

ACCULTURATION AND RELIGIOUS CHANGE IN A
NIGERIAN COMMUNITY:
THE KALABARI OF THE NIGER DELTA

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
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1963

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A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

1963

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It was the stoic philosopher Epictetus who said in his Manual, "Be not elated at an excellence which is not your own." The whole academic socialization process is such that no one graduate student or even scholar can claim any work of his as entirely his own. Rather it is a composite of significant contributions of others. Thus, instead of being elated, the student learns to pay tribute to those others who have contributed to his work.

In this respect, I acknowledge my deep appreciation to the Chairman of my committee, Dr. John Donoghue, whose insightful comments and persistent direction led to this finished product. To the other members of my committee, Drs. Hans Wolff and Bernard Gallin, I am much indebted for the regular comments and adjustments they made during the process of writing this thesis. I am also deeply grateful to Dr. John Useem for the unalloyed support and encouragement he gave me as I was grappling with my thesis topic.

I am also appreciative of the constant help given me by fellow graduate students and particularly Mr. Augustus Caine, with whom I constantly discussed my ideas as they unfolded and who helped tremendously to sharpen my thinking.

Finally, I am much indebted to my grandmother, who first taught me to appreciate cultural patterns.

Dedicated to

The Institute of International Education

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INTRODUCTION

If the scientific adequacy and efficiency of concepts are measured by the polemic of scholars about them, then the four primary concepts used here--acculturation, religion, change and community--would rank highly. But since polemic by itself measures neither scientific adequacy nor efficiency, the divergencies of opinion on these concepts become alarming and constitute a regular source of difficulty and confusion to the student as well as the scholar. A review of the literature indicates that none of these issues is a closed matter and the polemic continues with new formulations and reformulations. However, if the development of science is predicated on self-criticism, re-evaluation and reformulations, then the divergencies of opinion become less alarming and rather represent systematic attempts at making these concepts more adequate and efficient for scientific analysis.

This thesis represents one such attempt. It is, in the main, descriptive but it also attempts to reformulate these concepts in order to make the description more meaningful. An attempt is made here to describe the religious

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2. The second step is to define the problem.

3. The third step is to analyze the problem.

4. The fourth step is to develop a solution.

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6. The sixth step is to evaluate the solution.

7. The seventh step is to monitor the solution.

8. The eighth step is to report the results.

9. The ninth step is to conclude the project.

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12. The twelfth step is to close the project.

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17. The seventeenth step is to review the project.

18. The eighteenth step is to close the project.

19. The nineteenth step is to evaluate the project.

20. The twentieth step is to report the results.

system of the Kalabari, its relationship to the social structure, the changes that have occurred, why and how they have occurred and some delineation of certain theoretical issues. This is a library thesis and as such it would probably lack the intimacy with the phenomena that a field work would require. This handicap is slightly overcome by the personal knowledge of the culture by the writer.*

In a field as wide as this and in a thesis as modest as this, it is neither possible nor necessary to deal with all aspects of religion or of change. Chapter I, therefore, will attempt a brief description of the social structure with emphasis on descent, marriage and divorce, residence patterns, political and judicial institutions, etc. The rationale for this chapter is that it is difficult to understand religious systems outside the context of the social structure. Chapter II will deal with Kalabari traditional religion, while Chapter III will treat the changes that have taken place. The last chapter will attempt to make some comments and observations on acculturation and change.

Throughout this thesis, a conscious effort is made to avoid psychological interpretations. This is not only

*It is easily admitted that this is no substitute for a field work. Nonetheless, it serves a heuristic purpose by providing guide-lines for such field work. In order to test out the conclusion and realistically evaluate the changes that have taken place, a field trip is advocated.

because of the inadequacies of such psychological interpretations but also because of the contention that a religious system can be studied from a purely structural point of view. There is also the attempt here to reconceptualize certain phenomena in a manner that is radically different from currently accepted patterns. This is so because certain current conceptualizations seem to becloud the phenomena and make it difficult to describe the religious system that is being treated here. There is an inherent danger here, for if concepts are to be modified or reformulated to fit particular cultural contexts, there arises the problem of finding concepts that can be applicable cross-culturally. The contention, however, is not that the reformulations here are applicable cross-culturally but it is rather maintained that they can be.*

The Kalabaris live in four main towns--Buguma, the capital where the king resides, Bakana, Abonnema and Tombia--

* A theoretical discussion on religion is found in the Appendix. The main purpose of this appendix is to review some aspects of religious theories in order to pick out more salient elements that will be useful and meaningful in describing the religion of the Kalabari. The treatment is both cursory and brief and the more critically minded student may consult other theories or other aspects. It is admitted that the problem seems ineluctable and, as such, the position taken is both tentative and heuristic, calling for field work. However, for systematic theory building more cross-cultural data are required and this calls for more elaborate studies which are outside the focus of this modest thesis.

and about thirty villages on the tidal zone of the eastern Niger Delta of the present Eastern Region of Nigeria. Linguistically, they form part of the great bloc of Ijaw-speaking peoples but form a fairly distinct sub-group both in culture and dialect.

CHAPTER I

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Social structure, like many other anthropological and sociological concepts, is not yet a settled issue. Some have even questioned its utility. Recently Raymond Firth (Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. 84, p. 5, 1954) has argued that "there is . . . no such isolable entity [as] the social structure . . . the social structure, viewed as something within the grasp of the ethnographers account, is a myth . . . [and] if we want to compare structural systems . . . it is only in a selective sectional way that this can be done." Firth's position does not represent the final viewpoint in the field, but it nevertheless points out the inadequacies in current structural theorizing. The problem arises, though, from a metaphysical positing of social structure, viewing it as a substance to which its attributes inhere and which can be isolated from these attributes. To take an example from logic: "Socrates was a Greek; and Socrates taught Plato." The attributes of being a Greek and teaching Plato are said to inhere in the substance Socrates, and from which the substance Socrates can be isolated. This was a position retained by Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, and even

1. The first step in the process of creating a new product is to identify a market need. This involves conducting market research to determine what consumers want and what problems they are trying to solve.

2. Once a market need has been identified, the next step is to develop a concept for a product that meets that need. This involves brainstorming ideas and selecting the most promising one.

3. The third step is to create a prototype of the product. This involves building a small-scale model of the product to test its feasibility and to gather feedback from potential users.

4. The fourth step is to conduct a pilot test of the product. This involves distributing the prototype to a small group of users and observing their reactions.

5. The fifth step is to refine the product based on the feedback from the pilot test. This involves making changes to the design and functionality of the product to better meet the needs of the target market.

6. The sixth step is to launch the product into the market. This involves distributing the product to a larger group of users and monitoring its performance.

7. The seventh step is to evaluate the success of the product. This involves analyzing sales data, user feedback, and other metrics to determine whether the product is meeting its goals.

8. The eighth step is to iterate on the product. This involves making ongoing improvements to the product based on user feedback and market trends.

9. The ninth step is to scale the product. This involves increasing the production and distribution of the product to reach a larger market.

10. The tenth step is to maintain the product. This involves providing ongoing support and updates to the product to ensure it remains relevant and useful to users.

11. The eleventh step is to promote the product. This involves using various marketing strategies to increase awareness of the product and attract new users.

12. The twelfth step is to build a community around the product. This involves creating a space where users can share their experiences and provide feedback on the product.

13. The thirteenth step is to analyze the competition. This involves researching other products in the market to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

14. The fourteenth step is to differentiate the product. This involves identifying unique features and benefits that set the product apart from the competition.

15. The fifteenth step is to establish a brand identity. This involves creating a consistent visual and verbal identity for the product that resonates with the target market.

by Locke, but rejected by Hume. If social structure is viewed in this sense as a substance to which attributes inhere and which can be isolated from its attributes, then Firth's argument becomes extremely relevant and meaningful.

But even when social structure is viewed as a meta-physical substance, its attributes could be studied with a view to isolating them and then finding out their inter-relationships. It is pertinent to bear in mind that it is difficult to exhaust the attributes and this is what Firth may be referring to when he writes that, "It is only in a selective sectional way that this can be done." This is essentially the position that is taken in this thesis, i.e., a study of the manifestations of the social structure in the institutions and the inter-articulation of roles. This, in our view, can constitute a legitimate study and a way of looking at social structure.

Some historical antecedents are necessary to be able to appreciate and understand Kalabari social structure. The origin of these people is now shrouded in history, but there is considerable evidence that by the turn of the fourteenth century, they were an actively trading community on the delta of the river Niger, near the Atlantic seaboard.*

*Commenting on the trading capacities of these peoples, Talbot states that, "they are a people of great interest and ability, hard-headed, keen-witted and born traders. Indeed, one of the principal agents here, a

With the development of the slave trade and the subsequent trade in palm oil, this community, which, together with all the communities on the Niger Delta, became the middlemen between European traders and the hinterland producers, grew in importance. There were migrations from other communities--the Ibos, the Ibibios, the Ijaws, etc., and by the turn of the nineteenth century, the Kalabari community had welded the composite cultural backgrounds of the migrants into a peculiarly Kalabari culture distinct from the other communities. During the slave trade, many of the slaves were not sold out but were incorporated into the society. These were the factors that led Dr. K. O. Dike (Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885, p. 31) to use the term city-state for this community. He argues that "the term city-state as applied to the Niger Delta communities embraces not only the settlements on the coast, but also their extensions (by way of trading posts) in the interior. This is in line with the Greek idea of city which means a community of people rather than an area of territory; for although the Delta trading colonies were all outside her political boundaries, they were insolubly bound by strong economic ties. Moreover, city-state is a more appropriate

[European] of world-wide experience, stated that, in his opinion, the Kalabari [a Delta people] could compete on equal terms with Jew or Chinaman" (Amaury Talbot: Tribes of the Niger Delta, p. 9).

designation than tribal state, since the period of migrations disorganized the tribal entities and the slave trade further accentuated the mingling of peoples. In the nineteenth century, therefore, the Delta states were grouped, not by considerations of kinship, but by contiguity and . . . citizenship came increasingly to depend not on descent but on residence." This passage has been quoted at length to indicate the shift in kinship pattern and its importance in the social structure.

An Overview

An essential point of departure is a nuclear family which, together with all the related nuclear families, form the extended family. Even though one may find isolated nuclear families, i.e., husband, wife, and children, these are the exceptions; the rule being the extended family. A number of extended families form the compound, or polo, or more anthropologically, the lineage. The different lineages form the town or ama, as the Kalabaris call it. At each level, the roles of position incumbents are clearly defined, as well as the interrelationships of these roles. Each family has a head, and each compound a chief. There is also a head of the town who is known as the king or the amayanabo (the owner of the town).

Marriage

The nuclear family comes into existence when two

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people of opposite sexes are united in marriage (in whatever way this is defined culturally). A convenient point to begin with would be the marriage system. Ideally there are two systems of marriage--iya and igwa. There seems to be no equivalent in English translations for these. Full marriage and partial marriage are mere approximations that do not do much justice to these concepts as they are used by the Kalabaris. All that can be done, however, is to equate iya with full marriage, and igwa with partial marriage, for the purposes of this thesis.

