*J. Lantier, La cité magique*, Paris, 1972, 109/122 (*Les sociétés secrètes de magie*), devotes an emotional chapter to it, -emotional in that he brings up the criminal forms and does so as forms of madness.

### **Myth.-**

He cites *A.-M. Vergiat, Les rites secrets des primitifs de l'Oubangui*, Paris, 1951, who depicts the myth of the Manja society (in the northwest of Belgian Congo). - Its members center on a powerful spirit, Ngakola, a fabulous animal, which, when fed by the villagers, communicated to them an astonishing secret: "My power is great: I can kill a human being, cut his body into small pieces, and then put together all these shapeless chunks to form a new human being whom I breathe life into. I return him improved and cured of all his ills. - Send people to me, therefore, and I will devour them and surrender them renewed." - Vergiat notes that such belief in a man-eater devouring a boy to surrender him as an initiate can be found in the course of initiations among primitive populations around the globe.

**Opm . -** *B. Tanghe, De slang bij de Ngbandi*, Brussels, 1919, 53v., says what follows.- Tribes in the northwest of Belgian Congo (Ubangi) like the Mbanza and the Nbugbu worship a supreme spirit, viz. Ngakola. The Banziri worship the Hippopotamus as a supreme spirit who is hermaphroditic: the male is called Ngakola and the female Ngeseme. The myth says: when the Hippopotamus comes out of the water, it storms. Everywhere that supreme spirit rushes by, the plants and the trees and the fruits shudder. Among the Mbanza, Yagpa, Furu, Nbugbu, a kind of monstrosity that they call Ngakola is worshipped as the supreme spirit.-

### **Myth.-**

Ngakola lives at a spring deep in the forest. Those who want to become his "children" seek him there. They stay there for a long time and learn the dance and songs of Ngakola.- Secret society.- Tanghe, missionary in Ubangi, notes that the members are among the distinguished among the population. The initiates tell the uninitiated that when they arrive at Ngakola, he strikes the earth, and immediately the ground opens up so that all who want to be initiated are swallowed up in the abyss. When they are then whole and rotten, Ngakola resurrects them and gives them a new name (understand: a new being).

**Remark . -** We recognize in the myth (in its plurality of variants) the course of initiation into the underworld reality. Whoever wants to reach the - new - life must lay down the old and die. That is the general thought.-- But here an own course is exposed: the monstrosity, paragon of the initiates, gobbles up, in other words eats people whom

it thus provides with a new mode of existence. The initiates with the devoured "in themselves" are "new" thanks to the victims of the secret society which, by ritually devouring people, robs them both of their life force and subjects them to the other world. The latter, together with their slayers, perform tasks in and from the underworld. - Thus, two kinds of new people are created: the members of the society who are one with the life force and servitude of the devoured, and also the devoured who indeed, as devoured of their life force, lead a 'new' existence in the underworld and 'live' from that underworld in unity with the members of the society. Seen this way, there is indeed a dual initiation.

***Demonic.-***

*W.B. Kristensen, Collected Contributions to Knowledge of Ancient Religions, Amsterdam, 1947, defines "demonic" in the religious science sense as "harmony of opposites. Is demonic, one who does both good and evil, both health and disease, both happiness and miscalculation.- Lantier, in an indignant style, spits out his disgust o.g. a kind of psychological explanation of the criminality of secret societies. One can understand that. But the "mystery" of the underworld spirits controlling earthly men is not done justice in this way.*

## 6. Leopard people.

### **Bibl. st.:**

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique*, Paris, 1972, 117ss .

The leopard people are members of secret societies in Africa who stood their ground despite all government oppression. The initiation schedule includes what follows.

To become a member, one must ritually commit a degrading crime, i.e., maternal murder but also parricide or kinship murder.- Lantier cites *J.-P. Lebeuf, La civilisation du Tchad*, Paris, 1950, quoting: "At the time of the Sao, a human sacrifice accompanied the enthronement of the new king. The inhabitants gathered in the square. There the future monarch beheaded his mother ( ... ). Then he cut a cow or a bull's throat. With the skin of the mother and that of the animal, they made a cover for the Qur'an found on the hill by those who arrived first." Lebeuf specifies: a prince who refused the mother sacrifice because he inherited his father's power had to put down a revolt. Many Sao were so horrified by this that they fled and collectively committed suicide.

Ritual murder is updated through participation in magical crimes that include four stages.

### **1. Kidnapping.-**

Participants dress themselves with the skin of a panther or a lion and rub themselves with fat from these animals so that the dogs, believing they are dealing with wild animals, do not bark.

### **2. Sacrifice.-**

The victim must kneel down before the cauldron (the fetish). The weaman summons the spirit of the society and makes it clear to him that the sacrifice serves to honor him in such a way as to give strength to the objectives. A helper places himself on the victim and presses heavily with his hands on his back. Another helper raises the head to expose the throat. The weaman hacks the windpipe with a blow. Result: the victim screams in fear and pain but no one hears. The enjoyed - probably under drugs - "hear" these "mute cries," which the invisible spirits immediately "hear" as well.-

*As an aside*, such "stupid crying" is frequent in archaic cultures.

### **3. Communion**

(participation).- With a kind of spoon, the participants then take the blood from the cauldron which they drink to become occultly one with their spirit.

### **4. Distribution.-**

The dead victim is turned over. With a carving knife, the chest is opened and the heart and liver are taken out, which are cut into pieces for cooking together with magical active substances. The rest of the corpse is treated according to local customs: mutilated by the claws of the protective animal - panther, lion - the rest is left near the village to

spread terror; often the body is sawn and torn into pieces; sometimes the rest is eaten or thrown to dogs. Extreme treatment raises the dead from their graves and chops them to pieces, sometimes eating them.

**Opm .** - Lantier cites *l'Indépendant* (31.07.1970).- London.- An enraged reverend decided to found an "Association for the Protection of the Dead" with the aim of clamping down on those who indulge in black magic, and other magicians in Britain for whom one of their beloved pastimes is committing grave robbing. Reverend Father Percy Gray took such a decision because he was "shocked" - so he put it - by recent grave desecrations at an abandoned cemetery in Nunhead in south London. "A few days ago - he added - I had to rebury the remains of a child who had probably been unburied by Satan followers. The vandals had taken the body out of the coffin and cut off its head".

**Remark .** - Since July 1970, we have all learned to get used to such newspaper reports and detailed articles in tabloids of all kinds. There are indeed individuals and groups-perhaps secret societies-who in one way or another condone grave desecration, among other things as creepy rites in the service of their objectives. It is not unlikely that those people in question - as one fashion now puts it - "have it in their genes" to say nothing of those who teach it in books, movies or articles.

## 7. Incantation.

*Bibl. st.:*

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique*, Paris, 1972, 91 ss ... -

"I have often attended possession rites, particularly in Chad, but one of the most exceptional to my knowledge took place before my eyes in a clan of the Luba (Katanga)." A noble woman was "possessed by a spirit that had exorcised her soul and taken her place." About 20 people, the majority women, attended the rite deeply subdued.

One had stripped the woman and shaved off her hair. Several women forced them firmly to their knees on a mat. She continuously nodded her head and screamed shockingly copious foam flowed from her mouth.- Three musicians made an indescribable noise. Two men beat violently with crooked sticks on tamtams they held under their arms. The other blew on an Arabian horn. A three-note theme was repeated monotonously.

A masked man with raffia boots and bells came stomping violently from a nearby hut.

The possessed one stopped head-wagging and began to murmur incoherent words. The masked one threw himself on her and gave her three terrible blows with a club to the head "sufficient to finish an ox." Blood ran down her forehead, flowed into the eyes, descended down the nose. The possessed one stopped screaming and resumed wiggling but now very quickly and with her whole body. The women restraining them served them violent kicks with the foot from time to time on her buttocks and her legs. One grabbed them strangling almost by the throat. Another beat them regularly on the back.

The masked one swung a stick, danced, stamped so that a breathtaking cloud of dust arose. The possessed one shook her chest and head violently from front to back. As she began to pant, everyone present panted along, likewise moving chest and body from front to back. "The collective crying gave me chills." This ferocious ritual lasted for about an hour.