Coming of age is usually equated with having the wherewithal to maintain a family, and any man who finds himself in such a position would begin to look for a suitable partner, who may be from his own lineage or from an outside lineage. He may, on the other hand, ask his parents to look for a suitable partner for him. In any event, when he finds one, or when his parents do, there ensues an intensive research into the girl's background, her pedigree, her morals, her ability to serve a husband. The information is deemed necessary in order that his parents may determine compatibility. If his parents are satisfied, they formally approach the parents of the girl. The norm specifies that the parents of the girl do not accept immediately, but ask to be given time in order to consider the issue. During this period of consideration, her parents, too, would try to find out the antecedents of the prospective

bridegroom. There is no stipulated time limit, but after a reasonable period, the parents of the bridegroom would again approach the parents of the bride for their decision. If the decision is favorable, the bridegroom is expected to present drinks, clothes, coral beads and oil to the parents of the bride and this formalizes the engagement, or as they call it, olo, which literally means hold. Before, during and after this engagement, libations are usually poured to the ancestors to make sure that the match will be a good one.

After the engagement any of the two systems of marriage could be applied. A person may choose to marry by iya (full marriage) in which case the wife becomes part and parcel of a husband's house or family. On the other hand, he may choose to marry by igwa (partial marriage). In this second form of marriage, the wife is not legally part of the husband's family and has very limited legal rights in his family. For all practical purposes, she remains in her father's house but pays him regular visits. Since, by the first form of marriage, i.e., iya, the wife leaves her house and becomes a part of her husband's house, her children have full legal rights to their father's property and are members of his family. On the other hand, by the second system of marriage, i.e., igwa, even though the children always belong to the father, since this is a strongly patrilineal society, they have very restricted

• The first step in the process of creating a new product is to identify a market need. This is often done through market research, which involves gathering information about potential customers and their needs. Once a market need is identified, the next step is to develop a concept for a product that meets that need. This is often done through brainstorming and prototyping. Once a concept is developed, the next step is to create a business plan. This involves determining the costs of production, the pricing strategy, and the marketing strategy. Once a business plan is created, the next step is to secure funding. This can be done through a variety of methods, including bank loans, venture capital, and crowdfunding. Once funding is secured, the next step is to manufacture the product. This involves sourcing materials, hiring workers, and setting up a production line. Once the product is manufactured, the next step is to distribute it. This can be done through a variety of methods, including retail stores, online marketplaces, and direct sales. Finally, the last step in the process is to promote the product. This involves creating a marketing campaign that reaches potential customers and encourages them to purchase the product.

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• The fifth step in the process of creating a new product is to manufacture the product. This involves sourcing materials, hiring workers, and setting up a production line. Once the product is manufactured, the next step is to distribute it. This can be done through a variety of methods, including retail stores, online marketplaces, and direct sales. Finally, the last step in the process is to promote the product. This involves creating a marketing campaign that reaches potential customers and encourages them to purchase the product.

• The sixth step in the process of creating a new product is to distribute it. This can be done through a variety of methods, including retail stores, online marketplaces, and direct sales. Finally, the last step in the process is to promote the product. This involves creating a marketing campaign that reaches potential customers and encourages them to purchase the product.

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legal rights to his property. Indeed, at the death of their father, their claims to his property depend on the goodwill of other legal children and the brothers and relations of their father. This has an added effect on strengthening the patrilineal system since, in order to claim part of their father's property, children by igwa marriage strongly identify themselves with their father's family, proving their manhood and fidelity there.

The system is much more complicated than this. Even though the kinship pattern is patrilineal, it also has strong matrilineal tendencies to the extent that descent could also be counted on the mother's side, i.e., the mother's father and mother's mother, or even on the father's mother's line. This system of reckoning descent becomes crucial in the chief's family or in the king's family. In this society a woman can never be a chief or king, and this stretches even to the children of women in the ruling line. For example, if A, B, and C are children of a chief and C is a woman, she can never succeed to the throne, nor can her children. In most cases her children, i.e., in her father's family, are known by her name, thus distinguishing them from the male line and precluding them from running for the throne. Thus, if her name is, say, Bene (a typical Kalabari name for women) and her son's name is Gogo and his father's (i.e., her husband's) name is Obu, her son Gogo will be known in his father's family as Obu-ye Gogo

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• The second step in the process of creating a new product is to develop a concept for the product. This involves brainstorming ideas and creating a prototype. The prototype is a small-scale version of the product that is used to test the concept and gather feedback from potential customers. Once the concept is refined, the next step is to create a business plan that outlines the costs and potential revenue of the product. This plan is used to secure funding from investors or lenders. The fourth step is to manufacture the product, which involves sourcing materials and hiring workers. Finally, the product is distributed to retailers or directly to consumers through a sales channel.

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• The fifth step in the process of creating a new product is to distribute the product. This involves finding retailers or direct sales channels to reach the target market. The product is then marketed and sold to consumers.

• The sixth step in the process of creating a new product is to monitor the product's performance in the market. This involves tracking sales, customer feedback, and market trends. If the product is not performing well, adjustments may be made to the product or the marketing strategy.

• The seventh step in the process of creating a new product is to evaluate the overall success of the product. This involves comparing the product's performance to the goals set in the business plan. If the product is successful, it may be expanded into new markets or new products may be developed. If the product is not successful, the reasons for failure are identified and lessons are learned for future product development.

• The eighth step in the process of creating a new product is to protect the intellectual property of the product. This involves filing for patents or trademarks to prevent others from copying the product. This step is crucial for ensuring that the product remains profitable and that the company can recoup its investment.

• The ninth step in the process of creating a new product is to continue to innovate and develop new products. This involves staying up-to-date on market trends and consumer needs, and being open to new ideas and technologies. Continuous innovation is essential for long-term success in a competitive market.

• The tenth step in the process of creating a new product is to build a strong brand identity. This involves creating a unique logo, tagline, and overall brand image that resonates with the target market. A strong brand identity helps to differentiate the product from competitors and builds customer loyalty.

• The eleventh step in the process of creating a new product is to establish a distribution network. This involves finding reliable suppliers and distributors to ensure that the product is available to consumers in a timely and efficient manner. A strong distribution network is essential for the success of any new product.

• The twelfth step in the process of creating a new product is to provide excellent customer service. This involves responding to customer inquiries, addressing complaints, and providing support. Excellent customer service helps to build a positive reputation for the product and encourages repeat purchases.

• The thirteenth step in the process of creating a new product is to stay up-to-date on industry trends and regulations. This involves monitoring changes in technology, consumer behavior, and government regulations. Staying up-to-date helps to ensure that the product remains relevant and compliant with the law.

• The fourteenth step in the process of creating a new product is to build a strong financial foundation. This involves managing the company's finances carefully, including budgeting, accounting, and securing funding. A strong financial foundation is essential for the long-term success of any new product.

• The fifteenth step in the process of creating a new product is to celebrate success and learn from failure. This involves acknowledging the achievements of the team and the success of the product, and learning from any setbacks or challenges. Celebrating success and learning from failure helps to build a resilient and motivated team that is ready to take on new challenges.

(i.e., Gogo, the son of Obu), but in his mother's family he will be known as Bene-ye Gogo (Gogo, the son of Bene). If it is a daughter, she will be known in her father's family as Obu-ta Doku (assuming Doku is her name), and in her mother's family, as Obu-ta Bene. Usually, though, people are known by their father's name, but the fact that they could also be known by their mother's name in her family points up a crucial factor, i.e., that the child is both a member of his father's family as well as his mother's family. He could be consulted in important affairs in his mother's family even though he belongs to his father's family, and on the death of his mother's father, he could, at the goodwill of that family, share in the property. Indeed, on such occasions there is always a token present from the property of his mother's father made to him to indicate that he also belongs to that family.

However, each person belongs to the father's family. This is dramatically demonstrated at the death of a wife who has been married by iya. As long as she lived she belonged to the family of her husband. At death things change. Apart from her husband's immediate family, her father's family will be the first to hear of it. Two deathbeds, ede (as the Kalabaris call it), are prepared--one in her father's house and the other in her husband's house. On the second day after the corpse has been washed and put into a coffin, there begins a whole series of singing and

dancing (the weeping being mainly confined to the first day). On this day, the coffin is brought out from her husband's house into the public where strong men from her father's house will be waiting. A mock battle ensues for the possession of the corpse, during which time the women from her father's family will be singing the usual song, "Meni Fe Bo Ngbe fe-a-o . . . , " which means "He Who Marries the Flesh Does Not Marry the Bones." Victory is always assured for her father's family, who on winning the battle takes the corpse to the bed prepared for it. Her husband's family joins her father's family after the battle and there is more singing and dancing. Burial takes place on the third day, after which there ensues seven days of ceremonies. It is also interesting to note that during the mock battle the wife's mother's family joins with her father's family while her husband's mother's family joins with his father's family. This indicates that, although a person belongs to his father's family, he also, to a lesser degree, belongs to his mother's family.

The Marriage Ceremony

The marriage ceremonies begin with the engagement or olo. When an agreement has been reached between the man's family and the woman's family, he has to give her, as was indicated above, clothes, oil, coral beads and drinks. But this is done in a ceremonial, though limited, manner.

A representative from his father's family, together with women from his father's family, will form a procession, either early in the morning just as the sun is beginning to rise or at dusk when the sun is just going down, with these items to the prospective wife's family, where representatives from her mother's family and her father's family will be waiting. After a short ceremony consisting mainly in singing and dancing, and pouring libation to the ancestors, her father's family is expected to make presents to these "carriers of goodwill." This seals the engagement pact. After the ceremony, the wife-to-be comes regularly to her prospective husband's family, helping in the chores, but strictly forbidden either to eat in his house or to engage in sex with him. Other ceremonies will have to be performed before these and other things can take place.

On the appointed day of marriage, the ceremony follows the pattern of the engagement, but becomes more elaborate in terms of both participants and items. The quantity of oil, usually measured in puncheons, becomes bigger and the clothes become many. The drinks increase only slightly. The ceremony is a whole complicated process, but certain things stand out prominently. A day or more after this main ceremony a feast is prepared in the house of the husband, with him sitting at one end of the table and his wife at the other end. Libation is poured by an elderly member of his family, asking the ancestors, and the heroes, to

bless the marriage. After this, the husband takes the heart of whichever animal is prepared (usually chicken or a cow) and moves across the table to put it into the mouth of his wife. She does the same to him. After the eating and drinking ceremony that is called bibi fe (buying the mouth), the wife is allowed from then on to eat in her husband's house.* At the end of this ceremony, she goes back to her house, i.e., her father's house.

On the evening of this day, members of the husband's family (usually women) go to the wife's family and lead her in a procession to her husband's room. This ceremony is called ayi le kiri or a'i le k'ri, i.e., let me know you, or more correctly, let me find you out. She spends the night with her husband, the whole purpose being for them to engage in sex. The husband is supposed to put a white sheet on his bed. Early the following morning, members of her father's family (always women) would come round to take her back to her father's home. Her pride and the pride of her family depends on her showing the bloodstained white bedsheet, which proclaims her virginity before marriage. A big ceremony follows this in her father's family where there is singing and dancing. Meanwhile, all her

* A brief discussion of Kalabari marriage and the relationship of the bibi-fe ceremony to the Roman Concreatio is provided by Talbot (Southern Nigeria, Vol. III, pp. 438-439).

belongings are carefully packed and in the late afternoon she is led to her husband's family where she resides until death. What has been described here refers to iya marriage. In igwa the ceremonies are considerably curtailed, and the buying of the mouth ceremony may not even be performed, in which case the wife can cook in her husband's house, but cannot eat there. An aspect that is never left out even in igwa marriage is the "knowing" ceremony where the wife spends her first night with her husband. Without this ceremony, the two are not allowed to engage in sexual relations. This is a brief overview of marriage among the Kalabaris.

As could be seen, the whole marriage ceremony is very elaborate and entails a lot of money. This serves as an upper limit to many men marrying more than one wife. The chiefs and the wealthy marry as many as they care to, but the ordinary people content themselves with one wife, at least until they are wealthy enough to go through another ceremony.

What has been described is the traditional pattern of marriage, but there have been several changes, if not in form at least in content. Traditions die hard even under contact situations, and it is interesting that educated men and women still prefer this system as it is a way of showing acquired wealth. The courtship pattern has been the first to change, as now men and women usually first

meet and know themselves before they inform their parents. Also, the "knowing" ceremony is, at times, performed in a token manner or somehow manipulated, that is, if extenuating circumstances are known to be present. Coral beads are no longer items for marriage and in many cases money is used to represent the former traditional items.

Divorce

Divorce among the Kalabaris, until recently, was rare and this has been because of the built-in mechanisms of checks and balances. As was pointed out above, there is an elaborate process before marriage takes place and this eliminates certain problems of compatibility, faithfulness, etc. Again, the in-law system is well developed and powerful, and it is the duty of the wife's parents as well as the man's parents to see that differences are ironed out and marriage goes on smoothly. However, where husband and wife, or wives, interact for a long period of time, there are bound to be frictions and problems incidental to day-to-day living. Such problems do arise. Some of these problems, when they arise, are taken care of by certain cultural usages. If a man wants to have a second wife, he is obligated to tell his first wife about it, or even make her perform the functions of his parents by looking for another wife. When the second wife comes into the family, the husband may give her to his first wife to be trained,

or he may give her to any of his relations to be trained for a brief period. The training period is required to get her adjusted and oriented to the new family in which she is to live for all her life. These processes have helped minimize friction.

But where frictions are no longer manageable, there is recourse to the law courts but even here, the time and money involved in this process also act as a check. However, before a friction really gets out of hand, the parents of both husband and wife would use their influence to settle it at a private level. But cases do get out of hand and find their ways to the courts. In the courts, in divorce cases, the effort is towards settling the case amicably so that husband and wife could live together again. We shall discuss the functioning of the courts in a different section, but for now it is only necessary to mention that they apportion blame very cautiously in divorce suits, and try to get husband and wife together.

If a wife seeks to divorce her husband, and all efforts to reconcile them have failed, she would pack her things and go back to her parents. However, she has to pay back all that her husband has spent on her, including the bridewealth--everything up to the last pin. If the marriage was by iya, the children would belong to the father, but if it is by igwa, even though they continue to go by the name of their father, they have no legal rights and

for all practical purposes they belong to the family of their mother. On the other hand, if a man is divorcing his wife, he cannot claim anything from her with the stipulation always that if the marriage was by iya the children belong to the father, and if by igwa they belong to the mother.

However, it might seem on the surface the husband has the better deal. But in reality it is not so. Considering the tremendous investment a husband, to marry in the traditional pattern, makes on his wife, he is invariably hesitant to let go all this investment. For example, the Kalabaris have an eight-day week and, traditionally, on every eighth day a husband is expected to give presents to his wife or wives. These investments act as security for a good treatment of wives. Marriages last a lifetime and even today, when new idea systems have infiltrated to a large extent into the area, it is commonly believed and could be statistically shown (if one cared to collect statistics) that iya marriages rarely end up in divorce.

Locality Pattern

As must have been clear from the earlier discussion, the locality pattern is essentially patrilocal for iya where the wife moves into the house or compound of the husband. Within this patrilocal pattern it is also unilocal to the extent that a married man is supposed to build a house of

his own, or may be given a separate house by his parents for him and his wife or wives. A man never lives in the house or compound of his wife. However, since the house is a composite group of families who have true or fictional kinship ties, marriage is encouraged within a house if there is no blood relation between them. If any relation can be traced between the two, marriage is strictly forbidden.

On the other hand, in the igwa marriage, the wife invariably stays in her father's home or mother's home, depending on the type of her parents' marriage. She will remain there but be recognized as the man's legitimate wife until the full marriage or iya is performed.

There is another type of marriage that needs mentioning here. It has been referred to in the anthropological literatures as levirate, i.e., the "inheritance" of widows by the dead husband's brothers or sons. When a chief dies, all the wives are remarried by the sons of the dead chief or by his brothers. The process is not as complicated as the original marriage, but what is emphasized here is a symbolic act. In addition to accepting to marry a widow, a son or brother must give a few presents symbolizing the marriage. The property of the deceased chief is also distributed among his children, both sons and daughters, but the greatest bulk goes to the first son, who is supposed to succeed his father. This type of remarriage is only characteristic of wives of chiefs and does not apply to ordinary people.



In the case of ordinary people, if the marriage had been by iya, the woman, on the decease of her husband, remains permanently in his home and is incorporated into the bigger family of the parents of the husband. For all practical purposes, she is debarred from remarriage and this is so for two reasons. First, any person who wants to marry her must pay back all the bridewealth that had been paid on her up to the present and start his own marriage de novo. This acts as a check. Second, and more important, there is strong social disapproval of any remarriage of this type.

Political Organization

The political structure, which may be defined as democratic with potential power concentrated in the hands of a few people, has led many scholars to define it as a city state. Dr. D. K., who applied this term to the Niger Delta, argues that the term city state, as applied to the Niger Delta communities, embraces not only the settlements on the coast, but also the extensions--as has been described above. He goes on to state that "the city states divide broadly into two political groupings--the monarchies and the republics. The former include Bonny (Ibani), New Kalabar (Kalabari), and Wari. . . . (Dike, 1956, p. 31)."

Apart from the monarchy, many explorers and anthropologists have recognized the houses or wari system in this area. Philip Leis (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation,

Northwestern University, 1962), who did his fieldwork among the Western Ijaws, says that "Nembe, Kalabari, Okrika, Bonny, and Opobo contain the so-called houses or wari." This point has also been made by others (Dike, 1956, p. 34; Robin Horton, 1960, p. 8). The whole political organization revolves around the house or compound and the monarchy.

Before understanding the house system, it is important to note some historical antecedents and this ties in with what has been described as the composite nature of the Kalabari community. The Kalabaris, like many of the city states on the Niger Delta, acted as middlemen in the slave trade--buying slaves from the hinterland and selling them to the European merchants anchored on the coast. In this process some of the slaves were not sold out but incorporated into the community. They were given fictional ancestral ties to the house of their owner and from then on became part and parcel of the house. The emphasis was on enculturation, buttressed by this fictional kinship tie rather than on direct ancestry. It was a capital offense to refer to any person as a slave and if a slave is hard working and industrious he could even rise to be the head of a house. In this area where internecine wars were constant and power politics was the rule, achievement and diplomacy became highly valued and sought after. The slave first becomes a useful asset to the chief of the house since he could enlarge the chief's war canoe, help by his productivity



to increase wealth and give the chief a strong position vis-a-vis other chiefs. But his position becomes highly important if, in addition to his industry, he is also diplomatic. One would expect that, given such a situation, each chief would buy as many slaves as possible to increase his power, but in fact these are regulated by the king or Amayanabo.

Given this background, let us look at the functioning of this structure. It is in the juridical aspect that the function becomes clear and the democratic aspect becomes meaningful. If there is a dispute in a house, some elders in the house would attempt to settle it, but any dissatisfied person could appeal to the court of the chief of the house, where the case is examined de novo. If the person is still dissatisfied, he could appeal to the king who would meet in council to try the case de novo. Beyond this point, there is no appeal. This process is essentially democratic and it is an important aspect of the unwritten judicial code of the Kalabaris. But in point of fact, the chief of a house has the power of life and death over his subjects and cases hardly, if at all, pass from his courts to the court of the king. Essentially, then, the king adjudicates in disputes between two houses. In this respect, then, power is concentrated in the hands of the chiefs or the king.

The house or compound is a composite of families

that have true or fictional kinship ties to the ancestors. A compound or house could comprise as many as 4,000 or more people. Ideally, the oldest son of the ruling chief succeeds him on his death, but given the power of politics in this area, influential brothers or even slaves could jockey for the post and even get it. This, once again, indicates the importance of achievement and diplomacy in the lives of the Kalabaris.

Under the chief of the house, there may be some subchiefs, i.e., relations or slaves who have acquired enough wealth and influence to meet the requirements of a chief. The conditions for being a chief include the fitting out of 7 war canoes, 30 puncheons of oil, and most importantly, a recommendation from the chief of the house. These requirements will be followed by certain religious ceremonies. It is important to know that this subchief remains subservient to the main chief and continues to be part and parcel of the house. It is also important to note that, unlike some West African communities, a woman is never made a chief among the Kalabaris. This tradition has come down through the ages and is still rigorously applied.

The king's position is slightly different. There is an accepted royal family and recruitment to the throne is strictly from this family. Here, again, the succession of the oldest son to the father has been more rigorously applied. However, there are instances where a younger son,

or a more powerful brother has ascended the throne, but these are exceptions until quite recently when education has become an important criterion for recruitment. The present ruling monarch--Amachree IX--is much more educated and was recalled from his government service to the throne even though the sons of the last monarch are still living. This points to one of the changing aspects of the political structure. But here we are concerned more with traditional patterns as a base for seeing the changes.

The house or compound is a composite of families and each family is again a composite of people. But to make the picture clearer in order to understand the structure and function of the family, it is necessary to refer back to the family as it is formed. This, as it will be recalled, has been described above.

The Function of the King or Amanyababo

The functions of the ruler or Amanyababo are similar to those of the house chiefs, except that the king performs his functions for the entire community, while the chiefs perform their functions for their own houses. Each chief has jurisdictional rights over his house. Michael Crowder (A Short History of Nigeria, 1962), in discussing the functions of the ruler and chiefs, states: "The head of house has a great deal of authority over his members, in certain cases even being able to settle cases of homicide.