A fetish woman appeared: she held a truncated cow horn in her hand that was covered with magical objects - ancient coins, cowries (shells), pieces of leopard skin. The women laid the possessed person down on the mat with the buttocks on a pillow. They held the thighs apart. The fetish woman emptied the horn and pushed it with the small tip into the vagina of the possessed. From a basket she took a live lizard and dropped it into the horn. The masked one immediately plugged the horn with an after-burning piece of wood to force the lizard into the vagina. A horrible smell developed: the horn had apparently been rubbed with a magical product that gives off strangling odors when burned. After a few moments, the fetish woman withdrew the horn and stuffed the vagina with a bundle of plants that she attached with a leather strap.

The musicians stopped. The slumped possessed was stretched out on the mat. The

masked one sprinkled a few drops of a whitish syrup on her as he mumbled incomprehensible words.

Suddenly the possessed person straightened up to stand up gently. She was amazed in nothing and seemed calm. Everyone went home. Including the possessed one. As if nothing had happened.

"I remembered to test the result of this alienating therapy myself a few weeks later. Amazing as it may seem, the madman was now 'normal.' When I asked what had become of the lizard, people seemed shocked by my question. Someone told me that it was a good spirit which, with the combined help of the ancestors and the whole assembled family, had exorcised the intruder (*pm* ... the spirit which took the soul's place) and had taken its place in the body of the possessed."

**Remark .** - One sees that the reinsertion of the "lizard" (understand: the visible and tangible present proposition of a guardian spirit (a totem animal)) is the final goal of all that precedes. It is immediately clear why primitives rely on a totem being (thing, plant, animal).

## 8. The mythical snake.

### ***Bibl. st. :***

-- *B. Tanghe, The snake at the Ngbandi, Brussels, 1919.-.*

The Ngbandi, also Mbatu, are tribes in the north of what was then called the Belgian Congo. Steller knew their culture excellently, as missionaries can after living on the ground for decades.

The snake.- On 15.05.1912, the missionary has to deal with a more than four-meter-long thick snake that the residents together with him could not kill until 19.05.1912. But then it begins. Ginga, the cook, who had given the mercy shot, began to cry and rant like mad. Another boy said, "Shut up because he is a snake." Suddenly Ginga stopped and spoke as normal and explained, "I am a twin child and so I am a snake. I shot my brother in a moment. Had I not wept, I became sick. Now that I have wept, I am at peace".

### ***The grief rite.-***

The next day Kumba, twin sister of Ginga, came with her husband: she too was a snake. In a bag of leaves she had scraps of red mbio wood. She took some of it and with it drew a wide line on the inside of both Ginga's arms from wrist to shoulders. Ginga performed the same on her. Thereupon they both took the rest of the mbio wood and sprinkled it on the snake's skin which lay in the sun to dry. - The belief is that if the rite does not take place, falling ill and dying is to be expected.

### ***The reason.-***

Only twins and some loners, insofar as they are related to twins, are worshiped as snakes. Steller tried in every way to get the reason out of the mouths of the inhabitants but usually the answer was: "We don't know. God told our ancestors so".

### ***The scope.-***

The worship of the serpent dominates all other customs and practices within families and in public village life.

'God' - Gaso, a very distinguished resident of the Ngonda tribe, said, "Your God is in the church - he pointed to the chapel - ; with us the snake is what with you God is." A twin mother said:

"Know ye not that the serpent is the Toro (Supreme Spirit) of the Ngbandi? The Mbanza and the Ngbugbu have their Ngakola and the Banziri their hippopotamus as Toro. Among the Ngbandi one finds no Toro other than the snake".

The Bible story.- The origin story in the Bible tells of the serpent as the appearance of the devil (according to the proposer). "They asked me about ten times in succession whether the serpent was so evil after all, and whether God was really stronger than the



serpent."

***Life Force.-***

He who worships the snake enjoys its highest life force that can ward off all calamities.- Yet this. The dibèrè is most special wijas whose effects are known to all fetishists. Yet a twin was killed by dibèrè. Reason: his father had waited too long before paying his debts to a distinguished resident of the village. Waiting tiredly, this dibèrè dashed under the canopy of the father's house, resulting in the death of the twin child.

***Dreaming -*** The snake and twins regularly share messages in dream sleep.

Those messages are rock-hard orders. If they are not carried out, the twins will die or the serpent will kill others. But whoever pretends a false dream message will come to bite the field serpent.- Steller.- Whims of hysterical people, especially women, and of nuclear-speaking people lead to the most arbitrary inspirations. E.g.: the snake wants one to plant as twin trees not nduru but two ngbu. Or: the children were not allowed to suck milk but to slurp eggs and drink banana wine. As a result, both children died shortly after one another. Still: the snake indicates someone who was going to go fishing the following day where he would catch two big fish. The man got into the prawn, worshipped the snake, cast the net and, besides many others, caught two big fish.

So much for some insight into what a mythical animal whose visible and tangible presence is seen in biological animals can mean within the thought framework of a primitive culture.

## 9. Rainmaker.

***Bibl. st. :***

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique (Magie et sexualité en Afrique noire)*, Paris, 1972, 220/ 222.

"Jacques Lantier" is a pseudonym for a high-ranking official who leaves for black Africa in 1960. Next story shows us what a rainmaker does.

It was a year of exceptional drought in the land of Kirdi (from Tchaad to Cameroun). Every trace of greenery had dried up. People, animals suffered hunger and thirst. A rainmaking rite took place in Ledé. Steller was allowed to attend the ceremony from a distance and without taking pictures. The rainmaker in this case was a traveling weeman. Common custom: if the rite succeeds, rich gifts follow; if it fails, the weatherman is ripped off. The villagers gathered along a parched river arm that becomes a wide stream when it rains.

With an ancient axe, the rainmaker cut a furrow in the rock-hard earth. This one had the shape of the female sex organ. Around it he placed twelve round white stones of different sizes. In between he placed six black stones that had the shape and volume of a nut. He then set himself down at the edge of the quarry and took from a bag a flat stone which he placed in front of him. A helper offered him a chicken whose head he cut off on that stone. Thereupon he sprinkled "the altar" with the leaking blood while he sang a peculiar melopee that at times involved a slow rhythm then a fast one.

For two hours that melopee lasted while he kept repositioning the stones. Hopelessly blue the sky remained.- Suddenly, for a few seconds, the people felt a warm movement of air. At that, the weman raised himself and with crossed arms turned to the sky. The helper quickened the rhythm of the drum. The wind rose again but now it kept blowing now sometimes more violently then again more gently.

The weatherman took from his pocket an antelope horn and extracted a powder which he threw into the fore. The wind blew with gusts that grew fiercer and fiercer.- To his great amazement, steller saw in the distance a phallus spinning on its axis! This white, huge, immeasurable shape approached with dense black clouds in its wake. It followed the dry river arm and sailed over us leaving behind a giant cloudburst of rain. In a few moments, the entire landscape was flooded: a full river flowed at our feet. The villagers were lying on the ground before the deluge~) They were incredibly happy with their rainmaker and his work.

***Opm .*** - O.c., 214s . - The cloaca of a chicken resembles - for the Kirdi - the orifice of a woman. The raw - and perhaps earliest - magical rite postulates that the chicken blood resembles and is related to the - in the mentality of the Kirdi - fertile female menstrual blood. In this idea, one commits sexual intercourse with the chicken as with the woman: at the moment of the male orgasm, the magician cuts off the head of the

chicken and catches on a stone the "fertile" - understand: achieving results - blood. Thus, sprinkling the earth will confer this fertility.

Thus we now understand the rainmaker rite which at one point involves chopping off the head of a chicken such that with the blood "the altar" is sprinkled as an essential part of a rainmaker rite.- In footnote, Lantier argues that sexual intercourse with a chicken is still - his book appears in 1972 - a rather widespread custom in some more primitive areas of Europe.

*Opm . - O.c., 7.-* Author says: "It is sometimes said that reality surpasses the imagined. This book is not up to the denial of that claim. Yet the amazing histories I tell are real. I have mostly experienced the facts being told myself. In other cases, my text is based on testimony that is irrefutably true."

*Opm ... -* Such reports offer us an insight into what "religion(s)" can actually be. They may shock. But preferable are shocking accounts to sweetened renderings that caress our Western sensibilities but are beside the point.

## 10. Sexual initiation.

### ***Bibl. st. :***

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique (Magie et sexualité en Afrique noire)*, Paris, 1972, 239/ 248 (Avec les femmes-tabernacles).-- Steller is particularly familiar with sexual magic among the Yombe, the Vili and the Kongo (situated between the Atlantic Ocean and Kinshasa).-- The cultural system is matrilineal: authority over children is exercised not by the father but by the mother's brother.

### ***Basic Insight.-***

As soon as a girl's sexual maturation becomes visible, she must always wear panties. The reason: the life force (la force vitale) remains in her body and is shielded from evil spirits. More so, she must wear a tunica to hide her organs and their magical value from view.- 'Tabernacle,' i.e. abode, is the girl's sex.

The deity of the ancestors, creator of all things and especially bearer of fertilizing power, dwells in her sex. Indeed, in marital intercourse, that deity through the man fertilizes the woman. The child is in the ground of the deity.-This is called steller "the magical, mystical, yes, metaphysical interpretation."-What follows must be understood strictly in that framework if not one profanes the sacred - that is the right word - in the woman.-The virginity with which she enters the first night of marriage has that meaning.

### ***Initiation.-***

The grandfather usually initiates the young girl to be called "his wife."

Once it is three-four years old, he teaches her masturbation with him in a kind of love game. The grandmother also plays the same role with the little boy she calls "my husband."-

*As an aside*, boys and girls live in separate living spaces.

The young men.- A sister of the mother teaches the boy if he has reached the age to do so, all possible methods of sexual unification.- In addition, in every village there is a wewoman, called "Mama Mfumu", who is a widow or at least unmarried. She is appointed by the village chief. Sex-hungry youths she catches "so that the latter can present no excuse if they assault a girl" (o.c., 241).

### ***The young girls.-***

In every village there is a "Kumbi. She lives in an initiation hut painted in red. She lives naked - also maquiled in red - and often lies on a leaf mat while girls do her work and bring her food. She teaches unification methods to the girls, demonstrating with a pair of phalluses.

### ***The engagement.-***

Mama Mfumu helps the marriages come about. She relies on her "hunches" and at the same time on the way she sees young people attracted to each other.- The young men who are circumcised and ready for marriage are brought together by her in a dance

group. After the dance, the girls serve the young men the food they have prepared. If Mama Mfumu paying attention to everything notices a mutual attraction, she first questions the girl and then the young man "to test the truth in her intuitions" (o.c., 242). If nothing from either side opposes it, the engagement commences.-.

*Opm...* - For those who have not yet found a partner, the annual festival is the occasion,-again under the watchful eye of Mama Mfumu. - On the eve, the young man makes his way to her with two friends who deliver liquor. He pours them a chicken killed and cooked by his fiancée. Follows a dinner party. Then - accompanied by his friends clapping their hands and uttering debauched language - he commits one last act of lovemaking with Mama Mfumu.

***Palabers.-***

The next day the immediate preparation of the marriage takes place: especially the brothers of both mothers talk about the excellent qualities of the fiancées. The village chief at the end legally confirms the marriage.

The preparation of the girl.- The girl must thereupon retire to a hut or sometimes even go to live with the Kumbi for several weeks. The purpose of this period of withdrawal is to prepare the girl so that she can receive her husband in a "proper" manner. The Kumbi is a kind of woman doctor and initiate.

## 11. Sexual initiation (continued).

### ***The wedding celebration.-***

Headed by Mama Mfumu, a happy crowd accompanies the bride, carried on a berrie, to the groom's village. Mama Mfumu sings chanting songs while waving a square cloth back and forth.- She leads the girl into the "love hut" erected by the groom. She undresses it and rubs the body with oil. She prepares the vagina.- At her signal, the groom enters. She strips him of his clothes, anoints him whole and all and rubs the penis with a magical agent.

### ***The unification.-***

When the penis is ready to function, the Mama places the young man in the proper position while two women hold the girl's legs. The Mama ensures that the deflowering is gentle. If the young man is too bold, she restrains him for a moment and then opens the entrance with her finger.

### ***Compassion.-***

Outside, the people pay attention to the cries coming from the hut. Heady cries show that the girl is a virgin. It shows a good upbringing if exaggerated. Which sometimes tires the groom. If he loses his lust, the Mama knows what to do.

### ***The unification.-***

The moment the Mama finds suitable, she pushes on the man's buttocks. The intrusion is then total. Thereupon the bride must immediately utter great cries of joy to make her happiness known to the people.

***The outcome.-*** Now that her work is finished, the Mama Mfumu leaves the hut with the two women. They are welcomed with cheers by the people.- Basically, the man must continue with the lovemaking or caressing according to the techniques of the tribe until early morning. The residents get up early to see the woman come out. She goes to fetch water from the well with the pitcher that her mother-in-law donated to her. She must do this silently. If upon returning she shows her satisfaction in the ritual form, the marriage is final. If she leaves the jug in the well and returns to the parental home, the marriage is annulled.

### ***Reflections.-***

Steller says, "One might suppose that such seductive habits are aimed at a refined pleasure-seeking. Nothing of the sort! What is involved is a solemnity that largely transcends magical trappings to become religious and even metaphysical" (o.c., 245).-

***Opn .*** - Steller (as he often does) defines "magic" as "non-religious" or "non-metaphysical. His further interpretation proves otherwise. "The whole rite shows the sacred nature of the marriage act and the need to ensure the purity required of the 'tabernacle' of the spirit of the ancestors." A wifely institution such as that of the Mama Mfumu has the sole purpose of offering a way out of the unruliness of boys and young

men and at the same time protecting the virginity of girls: it serves to offer the divine semen a vagina free of any "defilement. After all, the husband is the we-man who represents the ancestors. "His role is thus religious" (o.c., 245). Such ordained role does not have the vehemence of the Hindu tantrists, certainly not that of the tantrists "of the left hand" (*note*: who do not take morality so closely). The woman here is not the representation of the goddess as in India but as a tabernacle she represents a mystical dignity. Unification is in itself magical, yes, divine. Consequence: the female orgasm expressed in the cheering cry shows with all clarity the intrusion of the god who comes to impregnate the virgin reserved to him alone.

*Side effects.*- The rigid rules of behavior surrounding virginity as outlined above are one of the unconscious reasons for male homosexuality.

*Universality.*-

O.c., 249. - "The belief in women as tabernacles is in fact widespread. It lives on in a variety of forms down to the most evolved peoples. In Africa, the shielding of women as shrine of deity is ensured by numerous female societies. The primary purpose of these is to provide moral assistance to women in the exercise of her "natural role" (*note ...*: to be the shrine of deity)."

## 12. Ritual Rape.

***Bibl. st. :***

-- *J. Lantier, La cité magique, Paris, 1972, 114ss ...* -

Steller, familiar with Congo, talks about the Simba after the uprisings of the Mulele and Soumaliot in eastern Congo. The Simba as a secret society continued the tradition of the leopard people, notorious throughout Africa.

Briefly outlined: through a series of harsh tests, one identifies with the "simba" (civet cat) thanks to a "dawa" (a fetish) and then magically transforms into an invulnerable animal (panther, leopard, lion). -

***In passing:*** if a candidate dies in the course of initiation, the elders cut off his nose, ears and genitals to make fetish materials from them: the crushed and mixed flesh is mixed with earth and other magical active substances. Thereupon, in a secret place, they dig a pit in which they bury the unfortunate.

The Mulele and Soumaliot, tribes in eastern Congo, committed rebellions. The secret society there became notorious for its atrocities, including the ritual rape of the Belgian convent women in Bunia.- The missionaries and the convent women were gathered and locked up - more to protect them than to guard them - in the hotel PapaNungovitch - by a major with his soldiers. Everyone was waiting for the end of hostilities.-

Suddenly the situation turned around: In the evening on 16.11.1964, a strong group of Simba warriors - like a soldateska - entered Bunia. They reached the hotel. To show the magic of dawa, they were naked. Their bodies were daubed with sacred paintings. - The Congolese major asked the chief what he wanted. To which this one replied: "To rape the convent women." The major resisted but the chief gave him a jaw slap and called out to his men, "All these filthy white men are at your disposal. Do with them whatever thou wilt".