Any interhouse dispute became a matter for the town assembly presided over by the Amanyabo, who also had his own house. The Amanyabo was the initiator of policy. He decided on the conduct of war, and led the battle fleet. He was expected to pay for the conduct of war and, to defray these expenses, the town assembly agree that from time to time he should have a complete monopoly of a particular trade and article (page 69). In a sense, the legislative, the executive, and the judicial aspects are invested in the ruler. There are, however, checks and balances, but we will not go into these here. The crucial question for us, and what is pertinent to this thesis, is to find out whether the religious aspect is also invested in the ruler. This will be taken up in our discussion of religion among the Kalabaris.

Here, then, we find a political structure ranging from the family to the king and with the functions at each level clearly defined. The implications these have for religion will also be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

KALABARI RELIGION

In dealing with Kalabari religion, the political structure as delineated in Chapter I should be borne in mind. There it was shown that the family was an integral part of the "house" or "compound" and its jurisdictional rights are diffuse and merge into the "compound." It was also shown that the compound was distinct from other compounds and has jurisdictional rights of its own but above it was the town ruled by a king who has legislative, executive, and judicial powers. This structure is extended into the religious sphere. Before discussing Kalabari religion in detail, it will be necessary to show this connection between the political structure and the religious structure.

Each family has its own oru or duenji, or what may be termed ancestors. Before drinking or any family celebration libation is poured to these family ancestors, the oldest member of the family (always the man), saying in this process, "wari (house-building) duenji iru-bu" (house ancestors drink wine). But it is interesting to note that there are no cults of these family ancestors nor are there any religious ceremonies connected with them except the simple libation. They function to protect the family but

they have no shrines and no paraphernalia. Above these are the polo-oru, or polo-dueyi, i.e., the ancestors of the house or compound. These have shrines with elaborate paraphernalia and have a cult. There are also distinct ceremonies that are performed to them. And again, above these compound ancestors are the ama (town)-oru or ama-dueyi, i.e., the ancestors or heroes of the town. Here again, the shrines and ceremonies are more elaborate than the compound ancestors. Above these and ascending in order of importance are two other categories. The first is the divine goddess of the town or Kalabari people, called Awomekaso. Her position and functions will be discussed below. At the top of the hierarchy is Tamuno, the supreme God, the creator and the ultimate determiner of the life and course of human beings.

The essential categories for analyzing Kalabari belief system would be teme (spirit or more appropriately soul), dueyi (the dead or ancestors or heroes), oru (the ancestors or deities or heroes), owu (the water spirits) and Tamuno (the creator). However, a convenient point of entry into Kalabari religion would be teme, which would be discussed from the point of view of an individual. Each individual and, for that matter, each natural phenomenon, has a teme or soul and an oju or oju-akpakpa, i.e., body or flesh. The teme provides the motivating force for all human actions, directing the individual through predestined

paths. It is eternal and leaves the body at death. Robin Horton (1960) was quite correct when he used the concept of teme as the convenient entry point into Kalabari religion. The teme has considerable implications for the other categories of the religion.

An important aspect of the teme is fate or predestination and this is derived from the creator or Tamuno. Fate is crucial. Implicit in the concepts of fate and soul is the belief among Kalabaris of continuous creation, i.e., that creation goes on ad infinitum. After its creation a soul makes a speech, what is known among Kalabaris as fie te boye (speech before coming), in which it outlines what its course of life will be, what it will do, whether it will be rich or poor, strong or weak, healthy or sickly, when it will depart from the body into which it was going, etc. Thus each individual follows a clearly predestined path from birth to death. In this case, it would be said of a trader who has made all efforts to have a lucrative trade but yet finds himself daily impoverished, that this was the course of life he has marked out for himself before coming, i.e., fie te boye. Built into this idea is also the idea of reincarnation, not in the sense of going through higher and higher levels of purity and spiritual maturity, but in the sense of choosing a different life-course.

When a person dies, the soul departs or, to put it differently, when a soul departs from an individual, he

dies. The soul, thus liberated, goes back to its creator and may choose an entirely different course of life in its next entry into the world. However, it is in the idea of the soul coming back that there appears an apparent contradiction in Kalabari world view. For in one sense the soul of an ancestor may be thought to have come back as one of the children of his sons or daughters in which case the child will be treated with all respect that was due to the ancestor. He is also invariably named after the ancestor. Yet in another sense, the same ancestor is believed to be in the company of other ancestors protecting and guiding his people and elaborate ceremonies are performed to him. This apparent contradiction can only be accounted for by the dual meaning the Kalabaris give to the soul. On the one hand the Kalabaris view the soul as a concrete identifiable entity, i.e., it is created, it outlines its course of life, it enters a body through the womb and it departs at death. Yet on the other hand it is viewed as a pervasive metaphysical essence. It is here, there and yonder and, like the breeze, it is everywhere. The confusion, therefore, arises as a result of the dual interpretation of the soul, yet if the second interpretation is taken account of, it becomes clear that there is no contradiction between the reincarnated ancestor and the ancestor in the company of other ancestors. This was a point Robin Horton missed when, even though he recognized the pervasive interpretation,

he did not use it as a solution for the contradiction (Robin Horton, 1962).

Before going on to the other two categories of oru and owu which in a sense confound analysis, a point pertinent to the analysis of fate and soul will be touched upon. From the foregoing description it would seem that the Kalabaris approach their world in an extremely fatalistic manner. But this is not entirely so and fate is not as permanent as it seems. It was stated earlier that achievement and diplomacy are highly evaluated and sought after. An individual who lacks any of these two or all of them takes it as fate, as the predestined stipulations for his life-course. But yet he actively seeks to correct them. Through divination and religious sacrifice he could, as they put it, bibi bari (call back mouth, or better still, reformulate his fate). It is interesting to note that most ceremonies for bibi bari are extremely simple. For example, if one has lost several cases in court and people say or a diviner says that it is one's fate to lose cases, one may just take a mouthful of water and, in the process of throwing it out, say, "I reformulate my fate." Or one may take a white fowl and some gin to a diviner who performs a simple ceremony and declares the fate of the man changed.

Connected with fate or fie te boye is the concept of So. So literally means heaven and the seat of Tamuno, the supreme deity. So is an extremely difficult concept

to describe or analyze. In one sense it refers to the creator, the very supreme God, as when the Kalabaris talk of ámá-témé só (the creator of the town) or I teme so (my creator). In another sense it may refer to fate and could naively be taken as synonymous with it, but there is a distinction which is very hard to make in a different language. Ámá témé sō may refer to the fate of the town, the predestined path it will follow or a kind of national character. In this respect, it is not exactly fate but more like the whole atmosphere of the fate. A near example would be the letter of the law as being analytically distinct from the spirit of the law. So in this sense would be the whole complex of fate--the individual incidents, the whole atmosphere and the path of fate, etc. What should be noted here are the levels of abstraction involved--from acts to fate, and from fate to So. So, therefore, is not an act; in some instances it is not even fate; it is a higher order category for which there is no English equivalent.

Robin Horton (1961, p. 205), in trying to delineate So at the level of the soul teme, made it co-terminus with destiny or fate. This is what is implied when he says, "Before a person's spirit is joined to his body, it tells his creator how it will live its life on earth--saying whether it will be powerful or weak, rich or poor, violent or peaceful, fruitful or childless. What is thus spoken is known as *fie te boye*--'speech before coming,' or more briefly as

so--'destiny.'" In his view, then, the contract between the creator and the soul becomes the so. This is true but not all the truth. It would appear that Horton's difficulty here is not his inability to understand the culture. (He has been doing field work among the Kalabaris for over eight years, is married to a girl from the area and speaks the language well.) His difficulty, as I see it, is that of translation and finding categories in European thought to match the concept. In this respect he is not alone, for this is one of the problems of anthropologists, and mine, too. However, considering his English background, one would readily accept that his analysis is very penetrating. In our treatment later of the supreme deity--Tamuno, we shall endeavor to show another aspect of so.

The next categories to be treated in Kalabari belief system are oru and owu. As was touched upon slightly earlier, distinctions are, in some aspects, very hard to make. Oru could refer to ancestors, to terrestrial deities, but again it could refer to the owu-amapu (the water people) when these spirits in the water possess a human being. However, whenever owu is used with ama-pu (people of a town), it refers exclusively to the spirits of the water. Robin Horton managed to escape this problem by categorizing deities into aquarian, terrestrial and celestial without involving himself in semantic problems. To make the analysis understandable, we shall use his distinction with the

understanding that these are approximations.

Ideally, a prior concept to oru is dueyi (i.e., the dead, but in the religious context it refers to the ancestors). These are the souls of once living heads of lineages, who have now become powerful entities protecting the lineages and expecting certain ceremonies in return. They reward those who enhance the norms of the family and its welfare and punish those who spoil the family and bring it to disrepute. They are in intimate contact with the living head of the lineage and to the extent that he acts well, it is with their help, but if he acts badly, they have dissociated themselves from him and will punish him sooner or later. The rise or fall of houses or compounds are mainly accounted for by their intervention. Again, before a new chief is made or in the case of succession, their opinions are sought.

The oru, properly speaking, are the town heroes. There are essential similarities and dissimilarities between the town heroes and the ancestors. Like the ancestors, they once lived in the community of men, but unlike the ancestors, they are always spoken of as coming from outside of the town, either from a non-Kalabari community or from an unknown place. An explanation of the interpretation of the heroes may be found in the heterogeneous composition of the Kalabaris who, as a result of their unique position near the Atlantic seaboard and the unique circumstances

of the trades that developed around that area, developed a culture that is in many respects peculiar to itself. In coming together, these diverse groups must have brought with them ideas of deities in their areas whose origins must have been lost in time. The deities become integrated into the society as heroes with their origins lying in the dim past. Again, unlike the ancestors, the heroes did not die but disappeared either into the sky or into the sea. The heroes are also intimately connected with cultural change and this point will be taken up again in the next chapter. It is only pertinent here to mention that the heroes did not come and accept the existing pattern but rather are believed to have established new customs. Thus, the head of the heroes or the protecting deity of the Kalabaris, Owamekaso, is believed to have introduced trade with Europeans.

Owamekaso is usually referred to as Wanyingi (our mother) or amayana oru (the deity that owns the town). Implicit in the latter is the belief among the Kalabaris that each town has its own major deity or protecting genius, and the strength or weakness and even national character derives from this deity. For example, Owamekaso is viewed as being extremely wise, diplomatic, powerful and progressive, and these are also believed to be the essential characteristics of the Kalabaris.

Some interesting aspects of Owamekaso are given by

Leonard (1906, p. 404), who unfortunately thought this deity was masculine instead of feminine. "In New Calabar, for instance," he writes, "we find that the destinies of these keen and pushing traders are presided over by Awomakaso-- a god who, although he is only symbolized by a plain wooden emblem, is extremely fastidious with regard to the temple in which he resides. For this has to be built in one day, and if by any chance it is not finished within this time, it is pulled down and rebuilt on the fourth day. . . . [he] desires that a bottle--preference being given to rum--should be presented to him on the eight [day], or last day of the week. . . . Yet this exceedingly moderate potentate is satisfied by one annual food offering, and a special festival which is held only every three years." In addition, this deity leads the town in war and protects them in peace.