The convent women had understood what was coming: they barricaded themselves in a room. The priests fought but were knocked out with rifle butts and machetes and dragged outside bound hand and foot.- The ferocious Simba took hold of the nuns who were screaming out in terror : they were stripped and thrown naked one on top of the other outside in a heap. Thereupon the savages formed a circle and with a drum roll they danced and stamped their weapons. They interrupted to emit long cries that resembled the calls of night owls.

One monastic woman raised herself up to dance and stomp as well. Her eyes bulged. Suddenly she stepped straight ahead: the warriors gave way and let them flee. In the mentality of the region, the insane are already in the underworld with the ancestor souls and so they treat them with "reverence. This lasted until half an hour after midnight. At



that time, the ritual rape began. Thérèse, one of the convent women, was raised on a kind of altar : she gave up her spirit around two in the morning. At six o'clock, the last Simba warriors left the grounds.

**Remark.** - Lantier thereby notes that in Eastern Congo atrocities were committed just about everywhere during that period.- Near Paulis, a "captain" went insane: he killed six hostages in an exceptionally savage manner. He cut a slit in the lower abdomen, pulled out the victims' intestines and used them like a rope to hang them from trees.

People's eateries also restarted in abundance. Young people from le Mouvement national congolais Lumumba in Stanleyville sent a telegram to the Organization de l'Unité Africaine on 20.11.1964: "The Congolese people want to dispose of the prisoners of war themselves. Stop. Whole population willing to eat prisoners of war if other bombings in our region. Stop. If you refuse, we ask that you be allowed to surround all the residences where these POWs are staying with barrels of gasoline to be ready to burn them alive if Maison-Blanche does not commit to negotiate with revolutionary government by Tuesday. Stop. Lumumbian greetings. Full stop."-

Cruelty is contagious. Very definitely ritual cruelty.

### 13. *Funeral of a magician.*

***Bibl. st. :***

-- *J. Lantier, La cité magique, Paris, 1972, 53ss ... -*

Steller is in the region of the Kabré (Kabiyè, Cabrais ) in northern Togo, where he was allowed to attend a funeral of a magician. The corpse had been lying in a round hut on a clay bed wrapped in palm leaves for a week. Flies and insects swarmed amid an unbearable smell. The villagers, who had been absorbed in dancing, libations and taking drugs all week, were exhausted except for the blacksmith, the head of the mages, and a few women. Among these, the eldest sister of the deceased mastered the proper course of the rites with a whip. The strongest danced on under tambourines. Sometimes they interrupted to drink sorghum beer from gourds. The rest of the villagers lay on the ground.

As an aside, steller, as always, had eucalyptus oil with him against nasal allergies but these did not help now, so much so that the sight in itself of depraved flesh was disgusting. This did not seem to bother the Kabré. Late at night, under constant tam-tam the blacksmith and the eldest daughter of the dead man led about twenty people into the 'womb hut' with steller. One sat down. Outside, men masoned them in. The blacksmith began to chant litanies to which those present replied endlessly in the same manner. "I could not take my eyes off the young woman who was ranting, shouting with all her might, gesticulating as she brandished a large knife, the destination of which I did not know. Her long drooping breasts swung back and forth across her belly. A leaden heat pressed down on us amidst suffocating humidity. I wondered if I too was not going to die".

About fifty centimeters above the dead person's head was a hole in wall of about twenty centimeters by meter. A slight flow of air had started up between the opening in the wall that was supposed to contain us, and the hole in the wall.

Suddenly, after a series of clanging words taunted out in a shrill tone, the young woman plunged her knife into the dead man's body and began to remove the bandages and palm leaves around the corpse.

"When the corpse was bared in that horrible way, I had the impression that it was visibly swelling. I did not get the time to test the occurrence of such a phenomenon. The strangest thing imaginable occurred: the dead person stood up and sat down. Out of his open mouth came a sphere or a flame! I could not say it correctly because it happened so quickly and so unexpectedly that my abilities to pay attention to it were beyond me. That thing-it was of a blue-green color-found its way for a moment and then disappeared through the hole in the wall-what happened next I could not say. I found myself outside but with a bad feeling in the stomach and a heavy head. The villagers: they had resumed their drinking and dancing amid a hellish noise." So much for the report.

**Background.-** The Kabré are very primitive mountain dwellers.- Myth.- Eso, the primal father of all men, has departed to heaven. He is surrounded by spirits, including a phallus "as big as the sky." From the Coran they took over that after death one can indulge in eating, drinking and love-making forever. - Ancestor worship takes place in a hut where each dead person is represented by a clay cone representing his approximate sex. In front of it one places a fetish composed of clay, placenta of a woman left dead in parturition, menstrual blood of a female dog, livers, feathers of chickens that died in sacrifices.

Magicians try to bypass Eso's vigilance and want to reincarnate into a newborn. Therefore, living mages check every birth. If some signs indicate that the baby is a former mage, they strangle him with his umbilical cord, decapitate him and bury the two body parts separately.

## 14. Done.

### ***Bibl. st. :***

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique*, Paris, 1972, 84s . - Steller attends a customary law inquiry in the vicinity of Kinshasa (Congo). A villager had seen his chickens die one after another. Then he saw his wife die "without ever having been sick." Well, in his village, a young man had been noticed because he turned himself into a wild pig. Several people had met the wild pig and recognized the young man in it. They are there to testify under oath.-At least, so understands the steller because the lawyer does not plead but limits himself to performing in court dances with ringing of bells.

The judge questions the magician - understand: the shapeshifting young man - : he accuses him of having sparkling eyes. -

***Remark.*** - Among the Bakongo in the region around Kinshasa, such magic is called "n' doki" : whoever deviates from tribal or clan behavior is n' doki. Especially in a case of shapeshifting. - The judge o.g.v. that concept considers sparkling eyes a case of n' doki. - Such "evidence" is sufficient to sentence the young man to pay the amount for the chickens and the wife as well as that for a bowl of beer in court.

***Remark.*** - This case is unconvincing except as to common law axioms. The following is more persuasive.

### ***In Congo.-***

Judicial police in Kinshasa accuse a man of turning himself into a crocodile to steal a child. - About 10 years ago, the man, who had a wife but no children, turned to a renowned magician so that he would provide him with a son to raise as his own. The magician agreed and gave him a potion to turn into a crocodile. In such guise, the man descends into the stream and follows a vessel in which there is a six-year-old child. The child to pee moves to the end of the vessel.

The "crocodile" makes it fall into the water, grabs it and carries it to the village. The man resumes his human form and asks his wife to act like the child's mother from now on.

There will be a trial of.- All involved recognize the event as real. Including the adolescent who is now 16 and completely remembers the circumstances of his abduction. The Kinshasa court sentences the man to return the son to his family and to pay hefty damages as well as a heavy fine.

In the recitals, the court emphasized that the man really did turn himself into a crocodile to commit his crime.

***Opm .*** - O.c., 82s . - Steller sets forth the Bakongo view of man.-.

### ***1. The normal aspects.-***

a. "I am". This is the soul insofar as independent of the body and living on after death.

b. Clear-sensitive soul.- As magical plants, medicines, drugs "feel," so the soul "feels."

c. Decisive soul, called "ndwenga."- The soul in unison with the totem (thing, plant, animal that are protective) is capable of calculation and cunning. Its seat is in the head.

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## **2. *The supranormal aspects.***- O.w. these two.-

a. The soul as "yembo," situated in the spinal cord at the base of the cervical vertebra and extending to the ears, the eyes, the shoulders to before the stomach, "sees" all that is invisible danger, reacts with fear but unfolds strengthened life forces.

b. The soul as "kasasa," situated in the glabella (between the eyebrows) and extending into invisible, horn-like "antennae," is clairvoyant: it "sees" within itself and others and "sees" the future.

Yembo can be practiced by initiation. Kasasa - little developed with most is found with people who "speak while walking" with a deceitful mind. Some through higher initiation can master kasasa and become very powerful. They guess what others are thinking and force them to do what they want. This giftedness apparently possesses fortune tellers, magicians and witch hunters. - The ability to change shape belongs to the latter kind.

## 15. *The mythical snake.*

### ***Bibl. st. :***

-- B. Tanghe, *The snake at the Ngbandi*, Brussels, 1919.-.

The Ngbandi, also Mbatu, are tribes in the north of what was then called the Belgian Congo. Steller knew their culture extremely well, as missionaries can after living on the ground for decades.

### ***The snake.-***

On 15.05.1912, the missionary has to deal with a more than four-meter-long thick snake that the residents could not kill with him until 19.05.1912. But then it begins. Ginga, the cook, who had given the mercy shot, began to cry and rant like mad.

Another boy said, "Shut up because he is a snake." Suddenly Ginga stopped and spoke as normal and explained, "I am a twin child and so I am a snake. I shot my brother in a moment. Had I not wept, I became sick. Now that I have wept, I am at peace".

### ***The grief rite.-***

The next day Kumba, twin sister of Ginga, came with her husband : she too was a snake. In a bag of leaves she had scraps of red mbio wood. She took some of it and with it drew a wide line on the inside of both Ginga's arms from the wrist to the shoulders. Ginga performed the same on her. Thereupon they both took the rest of the mbio wood and sprinkled it on the snake's skin which lay in the sun to dry. - The belief is that if the rite does not take place, falling ill and dying is to be expected.

### ***The reason.-***

Only twins and some loners, insofar as they are related to twins, are worshiped as snakes. Steller tried in every way to get the reason out of the mouths of the inhabitants but usually the answer was: "We don't know. God told our ancestors so".

### ***The scope.-***

The worship of the serpent dominates all other customs and practices within families and in public village life.

'God' - Gaso, a very distinguished resident of the Ngonda tribe, said, "Your God is in the church - he pointed to the chapel - ; with us the snake is what with you God is." A twin mother said:

"Know ye not that the serpent is the Toro (Supreme Spirit) of the Ngbandi? The Mbanza and the Ngbugbu have their Ngakola and the Banziri their hippopotamus as Toro. Among the Ngbandi one finds no Toro other than the snake".

### ***The Bible Story.-***

The origin story in the Bible tells of the serpent as the appearance of the devil (according to the author). "They asked me as many as ten times in succession whether

the serpent was so evil after all, and whether God was really stronger than the serpent."

***Life Force.-***

He who worships the snake enjoys its highest life force that can ward off all calamities.- Yet this. The dibèrè is most special wijas whose effects are known to all fetishists. Yet a twin was killed by dibèrè. Reason: his father had waited too long before paying his debts to a distinguished resident of the village. Waiting tiredly, this dibèrè dashed under the canopy of the father's house, resulting in the death of the twin child.

***Dreaming.-***

The snake and twins regularly share messages in dream sleep. Those messages are rock-hard orders. If they are not carried out, the twins will die or the serpent will kill others. But whoever pretends a false dream-message will come to bite the field serpent.-

***Steller.-*** Whims of hysterical people, particularly women, and of kemproking people lead to the most arbitrary inspirations. E.g. : the snake wants one to plant as twin trees not nduru but two ngbu. Or : the children were not allowed to suck milk but to slurp eggs and drink banana wine. As a result, both children died shortly after one another. Still: the snake indicates someone who was going to go fishing the following day where he would catch two big fish. The man got into the prawn, worshipped the snake, cast the net and, besides many others, caught two big fish.

Up to there some insight into what a mythical animal whose visible and tangible presence is seen in biological animals can mean within the thought framework of a primitive culture.

## 16. Fate throw.

### ***Bibl.st.:***

- S. Hutin, *Techniques d'envoûtement*, Paris, 1971;
- L. Bernard d'ignis, *Traité du désenvoûtement et du contre-envoûtement*, Rennes, 2002.-.

### ***By way of introduction what follows.***

Magic (witchcraft)/witchcraft.-If S. Greenwood, *Magic and Witchcraft (An Illustrated Historical Account of Spiritual Worlds)*, Utrecht, 2002 (or.: *The Encyclopedia of Magic and Witchcraft* (2001)), is to be believed, then "magic" is the description of the "spiritual" or "spirit" side of all things.-"Spirit" is apparently the same as "life force" (the basic dynamical concept).-

O.c., 122, it is pointed out that "spiritual powers" are neutral in themselves but can be employed either for good or bad. The bad use would then be called "witchcraft."- Though we dwell on one of the top achievements of witchcraft, the fate throw.

### ***Definition.-***

In any case: autosuggestion in the form of "feeling bewitched" falls outside the strict definition.- Hutin defined "fate throw" as "the grip of a strong personality on a weak personality" (in terms of life force).Included in that definition is the fact that the victim believes in it and realizes it.- After Bernard d'ignis' reading, he admits that the concept of fate throw also refers to people who do not realize it and do not even believe in it. Thus, Bernard d'ignis also counts "the memory of the walls" (which even after centuries still radiate the evil energies of past occult evil) or the evil energies of a landscape among the concept of "fate throw."-

Fate casting is then the magical practice by which a cast fate is nullified.

### ***Characteristics.***

- Bernard dignis provides lists that express a criterion for distinguishing destiny throw from the rest of reality.-We summarize them somewhat and organize them differently.

#### ***1. Energy loss.-***

The pre-eminent effect is deprivation of vitality, of course.- Fatigue "for no apparent reason." In the morning one is already dead tired. One has a conversation with someone for a few minutes: in the course of that conversation one becomes so tired that one seeks a recliner as quickly as possible.

#### ***2.1. Despondencies of all kinds.-***

One "doesn't see the point" anymore. From along to more. Fears overwhelm you. Nightmares disturb sleep which is very restless even without nightmares.

#### ***2.2. Isolation.-***

Those around you avoid you; family members, colleagues, friends seem to avoid you. Even strangers quasi-immediately take an aversion to you. Even animals react



negatively.

### **2.3. Aversion.-**

The victim himself develops negative attitudes toward his environment: roommates, the other or one's own gender, strangers with whom one lives or works, come across as strangling or disgusting. This can go to fits of rage.

### **2.4. Financial problems.-**

Usually those affected undergo breakdowns (computer, all that is electricity especially but also cars and other equipment). Accidents "for no apparent reason" strike unusually. Business falls unusually despite special efforts. People hurt themselves inexplicably.

### **2.5. Physical problems.-**

One undergoes peculiar chills. One feels a rare lump in the throat or stomach. Certain headaches terrify the mind. At certain times one chokes during the day or also at night. Peculiar tingling in body parts occurs.

Impassibilities and dizziness occur. Unusual digestive disturbances may be added.

### **3. Extra-human phenomena.-**

Animals - including domestic and stuffed animals behave aversively. Electric lights and any equipment exhibit unpredictable and unusual behavior such that the specialist called in "finds nothing" and leaves shaking his head.

One timely feels "someone" or "a group" behind him, yes, in the back urgently. Streams or shapes seem to move through portions of the body.

Bernard d'ignis says that none of the enumerated "phenomena" is sufficient in itself AND that the accumulation of the enumerated traits of knowledge - the more numerous the better - only offers some certainty as to whether there is real destiny. For its diagnosis is a very difficult matter. With the risk - always present - of being mistaken (especially if autosuggestion is taken into account).

## 17. Ancestry.

***Bibl. st.:***

-- *J. Lantier, La cité magique*, Paris, 1972, 40ss ... -

Steller is in the land of the Fali in the Tinguelinge Mountains. It is claimed there that at full moon the ancestors move. He asks a village chief if he could attend such a thing. The latter says that to do so he must "arrange the magic." For a suitable payment, a magician wanted to do this. This one goes into the wilderness to collect the active ingredients that make invisible - invisibility necessary if one wants to see the ancestors move at full moon -, because he would prepare a mixture with herbs (in which two eyes torn from the head of a living monkey, urine of a female dog and so on). Two days later everything was ready.

The head, steller and mage drank the mixture that makes invisible. "I ingested about three tablespoons of a slimy green boil. ( ... ). A slight intoxication took hold of me, upon which I felt numb by a kind of paralysis."

At a sign from the mage, the village chief asked them to follow him in his family enclosure to the hut of the ancestors, a simple cone-shaped we place in hardened red earth. A wickerwork in front of the entrance was raised. By the light of a kerosene lamp, a mound of boulders was visible. In the corridor that opened onto that mound was a sotghum offering and a fist-sized, luminous and dirty something that appeared hairy. When steller asked what the latter was, the answer sounded, "THAT? That's fetish!".