While the ancestors protect and cater to the needs of the lineage or the house, the heroes perform these functions for the town. Again, as the ancestors are supposed to be in close contact with the current heads of the lineage groups, so are the heroes supposed to be in close contact with the ruler of the town. Concerning the relationship of the king to the protecting deity of the town, Robin Horton (1962, p. 201) reports: "In New Calabar old men are fond of remembering how the favour of Owamekaso made the nineteenth-century King Abbi indestructible when he led the state's canoe fleet into battle." He goes on to

record an interview with one of the chiefs who narrated to him that, "before embarking, the King went into Owamekaso's house to offer 'libation;' and as he went down to the water-side he trembled violently, for 'the power of Owamekaso was with him.' It is also reported of an earlier king that 'the way he was spoiling the town, the heroes could not allow him to live long.'" Tradition has it that this king ruled only for about two years.

From the foregoing description it is clear that the super-natural or super-empirical entities follow closely the social structural categories of these people. The functions and powers of these entities follow the hierarchical order in the society from the individual to the state. This partially bears out our definition of religion in this thesis.* However, its applicability cross-culturally cannot be stated categorically at this stage except in a paper that focusses on comparative religious studies.

The next category for description is that of owu (the water people) or appropriately owu-amapu. Unlike the ancestors and the heroes, the owu-amapu have never lived in the community of men even though they influence the affairs of men. They are believed to be living in the water where they have towns and social structure akin to those of men. They are also believed to pursue interests like

*The definition is elaborated upon in the Appendix.

plays, dances, trade, etc., as men. Their essential differences with men are that they possess super-natural powers and that their towns are bedecked with coral, gold, and the rarest and most expensive of cloths. The delta creeks are supposed to have been created by them and so each creek has its own deity or owu with his retinue. It is more so in these creeks than in the towns that sacrifices are offered to these entities. They are represented at times as human beings, at times as pythons or even as the rainbow. Robin Horton saw this distinction clearly when he stated: "Unlike the ancestors and heroes, the water people are identified not with particular human groups, but with particular tracks of creek, swamp, and mudflat. This contrast is strikingly displayed in the arrangement of shrines; for while the shrines of ancestors and heroes are always in the villages that give them cult, those of the water people are generally perched on raised lumps of mud beside their creek domains" (Horton, 1962, p. 201). But this statement needs a little modification for the water people or owu-amapu are supposed to, as they say it, "enter into the head," or possess a human being--almost invariably women, who will then perform his rites, develop a cult for him, offer sacrifices, dance in his way and be married to him. Deviant behavior among women is always attributed to possession.

Here again we find social structural categories extended to these entities and here, too, we find that

change or invention is attributed to them. This is particularly so in dress patterns, fashions of plays and dances and even curative medicine. This aspect again will be taken up in the section dealing with religious change.

Since the Kalabaris live near the Atlantic seaboard, water transportation is an essential part of their lives. To this extent, then, the importance of the water people looms larger. Before embarking on any aggressive war or peaceful trade, these owu have to be pacified and their aid sought. The ceremonies for these entities may be as simple as pouring libation to them near their shrines, or as complicated as slaughtering a white fowl, dancing and drumming and incantations. Again, as these entities control wealth, their help is sought in trade transactions. There are myths about human beings who have gone down to these owu, made friends with them and have come back with great wealth or the dances of these entities.

The next category, which was touched upon slightly earlier, is Tamuno (the Creator), who is distinct from the ancestors, the heroes and the water people. The creator is usually referred to as a female, a mother. She is thought of as residing in So--the sky, and continues her creation of souls that come down to earth. In Kalabari world view, quite often so and Tamuno are used interchangeably to such an extent that distinctions are difficult. So is also her creation but it has come to mean the moving spirit of her

creations and it is in this sense that the two are used interchangeably. However, even in the minds of the Kalabari, the inherent force or spirit in the creations, So, is distinct from the creator--Tamuno. She is believed to have created everything from mud and continually watches over them and nothing happens in the world without her will.

Here there are no elaborate rituals or even an organized cult. As each individual has a so, so is each individual free to approach his own creator. The offering to one's creator is a small abila fish which the Kalabaris say "any man can easily get." It is neither expensive nor hard to get as these people live close to the ocean. As each individual has a so, so does each compound and each town. They are usually referred to as polo teme so (the creator or spirit of a compound) or ama teme so (the creator or spirit of a town). The sacrifice to these is only a libation of gin and this is as simple and inexpensive as it is easy to do. There are no offerings of fowls, goats or incantations but rather simple prayers. There are no sayings about the power of men over the gods but a submissive acceptance; and the town cannot reject its Tamuno.

Certain points stand out for further discussion as we look back on Kalabari religion. In Kalabari religion, the individual is not a passive agent to do the will of superordinate beings but he is an active participant in all the affairs. Starting from the soul or teme, we saw

that even here, the soul that later animates the body of a human being is not passive but active. It is it that decides and not the creator, which life it would lead on earth and it is only when it has decided that a contract is made between it and its creator. The creator does not pattern the predestined path for it; it is the soul that decides. Again, when the individual finds this contract or fate too stringent, there are institutionalized means of rearranging the contract. However, when the contract is made or revised, the soul or the individual is duty-bound to carry it on. It is in this sense that the Kalabaris, in moments of resignation, say "Tamuno, the creator, never loses a case."

It is in his dealings with the heroes that the active participation of the Kalabari, and on equal footing with them, becomes more apparent. There is a popular Kalabari saying in their dealings with the heroes which brings out this point more vividly. They often say, "Agu nsi owi baka kuma nko-okara siñ in̄ duko opiriba" (i.e., if a god becomes too demanding or too powerful they [the people] will tell him from what tree he was carved). Thus, it is the people who set the upper limit to the power of a god and anything beyond this limit puts him in jeopardy and a possible rejection. There is another related saying that, "oru bala bo fi bo" (he who takes too much care of the gods or pays too much attention to them is a dead man). The

implication of this is that the more one serves a god or deity, the more power that deity has over the individual and so, in order to curtail his power, service to him must be within a prescribed minimum limit. It is interesting to note that these sayings do not refer to the Creator, since she is regarded as a deity quite separate and distinct from the other deities.

Another important point in Kalabari religion is the separation of the deities, both according to their origins and also their functions. This separation goes deeper and fits into the hierarchical structure, becoming more manifest in the ceremonies. The cycle of ceremonies follows a prescribed segmental pattern and does not allow any mixture. The cycle starts with sacrifices and ceremonies to the ancestors, or polo duen, as they are called. In this, each compound or house or polo performs its own separately following its own traditional patterns. These ceremonies must be fully completed with an intervening break before ceremonies to the ama-ar, i.e., the heroes, begin. These heroes will have to be fêted before a ceremony for the head of the heroes, Owamekaso, begins. At the completion of her first ceremonies, a period of masquerades begins; but before they start playing the masquerades, the water-people (oru) must be fêted. At the completion of the masquerades, a second and last ceremony for Owamekaso begins and this must be completed before the whole cycle begins again.

Apart from this structural separation of the deities, there are even more stringent norms in terms of the ceremonies performed for each category. Indeed, quite apart from the fact that, for example, a compound cannot fêter its ancestors when the town is fêting the heroes, even the songs and dances and even dress patterns that accompany one category must not be used during ceremonies for other categories.

A few categories have been utilized to describe Kalabari religion. These by no means constitute the total Kalabari religion, and to try to grasp the whole or describe it will be beyond the limit of this modest thesis. However, what these key categories have helped us do is to pinpoint certain significant aspects of the religion of these peoples.

There have been, over the years, some changes in this religion, and this aspect will be taken up in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

CHANGE IN KALABARI RELIGION

The problems of analyzing change have for long been realized in the fields of Sociology and Anthropology. Arguments against such analysis have largely centered around the lack of a highly structured, logically consistent theory of change. Indeed, the apologetic attitude of social scientists in this area led Wilbert Moore (A Reconsideration of Theories of Social Change, A.S.R., Vol. 25, Dec., 1960) to state that this attitude is unwarranted. "The mention of 'theory of social change,'" he writes, "will make most social scientists appear defensive, furtive, guilt-ridden, or frightened." But he further states that "the several social scientific disciplines, and notably economics and sociology, do provide some fairly high-level, empirically-based, and interdependent propositions concerning social change."

The poor fit to data of sweeping evolutionary or cyclical doctrines of social change makes the position of the structural-functionalists more crucial to the extent that they attempt to demonstrate empirically the functional interdependence of structural elements. Their preoccupation with structure and function biases their approach in

the direction of statics and conservatism, limiting it to deal with processes of persistence and what may be called boundary maintenance. Others, and particularly American sociologists, even though they admit of the lack of a well-developed theory of change, do maintain that complex societies like the United States are dynamic and ever-changing. This essentially ideological position has been accepted even by ordinary people who often talk of a fast-changing American society. The emphasis here, in contradistinction to the position of the structural-functionalists, is on change.

Since the theory of change will be taken up in the last chapter, it only needs to be mentioned here that the truth may lie between these two positions--that static and dynamic approaches are complimentary. For to analyze change, the social scientist has to answer questions like, change from what? In what direction? How much change? In answer to these questions, a base-line must be found from which the direction, degree, etc., of change will be studied and analyzed. Thus, statics provides the logical antecedent to the study of change. Again, a static approach cannot be made an end in and of itself since forces both internal and external continually impinge on the society. To state that the society, any time there is an imbalance, struggles to maintain the status quo ante, is theoretically untenable since it attempts to hold time constant (a crucial variable),

and also loses sight of qualitative differences between the status quo and the status quo ante.* The position that will be taken here, therefore, is to indicate both the static and dynamic processes and how they function in the religious sphere of the Kalabari people.

Changes could be viewed as resulting from internal sources--the gods--and from external sources--the influence of other communities outside the Kalabaris and of Europeans. These three dimensions of the sources of change are intimately related, and it is for analytical purposes that they are separated.

The core of the religious system, which was described as the categories of the super-empirical world, has remained largely intact. What have changed are the related rituals and the degree of commitment. As was indicated above, the gods, particularly the oru, or heroes, are the initiators of internal change. When a hero is integrated into the system, he or she introduces new items and rituals. The introduction of trade with Europeans, as was explained above, was attributed to Owamekaso, the head of the heroes. Association of a change element with the gods makes its

* Status quo ante is used here in a peculiar sense. The level before the system experiences any disturbances is called the status quo. But if a new element is introduced and the society reverts back to this former position, then this second status quo is called the status quo ante to indicate that there had been an intervening element.

acceptance highly probable, but full acceptance depends on its fit with existing patterns of culture. For example, when a god, Okpolodo, introduced head-hunting, this was thought to be against Kalabari practice, but the power of this god in the sea precluded his total rejection. Through ritual ceremonies, the god was invited to a court session where the case was argued out. A compromise arrangement was made whereby, instead of human beings, bulls will be sacrificed. This, in addition to showing the processes of acceptance or rejection of new cultural items, also indicates the active participation of these peoples in the decision-making processes of their religious life.