One sat down in front of the entrance to the hut. The lamp inside it illuminated the mound of boulders with a faint glow. One sat like that for a long time. The village chief looked tightly at the heap of boulders. "When will we become invisible?" He gave sign to remain silent.

Nearby, monkeys squawked and could be heard galloping. The long silence that followed was interrupted only by a hiss that seemed to come from a snake crawling by very close to us. A hyena began to laugh.

The head that continued to stare at the boulder pile in the glare invited me to look out.

He seemed strongly impressed. Steller, for his part, experienced - without grasping its reason - an indefinable anxiety. "I had no reason to experience such uneasiness because I did not believe in the least about this boulder history."

Suddenly the silence was broken by strange sounds. "One would have sworn that on those boulders there were stones falling down so close in front of us. The light wavered. I looked sternly at what I discerned. The boulders trembled and bumped against each other as if one were shaking them. I watched the scene intently: I could clearly hear the sound of boulders colliding. I saw several rising slowly, suddenly turning around and falling down with a thud". "It is over. Now we must leave quickly. So said the chief.

Thereupon he and Steller found themselves by a fire outside the fence. The mage had left. The night life of the village remained at its usual rhythm. Every mood was gone by the head. Steller was bored. And could not get it said. A little later he was able to say a word: "Thou didst tell me that we would be invisible but that was false!". To which the reply was, "Nevertheless! We were invisible!".

"I remembered that indeed, as the boulders danced, it occurred to me that for some moments the village chief was no longer present beside me."

*Opm ...* - Steller tells this history to a French captain who was a doctor at Fort-Lamy in Tchad. The officer burst out laughing: "One has made a fool of you! To extort money from you. The two snouts gave you a hallucinogenic product to drink and you thought you saw the stones dancing. It is also possible that they dug an opening behind the hut and someone came to shake the stones with a stick." Steller: "I confess that for several days I was ashamed of my naïveté. My surprise increased when I learned that the captain-doctor had never been to the land of Fali".

## 18. God.

### ***Bibl. st.:***

-- L.-V. Thomas/ R. Luneau, *Les sages dépossédés (Univers magiques d' Afrique noire)*, Paris, 1977, 132/169 (*L'homme et le divinité*).--Thomas.

Lantier presented us with an image of African "sacred" facts. He did this from his positivist axiomatics which sees humanity and its religions evolving from - what he calls - "the magical (primitive) stage" through "the metaphysical stage" (which merges into vague notions) to "the positive (mean: natural science) stage." As a result, his view is somewhat limited because all three stages are in fact there at the same time but with different emphases. The preference he shows for the sexual in magic runs in tandem with a thrust toward sexual emancipation. But what he has seen as an eyewitness is very valuable in part because he is a radical skeptic and thus considers as much as possible the extraneous and supernatural impossible. Even if he sees with his own eyes what with certainty positive science today cannot "explain," yet he does not deviate an inch from his skepticism ...

Do we now dwell on what Lantier hardly sees, ni. the concept of "Supreme Being" in black Africa. "The African sees in all that his senses grasp as a given something other than what he sees." (*R. Bastide, Religions agraires et structures de civilisation, in: Présence africaine* 66 (1968)).

### ***The ordinary course of business.-***

O.c., 166.- A great number of rites are performed without mentioning God. Not every drought is dramatic e.g., and so in the course of ordinary days the African situates what occurs in the ordinary course of events that visibly presents the spirits, the deities of second rank, the ancestors, the nature spirits as a quasi-immediate fact. Lantier's accounts have made this abundantly clear.

The unusual course of events.- For the African, the basic fact is the existing order of things and events. To this order belongs the ordinary course of things. But, when this is disturbed beyond measure, something like a Supreme Being appears. And as the preeminent reason for what occurs.

When one wants to summarize the learned exposition of proposers, it appears this.- There is a great variety regarding the names given to the Supreme Being (if a name is given to it at all), - diversity that reflects the types of culture: a shepherd speaks differently about "God" than a farmer or and cattle breeder. But the extraordinary, understand: all-transcending beingness of the Supreme Being is fundamentally the same everywhere. Even though it seems (some scholars emphasize this) that 'God' - whom one must not now confuse with the God of the Bible - exhibits paradoxical ken~ traits that are sometimes confused with contradictory ken~ traits. Sometimes 'God' is given names; other times it is stated that for Him there is no name. -

***Opn*** .... - This means that if the names do not betray the essence of "God," they may

be there, and if the names betray that same essence, they must remain absent. This is paradox but not contradiction.

Sometimes 'God' is far from people (which can then be called, among other things, "deus otiosus" (deity on vacation)); other times He is closer to life than all that is visible and tangible. - Thus, one can still find similar "opposites" in speaking of "God.

***Without equal.-***

One kentrek prevails: 'God' has no equal.-He is similar but never equatable.

***A model*** (o.c., 159).-.

The Mosi express this in this way.

- An yiid Wêndé (Who exceeds god?).
- An toê né Wêndé (Who makes it up to God?).- An tög Wêndé (Who is mightier than God?).
- An kêl Wêndé (Who is older than God?).
- An gê né Wêndé (Who usually lives with God?).
- Wênnam m'mi (God knows).
- Zàg bé Wêndé (All is in God).
- Da gêls Wêndé (Don't look God in the eye).
- Da pêlg Wêndé (Do not approach God).
- Sid bé Wênné (The truth is in God).
- Sid bé Wêndé (The truth is with God).

As A. Hampaté Ba, *Aspects de la civilisation africaine*, in: *Présence africaine* 1972, says:

"For tradition-bound societies, the principle of all true understanding ( ... ) always comes from above."

## 19. Clitoris.

### ***Bibl. st.:***

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique*, Paris, 1972, 286ss ... -

Lantier meets a fetish man and questions him about the female clitoris. We summarize.

How can one, as the mission does, forbid women to be engaged in what is the main part of unity with the ancestors? God (understand: the primordial father) has made the sex of the woman so that only he can visit it to bring his spirit into it at the moment of conception. In the process, the woman is driven and aroused by desire in two places, the clitoris and the vagina. By what? The hearth of the vagina is closed by a hymen and can be accessed only after tearing it. Why did God put this seal there? Why does He want such blood sacrifice? God has never done anything without a reason. The reason is that only God must come to impregnate the woman by giving her the spirit of the ancestors.

### ***Consequence:***

she should remain a virgin until the day when the husband chosen by the ancestors opens the way that allows God to bring offspring to life. Such a place must not be defiled because the spirit of the ancestors must find purity.- In doing so, God has willed that His presence provide the woman with the greatest pleasure she can live through in the course of her existence.

### ***Clitoris.-***

God gave to the woman the clitoris so that she could make use of it for marriage in such a way that she experiences the pleasure of love without losing the virginity that the spirit of God requires.

Consequence: she has no excuse if she loses it. And what is more : the pleasures she experiences sharpen in her a fierce desire to be married.

### ***Clitoridectomy.-***

Nipple excision is not performed on very small girls because the nipple serves them to masturbate. It is performed only on young girls who are considered eligible for conception and marriage. Once they have lost their clitoris, they no longer masturbate. As a result, they miss a lot. Then all their desire turns inward: they immediately seek quick marriage. Once married - instead of being absorbed in vague and insignificant experiences - they focus everything on the same place and - which is normal - the couples know great happiness.

Your God, white people, proceeds like a human being. We don't understand that. God does not work because He has no hands. God - for us - is the profound intention in all that exists : everything goes in a direction determined once and for all. Duty is always to go in the direction He foresaw. Do not deviate.

***Difference.-***

One tribe cuts out the clitoris; the other does not because each tribe has its own God. Immediately the lore and thus the custom differs. The differences also go toward God. Up to there what the fetish man said.

***Steller. -***

("The rest of our conversation strayed - I must admit - into far-fetched metaphysical reflections without any importance on the matter. The reader/readers will - I hope - admit that I better reflect the content of the conversation between me and the fetish man than merely expound my own opinion on the matter. From what the fetish man asserted, many conceptions and interpretations may thus arise which I leave to the reactions of all."

***His interpretation.-***

"Why is it that, in the countries that present themselves as the most advanced, people still believe, more than they want to know, in the importance of the virginity of girls? Why are boys left in their almost universal ignorance of the erotic scope of the clitoris? All questions that we - for what reason? - indicate as picky to answer but which might 'demythize' (understand: 'strip from its mythic character) the conceptions of the fetishman and rob it of its untouchability." Much has changed since 1972!

20. *There is phallus and there is wijfallus.*

***Bibl.st.:***

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique*, Paris, 1972, 163ss.-.

Steller talks about the objects that primitives make. Instead of displaying the long-winded theory he develops that is pretty much commonplace among ethnologists, we display a history that is a sample but perfectly captures the general idea.

In the Bakongo region, sculptors make phalluses. Together with a Canadian - representative of the UNO - who wanted to see how an amazing fetish (understand: magical object) is created in the house of steller, steller goes to a village near Kinshasa. In a workshop full of phalluses of all sizes - from our little finger to that of an elephant - both stand still in amazement. The sculptor was amazed for reason of that amazement. To the Canadian's question "What does that mean here?" the man replied :

"That's prokondo." "And what is prokondo?". "That is when ye approach a woman but are tired, then ye proceed with prokondo".

On it, the sculptor mimics with his mouth and cheeks a locomotive running from Kinshasa to Matadi. He takes a prokondo, spins around a large table with the prokondo already sighing and prostrating like the train.

Both men hold back their laughter as the Bakongo are touchy. Steller points to a prokondo, the largest, weighing as much as twenty kilograms and asks "Surely thou dost not tell us that the Bakongo girls can use such gear." "Surely they can! That is a matter of magic: on the wedding day the woman puts herself on it to have a child". "But surely there is no reason why putting oneself thereon favors the arrival of a child."

To which the sculptor: "Not just like that! This prokondo is made as it should be, with an eye toward magic but magic it has not yet received. It involves a long work, giving the magic. When the village chief will have redeemed the prokondo from me, he will make the object fit for magic. After that, the prokondo will serve at weddings".

The Canadian orders, negotiates the price and buys. Upon leaving the workshop, the sculptor - perhaps because he had provided him with a buyer - slides a beautiful prokondo under steller's arm, "a pitch black of natural size."

***Steller's interpretation.-***

In the Bakongo culture, every reality is a carrier of "mana" (life force) such that it radiates influences and receives influences. Influences that are sometimes beneficial and sometimes malicious. Result: "The object deserves reverence and attentiveness" (o.c., 152). Steller uses the French term "ambiance," "environment," to denote the space - the occult space then - in which the natives live, - an environment of innumerable "influences," good and evil.- It is from that "environment" that one can understand the wijfallus.



He expresses the power that the deity/ ancestor puts at the disposal of the married woman. If she - married - prostrates herself on it in a ritual manner, then through that phallus which thanks to "consecration," understand: magical operation (she is a prolonged, attentive operation) , becomes the wijfallus, the ancestral deity responds with his divine semen at unification with the man.

***Steller emphasizes:***

magical objects of that type are a message addressed to the addressee who is here the extra-natural fertilizer. The message, here a question : "Grant fertility," is not limited to thoughts, words and deeds but becomes "speaking" because a consecrated object transmits the message, the question. The belief is that through that we object the divine progenitor understands the message much better. -

***Opm. - P. van Baaren, Maze of the Gods, Amsterdam, 1960,190, emphasizes the same "rhetorical" meaning of magic: "Man calls upon divine beings for help and at the same time he drastically shows those divine helpers what help he expects from them. Of course, this succeeds only within the same religion with its system of high beings and their openness to human adherents, system of mutual understanding.***

## 21. Fetishes.

### ***Bibl. st.:***

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique (Magie et sexualité en Afrique noire)*, Paris, 1972,67/77. -

Steller observes that the African language calls things like a mask, a figurine, a tree, a plant or even a receptacle full of several 'things' a 'fetish' and that those we humans (men, women) who can! may create a fetish, go through very hard tests through an initiation of our own. He was once allowed to experience a rite in a 'monastery' of fetishists in northern Dahomey (West Africa) just before the annual festival of fetishes in Lolo. The Kaba Lolo attracts many people.

The founding ancestor of the Ber or Bariba, a very primitive people, is called Saccalolo. He is worshipped as a god. The Bariba fetishists obtain earth in Lolo where he is buried, to be used in the creation of fetishes. Two types are known: healing ones consisting of Lolo earth, and lucky ones that are human statues rubbed with magical mixtures.

The wives who are destined to transfer the life forces to a fetish undergo a three-year training. Some telling details: they are first deflowered but remain without relations all this time; they each have a hut that houses a phallus which they touch several times a day but which they are not allowed to use under any circumstances as a means of lust. In the courtyard can be seen a cock tied to the large fetish that Saccalolo presents. When he crows in the morning and evening, the novices must masturbate according to the customary rites. The initiation ends with a clitoral excision.

### ***The 'power' of King Lolo.-***

The initiates led by the head fetishist are dressed in white. They move a short kilometer to a large pond in a meander of the river. The villagers keep their distance. The village chief emits a few cries and then throws a series of live chickens into the pond. The numerous crocodiles throw themselves on the animals.- The initiate presides, singing, followed by the novices. They enter the water until it rises to her girdle.

### ***The crocodiles -***

"I saw that fantastic miracle" says Lantier (o.c., 76) clear the way. Thereupon the initiate addresses the crocodiles, and in the name of Lolo she commands them to allow the women of the place to draw water from the pond throughout the year. "Here and there the huge maws of crocodiles opened as if to answer" (ibidem). Then the fetishes stepped backwards out of the water. The bottom of her skirts was muddied; the top was white. Which created a curious impression. They reach the shore. They disrobe and return to the water where they bathe amid the crocodiles."

### ***Final impression.-***

"I was breathing strongly for fear of the attacking urge of these predators. A few

minutes later, the fetuses stepped out of the pond. Thereupon came the village women who kept pitchers ready, drawing water in the face of the crocodiles who watched them with the utmost indifference" (o.c., 77).

*Opm .* - One phase of the rite which Lantier was allowed to attend, during which the novices become one with "the hidden powers" (o.c., 74), should be mentioned. The novices - completely naked - emerge under the direction of the initiate "with staring eyes" as if they had taken drugs. The village chief to whom Lantier asked if they had taken a "drug" got a smile on his lips and said they were seers. When asked what they saw, he said, "They see King Lolo in the company of his subjects and his wives. These are happy because the king has conquered all his enemies and he has the sun behind him. The king is so powerful that he gives to the women who see him the ability to control all that lives." At that, Lantier asked if he could not see evidence of this. The above described taking to the water amidst the crocodiles and this twice counted as "proof" in the mentality of the village chief : "Very sure. It is easy. Be patient" he had said. He meant the scene in the pond! -

*Opm ...* - Even primitives have their "miracles" that substantiate the axioms of their religion.

## 22. A secret society of women.

***Bibl. st.:***

*J. Lantier, La cité magique, Paris, 1972, 249/257 (Sarabandes de femmes).-*

The magical role of women as shrines of the primordial father's sperm is ensured in black Africa by numerous societies that initiate young women. In Gabon, the societies are called "Nyembe" ("Nzembe"). People used to risk their lives if they tried to attend or spy on the meetings of the women's societies. Steller recounts his experience on the matter. It was agreed: he was allowed to watch the ceremony and was accompanied by an elder, not a woman.

The ritual site is an open space screened from view by a triple circular fence composed of hedges of various plants, some of which bear very fragrant flowers. In the middle there is a wephallus made of earth about two meters high.- Lantier was not allowed to enter the enclosure; nor was he allowed to take pictures. He could watch standing on a ladder against a tree near the clearing. When he arrived, the rite had already begun. Light clouds obscured the moonlight but blazing torches relieved.

In front of the wijfallus, a woman beat the tam-tam. About fifty women walked incessantly around the phallus. They formed a drag: one after another held hands on the shoulders of the one before. They were whole and naked but rigged with a thick artificial penis with which each woman - it seemed to Lantier - touched the buttocks of the previous one.

In that monotonous form - Africa often knows this - the ceremony lasted at least an hour. Suddenly, however, as if by magic, the sarabande ceased. The woman who beat the tam-tam mounted her instrument, which resembled a round tabouret, and addressed the participants. Every now and then they would interrupt the speaker with shouts or with repetitions of phrases unintelligible to Lantier. The speech seemed endless. The speaker ended it with a series of doubled drum beats.