These changes are hard to document but a better insight into internal changes may be gained from analyzing certain conflict situations. A process of role differentiation in a hierarchical categorization of entities cannot avoid conflict. An ancestor may seek the interest of the lineage at the expense and to the detriment of the society. Or a hero may seek too much power, thereby creating an imbalance in the power structure. In such situations (and they do occur), there may be a reemphasis of societal goals and power, over and above segmental goals and power, or it may lead to curtailing the powers of these segmental entities. There is a tendency towards maintaining the status quo. But this status quo ante, in our point of view, is a change situation since the intervening situation has created

new elements that the society has to grapple with. Rejection of the elements is not important; what is meaningful in an analysis of change is the orientational differential that has been created.

The next category for analysis of change is the foreign religious practices other than European. With the disintegration of the highly centralized political structure consequent on European inroads, with the introduction of formal education and other forms of trade and government, the individual who hitherto had been tied to the chief or king now finds himself in a position where he has to fend for himself and his immediate family. Since success is highly evaluated but since communal rituals have become gradually difficult as people sojourn from their town for longer periods to earn their livelihood, the individual has tended to seek the aid of foreign gods. In this process, Ibo gods, Ibibio gods and even Cameroon gods have recently been introduced. These gods have developed cults for themselves that essentially cut across the original categories and their members are recruited irrespective of lineage. The important thing is their potency in providing success. Two illustrations may make this point clearer. The Ibo Thunder God (Kamalu) gained considerable currency and acceptance among the Kalabaris. They call it so alagba (the gun of the sky). It serves to protect its adherents from thunder and also to punish others. In

quarrels and disputes, this god is invoked to punish the guilty person. However, since its efficacy is hard to demonstrate, it has not gained great support as it did before. On the other hand, since thunder is linked to so, an aspect of the Supreme Tamuno, it is easily reinterpreted into the fate of the individual. The second illustration is the cult of abassima, a non-Kalabari word which is a syncretism of Ibibio and Cameroon religious aspects. This god protects its adherents and gives them success in their trade or other engagements. The relation of this cult to success-goal guaranteed its acceptance, not in the total society, but in sections that again cross-cut lineage patterns. Since the fluidity of the social milieu makes it advantageous for new ideas to thrive (even though for brief periods), and the newer the idea, the better it is thought to be, many new ideas have been introduced.

This fluid situation may give the impression of extreme instability where even the core religious practices may crumble. But the core has stood the test. It is interesting to note that when religious ideas are introduced, their adherents solicit the help of the existing gods not only to allow these new ideas to stay but also to make them powerful. There is thus an implicit and even explicit acceptance of the superiority of these older gods. But why these older gods are not approached before the new ones are used may be found in the changing structure where the

individual and his immediate family rather than the collectivity is becoming more meaningful. A true but not twisted age-old saying of the Kalabaris is illustrative of this change. It had always been a valid and self-evident truth that "ya ma ibi, ibu kunu" (let my town be good and prosperous and it will flow to me). The younger generation are often fond of putting it the other way--"ibu ibi, ya ma kunu" (let me be good and prosperous and it will flow to my town). This verbal twist is significant of the changes taking place.

But with all these, the significant changes have been in the direction of lack of active participation of the people. This lack of participation and intensive commitment to the traditional deities have resulted in the desuetude of some of these gods who only become partially alive in crisis situations. This is important because, as a result, the younger generation is becoming less and less knowledgeable in the gods and the rituals connected with them and this leads to misinterpretations and consequently to syncreticism. An example is the growing simplicity of the rituals connected with the worship of the ancestors which are not only stripped to their bare essentials of merely pouring libation but have also incorporated some Christian ideas of collecting money and kneeling down to supplicate them. Kneeling has not been a way of approaching the gods, who in many ways are regarded as equals.

This has happened both as a result of ignorance of the former patterns of worship and the adoption of Christian patterns in traditional worship.

An important source of change has been the contact with European culture. Even here, too, the extent of change should not be overemphasized. Robin Horton (1960) was quite correct when he states that, "as a system of explanation and control of the universe it [Kalabari religion] is constantly drawn upon even by many of those who have had contact at secondary school with a very different world-view" (p. 71). What one can draw from this, considering the total social system, is that other aspects including the political, social and economic are more susceptible to change than the religious sphere. The reasons for this we do not hope to go into here but the point needs notice.

European influence on the Kalabaris has been felt for more than four hundred years. There were contacts first with the Portuguese and then the French and mainly British, who, by and large, were more interested in trading with these peoples of the Niger Delta than influencing their world-view. But even then, they have had indirect influences on the religion, not on the world-view as such, but on the ritual. However, one way in which they have influenced the world-view (indirectly, though) is that the owu or water people are supposed to be white and also slimy and slippery to such an extent that no human being can hold them firm.

Christianity has been more important in bringing about change than any other source. By Christianity is meant not only the doctrinal and theological aspects of Christianity but also the whole complex of what has come to be known as the "civilizing mission." In this complex, education and the whole western culture are brought to bear. The lack of distinction even in the minds of missionaries between Christianity and western culture has had great implications for change among the Kalabari who think, and rightly so, considering the emphasis of the missionaries, that to be educated is to be christianized. With the political take-over by the British and the consequent demand to fill governmental posts, education became a means to an end--or in the Kalabari view, a means to success. Since the first schools were established by Christians--the first among the Kalabaris dating back to the last decade of the nineteenth century--there gradually appeared generational differences in the world view. This was deliberately aided and strongly abetted by the missionaries who view the religion of the people (if they view it as religion at all) as the work of the Devil that should be abhorred and rejected. Again, the Supreme Creator of the Kalabaris was easily translated into the Christian God but with the important difference that, while the soul actively participates in the decision about its life-course with the Creator, the Christian God makes all the decisions and has to be supplicated daily.

Again Christian festivals of Good Friday, Easter, Harvest and Christmas, and all the paraphernalia of Christian worship, replaced in many ways the traditional practices among the converted. As the educated peoples increase, the number of converts also increase, and these people, in addition to rejecting the traditional religion, also become less knowledgeable in them and when, for some reasons they go back to the traditional forms, become ambivalent and try to introduce changes that have Christian undertones. However, the battle for the two faiths existing side by side still goes on, as well as changes in both.

An essential aspect of change has been the re-interpretation of Christian doctrines with an African or a Kalabari bias. Success is stressed in this society and Christianity, though it provides education and, therefore, jobs, does not meet the day-to-day demands of the people. A persistent question among converts is, "why have the miracles of Christ's time not occurred in present day life?" It may be argued that the existence of the two faiths and the early socialization of the individual in one rather than the other make it difficult even for the convert to make the total emotional commitment in order to get what he wants or for miracles to occur. He remains a marginal man. This has produced extremist religious groups, known as "prayer bands" or, as they are called, teke wari (house of prayer), who act more or less like fortune tellers but

use Christian modes of worship. Passages from the Bible are used as effective means of casting out evil spirits and holy water is used to cure illness. In addition to praying to the Christian God and Christ, these peoples also pray that the ancestors and heroes may bless the town or individuals. Here we find an extreme case of syncretism operating. Some of these groups, though, have carried their Christian zeal to iconoclastic proportions, as was reported as far back as 1923. Such groups have not only brought about the resuscitation of traditional religious patterns but have had the full weight of the society on them to the extent of disbanding their followers. Strictly, then, these groups act within societal limits and norms.

From the foregoing analysis, it will be clear that what has happened is that there have been accretions but the essential core of the Kalabari religion has not changed significantly. These conclusions are tentative until an intensive field work has been carried out. But if we accept the statement of Robin Horton, who has been doing field work there for many years, as true (the statement quoted on page 51), then our analysis is not far from correct.

The changes that have been described have their ramification in other institutions but these can be fully elicited from a field work. What has been done here is to provide general guidelines for further work.

CHAPTER IV

ACCULTURATION AND CULTURAL CHANGE: SOME COMMENTS

Anthropologists as well as sociologists have for long been plagued with the problem of the analysis of change. It was the recognition of problems inherent in the analysis of the processes of change that led Talcott Parsons to state that, "a general theory of the processes of change in social systems is not possible in the present state of knowledge" (The Social System, p. 486) and also Radcliff-Brown to distinguish "change within the structure" which, in his view, "does not affect the structural form of the society" (A Natural Science of Society, 1948, p. 87). On the other hand, Riecken and Homans insist that, "Social change is the most constant aspect of group existence" (Handbook of Social Psychology, Lindzey, p. 825). Today, most scholars in these two fields would agree on the reality of change and even the need for its study as a legitimate field. But there remains essential differences in the conceptualization of change and particularly the dynamics of it.

Even though Parsons had changed his position since and now studies change, his statement remains essentially true to the extent that the present state of knowledge is still highly inadequate to cope with the analysis of

processes or dynamics. Almost all the studies of change only attempt to analyze process inferentially by studying static structures at different time levels and sifting out the changes that have occurred. With the lack of available knowledge on processes, this approach constitutes a good and legitimate way of studying change but it should always be made clear that the processes are arrived at only by inference.

Acculturation as a useful concept has come to stay in the anthropological and even sociological literature even though scholars differ as to its precise definition. With essential modifications, the Redfield-Linton-Herskovits definition--"Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (1936)--has largely been accepted. The questions Beals (Anthropology Today, Kroeber, p. 626) raised--"what is meant by continuous first-hand contact? What is meant by groups of individuals? The relation of acculturation to the concepts of cultural change and diffusion. What is the relation between acculturation and assimilation? Is acculturation a process or a condition?"--even though pertinent, will not be gone into here. But rather an aspect explicit in the definition and related to cultural change which has not largely been taken into account will be treated.

In the literature dealing with acculturation and change a limitation is usually set on the "subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns." Most studies deal with the acceptance of cultural items as a situation of change or acculturation and treat rejection as not a situation of change. Herskovits states that, "if rejected, it [the new cultural element] of course disappears" (R. Linton, The Science of Man in the World Crisis, 1945, pp. 143-170). This position is theoretically limiting. Theoretically, it will be maintained that any contact situation is a change situation whether it is between the old elements and a re-combination of these to produce a new element and/or external elements.

Let us assume, for purposes of demonstration, that a particular culture A has ten elements (a.....j); and a new element R is introduced. If R is accepted, then, according to traditional argument, that is a change situation, but if not accepted, it is not; it disappears. This position is not very acceptable. In rejecting element R, the culture goes through a series of processes before it finally decides to reject it and through these processes R enters the world view of the culture; it becomes recognized as a potential threat to the culture or a bad fit and it provides, therefore, a measuring rod. To the extent that culture A is made aware of the presence of element R, it has introduced a change.