She then bent her head forward against the phallus and showed her behind to those present. She pulled her buttocks open with her hands. This lasted about ten minutes. Then the drag began during which each participant pushed the penis with which she was rigged between the leader's buttocks.

Then the women positioned themselves around the earthen phallus laying off the penis with which they were rigged. The leader gave short strokes on the tam-tam. The participants resumed her rigged penis and moved it back and forth as a representation of sexual intercourse.

"I was wondering how all this would ever end when the old man who had accompanied me ordered me to leave my ladder. I begged him to let me watch for a few more minutes but he assured me that this was impossible because we would be killed by

I don't know what spirit if we attended the most secret part of the rite. I took one last look: one of those women was rolling in the sand while uttering violent cries. Two other women were holding each other. But the old man pulled me away" (o.c., 257).

**Remark.** - Steller, o.c., 255, says: "It is my conviction that gatherings of that type may be regarded as extensions pretty much in the sense of those which now exist in the Paris region."--Provided.

This statement is surprising because it contradicts the rest of the interpretation the author holds regarding the backgrounds of sexual magic in black Africa. That the women in question "indulge" is very much in line with her sacred beliefs. They meanwhile live through what the lore imposes. That this is referred to as "living out" shows a misunderstanding of its sacred essence. Although a kind of survival is apparently an aspect.

The secret societies, such as the one outlined by the author in her meeting, are intended to realize the rules of conduct of the ancestors on earth and in the other world, including in the form just described. Woe to those in such cultures who venture to tear them down. This perhaps explains the surrender of women.

## 23. From mask to we-mask.

### *Bibl. st.:*

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique*, Paris, 1972, 195ss ... -

Steller attends a private consecration of a mask in Diosso, a village near Pointe-Noire (Congo-Brazzaville). The rectangular hut is full of very diverse objects including the magician's understructure. Some men and a woman in rather ordinary clothes were present. The woman keeps the upper body unclothed but is laden with a wondrous set of magical forewords. He sat down during a banal conversation.-

At the sign of an attendant, he stands straight and takes to a corner a number of baskets and objects which he places in front of him. On a block he places a mask painted with geometric figures. From a bag he takes out a fetish (an object charged with magical power) to which pieces of metal, nails, bits of keys and so on were attached.

The woman undresses and with a cutting voice raises a melopee which she sings to the end of the operation.- The woman puts the mask on the fetish. He takes from a hive a snake that looks sleepy, and grabs it by the head. Slowly it coils around his arm. Holding the snake above him with outstretched arm, he shakes a hive full of tinkling objects three times. The snake unfurls. With both hands he grasps them and makes them coil around the mask. The animal performs the rite apathetically. That is how it appears to Lantier.

The woman sings or rather cries hip-swaying, gesticulating, clapping her hands.- The woman takes out a truncated horn into which he throws a powder. He shakes the horn like a teal-thrower. He brings it to his lips, bends over the mask, and blowing three times, he throws powder on the mask.

The woman suddenly stops.-The magician places the snake, horn and fetish in their respective baskets and puts the mask on the block.

Returning to Pointe-Noire, Lantier expresses his surprise at the absence of dancing. It is explained to him that the mask is not for collective purposes but has been ordered by one of the men present: two of his children have died within a few days and he asks for an incantation against a cast of fate.

### *Axiomatics.-*

O. c., 154.- Lantier observes that, within the premises of such a magical event, it is true that the given things have their place and that the creation of a new thing is a disturbance of the given order of things. That is why recourse to ancestors, and especially to the founding ancestor, is before all else duty. One wants to know whether what is going to be created is to their liking or even to force its creation upon them. As a result, every creation is a rite of passage that addresses itself to "the spirits" in order to persuade them and to provide the necessary and sufficient guarantees for the

operation. - As a result, the construction of cities, villages, huts, their positioning, the production of comforts, are governed by rules that are sometimes very complicated and, moreover, vary greatly throughout the world.

*Opm . - Th. P. van Baaren, Maze of the Gods, Amsterdam, 1960, defines the we mask as a face covering that usually bears the features of spirits or deities who "appear" through the mask, i.e. are visibly and tangibly present. The mask dance then uses we masks to depict divine or at least higher beings.*

The question arises in Lantier's description of the external what processes and what presences the wijman, the singing wijvrouw, the wijslang, the consecrated objects, the attendants salvage. What is magically certain is that the mask, once consecrated, gives off a new life force or "mana" that works itself out, among other things, in the family of the orderer whose children died in a remarkably short time. That life force is that of the magician himself, of his we objects but also and first and foremost - as van Baaren states - of the founding ancestor and of the ancestor souls, of the spirits associated with these beings etc. ... -

The insight therein is then to grasp the "sacred" or "sacred" that lies within and behind all the external. Only then does one grasp what is actually happening. Only then is there true religious science that sees through the external.

#### 24. judge as interpreter of a spirit.

**Bibl. st. :**

-- J. Lantier, *La cité magique*, Paris, 1972, 132/134.-.

Within the forests of Gabon, the formation of judges involves two stages, the appeal to family spirits and ritual initiation. In each family, they keep the skulls of ancestors, which are carefully debarked, cleaned and rubbed with women's saliva.-

A carefully selected boy is adopted by the ancestors in a rite: to this end, he takes a decoction of the bark of a euphorbia ("alan") so that he can see the spirits. Byeri, the primordial ancestor himself, appears to him and taps his shoulder making him a weeman. If Byeri does not appear, it means that the ancestors refuse the one recited by the living.

In some tribes, the judges are designated among the men who have a contact with Byeri. The assembly of judges chooses themselves. Those so chosen seclude themselves to see Mundju, the spirit of the plant charged with power. Around that plant, each participant places the family skulls. As close to it as possible, the skulls of the deceased judges are placed. For eight days, to the rhythm of tamtams and tinkling, the candidates must incessantly move their heads down and up except during the meal times. They take a precise dose of iboga (a plant) so that three days later they see the ancestors.

The fifth day the life force of the plant comes through in their minds so that from then on they know themselves to be inhabited by its spirit which represents the world order. What they say then is infallible. After this they decorate their heads with the feathers of the parrot, "the bird that speaks without understanding." With a stick they strike the earth and thank the spirit that is within them: "Thou, spirit of the word, thou who hast opened for us the narrow and difficult door, we thank thee. Spirit of the word, henceforth thou speakest through our mouths. Spirit of the word, henceforth thanks to thee we are truth".

Thereupon the judges receive the badges of their office: a red Phrygian cap, a chain mail, a staff equipped with bells to impose silence, as well as a whole set of magical objects with which they touch those from whom they demand a reverent attitude and absolute obedience. Since the spirit of the ancestor speaks through them, everyone naturally bows before them.- Such judges play the role of enforcers of law and order.

**Opm.** - O.c., 124.-The role of a wine plant intrigues Lantier; indeed, it annoys him. Thus he says:

"Plants simply possess the ability to heal or kill." This discovery, after the discovery of fire, steller considers the most important observation in the evolution of humanity. Even more - and it annoys steller even more - the plants make the seeing of the other world possible.

He concludes, "The primitive mentality is startled by the existence of such a fantastic power and resigns itself to the superiority of the plant" (ibid.). The plant - he



puts it - , once "personified: acquires a superhuman power. Even worse: a magical tree e.g. is inhabited by an invisible spirit.- Given all this, the plant is for a primitive in itself a fetish: it obtains its being from the other world. Because it belongs to the other world - surpassing man in this - it testifies - like a "person" - to the ability to read people's minds, to determine their guilt, to judge their actions ethically and to respond to them with reward or punishment.

"This wondrous belief, so widespread in societies of the archaic type, so far wearing under point of view of consequences" annoys steller who nevertheless - especially where sexual magic is concerned - approaches the primitives with an open mind.

*Opm .* - It is clear: Lantier's interpretation which we have just sketched shows a superficial; behavioristic (paying attention only to external behavior) method. He misses what the primitives are telling him, by explaining their claims not from their axioms and experiences but by viewing them from his Western axiomatics as an outsider. That may be scientific but does it reflect reality?