An analogy from physiology (noting the modifications in its application to culture) may be more instructive. When a small-pox germ, as a foreign element, enters the body, the functioning elements in the body appraise it and, finding it inimical to its system, fight it. When it is expelled, there ensues a restructuring in the body whereby the body becomes immune from such attacks. Here we see an internal restructuring of the body and, therefore, a change. It could be argued, and indeed, Radcliff-Brown's position is not dissimilar to this, that the human being as such has not changed and, therefore, the structural form is not affected. The emphasis on the human structure leads to a lack of recognition of the dynamic inner changes which are even more crucial to the proper functioning of the body.

Another related aspect is the almost exclusive study of influences of one culture on another without a consideration of the reciprocal aspect of acculturation and change. Even though one may state, as Malinowski (The Dynamics of Culture Change, p. 15) in studying cultural change in Africa that, "the fact that it is the result of an impact of a higher, active culture upon a simpler, more passive one," being "higher" or "active" does not preclude a culture from being affected or, in this case, the carriers of the foreign culture. Malinowski's labelling of culture is certainly open to debate but it is outside the limits of this thesis. We would agree with Thurnwald (1938, pp.

179-180) that the contact situation sets on a chain reaction. In Africa, for example, studies should be made of how, say, missionaries have changed as a result of this contact with African cultures and how these changes have influenced subsequent changes they have introduced. Such studies are needed to give a true and better picture of acculturation and change.

Unfortunately, this thesis has not taken up these issues because of the limited nature of the study which is more descriptive than analytic. Rather this study has adopted Dr. Mair's zero point of change, not in the sense of reconstructing the past, but in trying to isolate the traditional pattern from the changes that have occurred. Reconstructions of the histories of cultures where there are none or few written documents is an extremely difficult task, but yet it could be done with extreme care and caution. However, for the anthropologist, an isolation of the traditional patterns could least expensively and perhaps efficiently serve as the zero point from which to analyze change.

This thesis has tried to set the ground and made tentative conclusions that can only await a field trip for more definitive conclusions.

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APPENDIX

THEORY OF RELIGION: A REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

Students of religion or belief systems (and we have throughout this thesis used religion and belief systems interchangeably) have unfortunately inherited a number of concepts whose applicability is not only limited but also imposes a formidable handicap on one who seeks to understand the nature and functioning religious beliefs. This is particularly true in the study of African religious systems. The use of preconceived categories of analysis may be useful tools for the anthropologist in understanding belief systems that he is in many respects unfamiliar with and help him in systematizing in an understandable and inter-related manner these very beliefs. But whether they help in peering through the veneer to get to the core of the beliefs is another issue. Some of these concepts have diverted attention from the crucial core of belief systems to the mere fitting of elements into categories. Professor Herskovits (1961) recognized this problem when he stated: "Those of us who have made depth studies of African religion have found that one of our most difficult tasks has been to penetrate the layer of popular terminology and reach to essential meaning." Again, Emile Durkheim, footnoting

Tylor's use of the word savage, states that, "this is the word used by Tylor. It has the inconvenience of seeming to imply that men, in the proper sense of the term, existed before there was a civilization . . . that of primitive which we prefer to use, lacking a better, is . . . far from satisfactory" (Durkheim, 1st Collier Edition, 1961, p. 66, footnote). The difficulty, though, is not with the concept as with the way it is used. It could be of scientific utility if we delineate it within the framework of the concept using components that are of a religious order. The hesitancy in using the concept derives from the attempt to lump some religious systems regardless of their structure and function into this category and the unwillingness to compare all religious systems on the continuum we shall postulate.

Since Edward Tylor (1873) delineated his conception of "primitive" religion, seeing it as being rooted in animism, there has been increasing anthropological interest in this area. This is evidenced by these selected titles: Paul Radin, Primitive Religion: Its Nature and Origin (1937); R. H. Lowie, Primitive Religion (rev. ed. 1948); W. W. Howells, The Heathens: Primitive Man and His Religions (1948). In this dichotomization of religious systems into "primitive" and "civilized," African religious belief systems have often been put at the primitive end of the continuum. To argue that this is a Euroamerican bias, as Herskovits does



(Herskovits, 1961), is to becloud the issue of the scientific validity and utility of these concepts. It is our contention that belief systems can scientifically be placed in a continuum of primitiveness and civilizedness if the variables used are religious in nature. Variables like the sophistication of the theology, the complexity of the philosophical underpinnings of the belief systems, the degree of interrelatedness of religious systems with other aspects of the culture would be crucial in determining whether a religion is primitive or civilized. The problems of what categories of analysis that can be used in measuring degrees of sophistication, complexity or interrelatedness are not entirely overlooked. Until better and more useful categories of measurement are available, we would advocate the use of "levels of abstraction" in the belief system to measure the sophistication of the theology, the logical rationalization of the beliefs to measure the philosophical complexity, and the proportion of the sacred vis-a-vis the secular in measuring interrelatedness. It is hoped that such a method will be useful in fitting religious systems along a continuum and help generate hypotheses that could lead to the formulation of an acceptable theory of religion.

Again, the evolutionary bias implicit in this dichotomy is not borne out by the facts, i.e., if we accept cultural evolution as the continuous growth of a culture from simple to complex forms and from homogeneous to

heterogeneous qualities (Winick, 1958). In this connection, the observation of Goode (J. Goode, 1955) that "the interweaving of belief, myth, and dogma among the Murngin is as far-ranging and intricate as that of most civilized religions . . . doubtless, the rituals of Dahomey are more complex than most," is particularly pertinent. Goode went further to propose the utilization of an acceptable typology of religious systems which, however, would not enable us to generalize until "we have identified the variables which at different values create different types" (p. 457). This in a sense is similar to our proposal in utilizing the continuum with the application of religious variables.

Before going into other concepts like magic, spirits, sorcery and witchcraft, etc., which have for long plagued anthropological research and have prevented penetration into the crucial core of belief systems, it will be necessary to discuss briefly the nature and growth of the studies of the so-called primitive religions.

A convenient point of departure would be the animistic theories of Tylor. Offering as a "minimum definition of religion," the belief in "spiritual beings" to which he applied the term animism* which, in his view, "characterizes

*This concept is not original with Tylor but had earlier been utilized by Stahl in his phlogiston-theory (Stahl, Theory of True Medicine, 1737). It was used in the scientific endeavor of identifying vital principle and soul.

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tribes very low in the scale of humanity, and hence ascends deeply modified in its transmission, but from first to last preserving an unbroken continuity, into the midst of high modern culture" (Tylor, 1873), Tylor essentially postulated an evolutionary sequence. The Tylorian thesis put forward in his monumental work can only be briefly stated. The essential thesis of Tylor is that religion began when primitive man in his sleep realized the other self, i.e., the double life which wanders around doing things. In its wanderings in dream, this other self engages in activities with other selves who may be at some distance in space from the primitive. Due to the low mentality of the primitive, imputed to him by Tylor, a recurrence of this phenomenon prepares the grounds for him to objectify this other self since, like an infant, he could not differentiate between the animate and the inanimate.

Upon this base, then, Tylor built his theory of ancestor worship which by its very nature is posterior to the doctrine of the other self or soul. Since the soul comes back to the primitive when he awakens, the body encastes it and restricts its free mobility. Thus when the body dies, the soul is set free and becomes eternally mobile and active. In time, as Durkheim notes, a population of souls is formed whose help the primitive then solicits since these beings now possess the power to aid or injure. Tylor arrived then at the conclusion that the first

paraphernalia of religious observances were offerings, prayers, sacrifices. Since it was death that transformed the soul into a free and potent entity which has to be conciliated by prayer and supplication and sacrifice, it is to the dead, the souls of ancestors that these are offered. Thus, the first cult was the cult of the ancestors.

Tylor has been severely criticized by many scholars including Durkheim, Paul Radin, Robert Lowie, Melville Herskovits, and to take up the issue will be to duplicate their works. However, an aspect of the Tylorian thesis is particularly pertinent here as it underscores our contention. The low and infantile mentality imputed to the primitive is essentially contradicted by the very analysis of Tylor. It should be pointed out that when we move into the realm of religion, the entities involved confound empirical analysis since questionnaires cannot be administered to spirits and we have to rely on the behavioral manifestations of believers as to the presence or absence, potency or impotency of these entities. If this is granted, then we are faced with the logical deductions of these entities to determine the mentality level of the believers. To grant the primitive, as Tylor does, the ability to arrive at ancestor worship from the other self in dream through a complex and logically valid inductive process is to invest him with a mentality that, in all its essentials, is not infantile but mature--a contradiction Tylor did not notice.

All we are saying is that the mentality level attributed to the primitive by Tylor is not adequate.

Since Tylor was dealing with cultures which, in his view, were not as technologically advanced as other cultures, this sophisticated inductive reasoning is erroneously utilized to demonstrate the low infantile mentality of the primitive and to provide the logical grounds for his animistic theory. This logical error is due to not applying the religious categories of analysis as we have delineated but by utilizing other cultural categories that are not, if only tangentially, related to religion. This same error led Lévy-Bruhl to imputing his famous mystical thinking to primitives as opposed to scientific thinking of the civilized. When we take up Lévy-Bruhl later on, it will be our burden to disagree with the logical grounds of his thesis.

The naturistic theory of Max Müller is, in its essentials, different from the animistic theory of Tylor but both of them agree on the mentality of the primitive. To impute a low level of mentality to the primitive and to analyze his reasoning on this ground results in a false logical deduction, as will presently be indicated. But the thesis of Müller will first be briefly stated in order to have a clearer perspective. Positing a perception theory of religion, Müller states that "religion if it is to hold its place as a legitimate element of our consciousness, must,

like all other knowledge, begin with sensuous experience" (Max Müller, p. 114). The categories for perception are rooted in reality and constitute systems of ideas and practices.

For Müller, the origin of religious ideas is rooted in nature, the features of which were objectified in deities. For him, then, "at first sight nothing seemed less natural than nature. Nature was the greatest surprise, a terror, a marvel, a standing miracle, and it was only on account of their permanence, constancy, and regular recurrence that certain features of that standing miracle were called natural, in the sense of foreseen, common, intelligible. . . . It was that vast domain of surprise, of terror, of marvel, of miracle, the unknown, as distinguished from the known, or . . . the infinite as distinct from the finite, which supplied from the earliest times the impulse to religious thought and language" (Max Müller, 1890, pp. 119-120). But in time, through a linguistic error, the categories of thought and language were transformed from merely modes of expressing these natural phenomena into active forces capable of influencing the lives of men. The metaphors for expressing these phenomena were taken literally. This error, in Müller's view, was inevitable since science, which only could have corrected the primitive's thinking, did not yet exist. Thus, the first gods were mountains, rivers, trees, rocks--these natural phenomena.



However, this linguistic error leading to the objectification of natural phenomena is logically posterior to linguistic categories in the culture for good and bad, reward and punishment, sacrifice and sacrilege. These antecedent categories must be present before the objectified entities are invested with them. The antecedent presence of these categories in the culture was noticed by Durkheim even though his essentially metaphysical postulate of society is not totally acceptable. The contention here is that the objectification of these entities can only be an extension of cultural norms and a means of providing extra-empirical sources of sanctions for these norms. The presence of sanctions for roles presupposes the existence of these roles and it is when these sanctions cannot be effectively applied by physical or empirical means that extra-empirical sources are sought. It is here that the Durkheimian thesis that religion ultimately derives from society becomes particularly applicable since it is able to see religion as an extension of society.

These two, Tylor and Müller, concerned themselves with the origin of religion and religious experiences but today most anthropologists do not concern themselves with origins. Indeed, as Godfrey Lienhardt noted (Shapiro, 1960, p. 310), "there is no evidence for any theory of an origin of religion in time or place." However, to complete the argument on the lack of logical reasoning of the primitive,

it is but necessary to discuss briefly Lévy-Bruhl's "mystical" and "rational" thinking--the former applicable to primitives and the latter applicable to civilized people. This dichotomy is based on a false premise and a wrong notion of science itself. Lévy-Bruhl states that "the entire mental habit which rules out abstract thought and reasoning . . . seems to be met with in a large number of uncivilized communities, and constitutes a characteristic and essential trait of primitive mentality" (Primitive Mentality, 1923, p. 29). One of the reasons he gives for the prevalence of this among primitives was that "the primitive, whether he be an African or any other, never troubles to inquire into causal connections which are not self-evident, but straightway refers them to a mystic power" (Ibid., p. 36)--that is their indifference to secondary causes.

The gap which Lévy-Bruhl saw between "mystical thinking" and "rational thinking" had earlier been fully developed in his "Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures," 1910, and was a reaction against what he called the 19th Century "Ecole anglaise." The influence of the positivists is particularly noticeable in this aspect of Lévy-Bruhl's thinking. For the positivists, the scientist is one who has cleared his mind of preconceived hypotheses and beliefs--like a tabula rasa--in observable entities and has left the mind open to the inflow of sensory data. From this data he extracts variations and interrelations to arrive at general statements of natural law which could

then be utilized to predict.

But if prediction is the only concern of science, then Lévy-Bruhl's analysis may carry some weight. However, this essential error of attributing to science the sole concern with prediction was corrected by Durkheim even though Durkheim himself did not follow it through because of his preoccupation with collective representations. He did point out that science was not only concerned with prediction but also with explanation and understanding and that what Lévy-Bruhl calls "mystical thinking" is also characteristic of theoretical thinking in science (Durkheim, 1960). In order to have a clearer picture of science, it will be necessary to look at the nature and growth of scientific theory.

The development of models is an essential aspect of the nature and growth of science. After their development for the understanding of particular phenomena, these models are modified for an understanding of second order phenomena. This process continues on several levels and, as the scientist goes up these levels, fewer categories applicable to the description of observable reality apply. This ascent into levels of abstractness is as a result of one of the basic functions of explanation, i.e., that of unifying diversity in order to explain them.

Following Robin Horton (1962) who relies heavily on Harré's An Introduction to the Logic of the Sciences

(1961), we shall take the Rutherford-Bohr Atom as a concrete example of the nature and growth of science and its concern with prediction as well as with explanation. Here the problem of the passage of fast-travelling small particles through sheets of metal foil led to the development of models using the planetary system and using aspects of it for further models until the abstractions at the top differ greatly from observable reality. In accepting this proposition that science proceeds through levels of abstraction to provide prediction as well as explanation, the essential thesis of Lévy-Bruhl becomes unacceptable and, as we indicated, the religious system of the Kalabaris progresses through abstraction in order to explain.

The argument so far has been concerned with the inadequacy of the concept "primitive" as it has been applied in treating religious systems. To be scientifically useful, the categories for delineating the concept should be religious in nature, as has been stated above, and should not be applied to religious systems a priori.

When we move from the logical grounds for the systematic study of religious systems on a continuum to the area of African religious systems, the concepts for analysis confound the researcher. Concepts like "pagan," "animistic," "superstition," "magic," "sorcery," "witchcraft" have been used quite often without thorough delineation. Arguing that missionaries "whose objectivity, in the nature

of the case, has not been untouched by prior commitment to a position" (Herskovits, 1961), and who have for long studied African religious systems, consistently using the misleading concept "superstition," Herskovits goes on to state that "where terms generally current are not of this derogatory nature, they tend to be ethnocentric, as for example, the words 'witch-doctor,' 'sorcerer,' both having fairly precise European values, but having no valid parallel in their application to African approaches to the supernatural." Our concern is not with European values, unlike Herskovits, but with the implications of such concepts in empirical research.

In this connection it will be necessary to take an example to illustrate the point. The distinction that is usually made between magic and religion becomes blurred and inhibits the analysis of some religious systems. Durkheim makes this distinction by stating that "magic takes a sort of professional pleasure in profaning holy things; in its rites, it performs the contrary of religious ceremony" (Durkheim, 1960, p. 58). Malinowski follows essentially the same pattern when he distinguishes it from religion, stating as he did, that "the definition of magic . . . when in order to distinguish it from religion we described it as a body of purely practical acts, performed as a means to an end" (Malinowski, 1948, p. 70). Making it more specific, Ottenberg writes that, "belief in a nonspiritual

supernatural force, magic, is an important part of religion in many African societies. Magic may be used to promote good or to promote evil: to help and to cure, or to harm" (Ottenberg, 1960, p. 63). But the problem becomes difficult when we look at specific religious practices. For example, the white chalk that is used in religious rituals is also, during the ritual, used in painting the forehead of the devotee and is supposed to bring him good luck or protect him from harm. In this sense it has a utilitarian value and, in the views of Malinowski and Ottenberg, it would be magic. But it could also be viewed as part and parcel of the ritual ceremony and in this case the distinction between magic and religion becomes untenable. This is particularly true of the religious system we have analyzed.

Again, Lessa and Vogt (Reader in Comparative Religion, 1958), in their introduction to Magic, Witchcraft, and Divination (Ch. 6), attempt a distinction that "religion is supplicative; by ritual it conciliates personal powers in order to request their favors. Magic is manipulative; it acts ritually on impersonal powers in order automatically to make use of them" (p. 245). They had earlier stated that, "while magic and religion have many mutual resemblances . . . they are basically quite different" (p. 245). This difference they saw in "conciliation" and "manipulation." It could readily be admitted that in scientific analysis it is necessary to abstract from concrete behavior



or objects in order to classify and generalize but the issue here is whether this particular abstraction can enable us to distinguish between magic and religion. Even when abstracted from concrete behavior, these concepts tell us nothing about why one is religion and the other magic, for to say that one is religion because it conciliates and the other magic because it manipulates would be begging the question.

Leaving the higher order categories for the lower order categories--concrete behavior patterns, the problem becomes more difficult to the extent that behavior patterns manifested in a "religious" ritual could also be manifested in a "magical" ritual. Thus, the discrete concrete acts do not tell us much about religion and magic and so we have to go back to the higher order categories--conciliation and manipulation. Here, too, the distinction cannot be held for long. The two concepts are not mutually exclusive but complimentary and, if so, then they cannot be used to distinguish two phenomena. Conciliation also means manipulation since by conciliating we are also manipulating the sentiments for our own purposes. A devotee who conciliates a god or a group of gods is by the same token attempting to manipulate the sentiments of this god or gods. On the other hand, manipulating the supernatural presupposes conciliation by creating a favorable atmosphere for the supernatural to act.

The only acceptable distinction would be between religion and black magic (or this may rightly be called magic). To make the distinction, it is necessary to invoke social norms and sanctions for one (religion) conforms to the norms of a society while magic (black magic) does not and is accompanied, if practiced, by social sanctions. This distinction is necessary because it ties the two to society and to social usages (to follow Radcliff-Brown). If the earlier distinction is maintained, we will be faced with a problem when an anthropologist turns up data from a society that approaches its supernatural beings by manipulation only. In this case we would be forced to put a whole series of religious practices under magic. For our purposes, then, magic will be defined as a mode of approaching the supernatural beings and the end result thereof that do not conform to the norms of a particular society and therefore sanctioned. This is by no means the only definition of magic but for our purposes it is the most appropriate not only because it helps us distinguish between magic and religion but also to introduce the dimension of social norms and sanctions which are crucial in understanding religious systems.

We have raised these issues not with a view to destroying the classic works of these great theorists but to point out the inadequacies involved in using such categories in studying religious systems. They have also helped us

in formulating a tentative definition of religion that, we hope, will enable us to understand Kalabari religious system. Following the structural-functionalists and taking an essentially social approach to the study of religion, we will, for the present, view religion as an extension of social norms into the realm of extra-empirical entities providing an explanation, that is believed to be true, both of the origin and function of these entities, the existence and function of the society and the interrelation of the two. This position has been taken to avoid psychologizing or psychological interpretations to religious systems. The contention against using psychological interpretations is that even the dispositional or attitudinal manifestations are themselves culturally derived to the extent that the expression of sentiments in particular situations varies from culture to culture or society to society. If it is granted that there are differential expressions of sentiments in different societies, then, our contention is that the reasons for these differences must be sought for in the different societies and their norms. This is the most useful frame of reference with which we can understand religion. In brief, then, our contention is that religion cannot be fully understood apart from the social framework in which it exists.

Finally, we have used social structure and the idea systems or social usages underlying this structure in our

analysis of religion. As a result, we used the concept "culture" very advisedly. This is because the all-embracing or omnium gatherum types of definitions of culture do not help us either in understanding culture or its manifestation. Take, for example, Sorokin's definition of culture as: "In the broadest sense it may mean the sum total of everything which is created or modified by conscious or unconscious activity of two or more individuals interacting with one another or conditioning one another's behavior. According to this definition, not only science, philosophy, religion, art, technics and all the physical paraphernalia of an advanced civilization are cultural phenomena; but the trace of a footstep on the sand left by a savage and seen by Robinson Crusoe, a heap of refuse and broken trees left by an exploring party in a virgin forest, the bones, shells, and ashes left by some prehistoric tribe in the ground excavated by an archaeologist--these and millions of other human creations and modifications are all a part of culture" (Sorokin: quoted from Radcliff-Brown, A Natural Science of Society, p. 95). Culture has been used here as the symbolic representations of aspects of the social structure. Thus, a bow, i.e., the concrete object, is not taken as culture but the symbolic representation of a bow, i.e., it is the idea of a bow that is represented as an aspect of culture. Again, the processes by which a bow is made is not culture but the idea

of the process, i.e., the symbolic representation of the process is an aspect of culture. It is this idea or symbolic representation, by our definition, that is learned and transmitted and not the concrete discrete acts.

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