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The Prophet and the Psychiatrist

Translated by Patricia Klammerth

The following report describes the strangest psychiatric interview we have ever conducted. Our encounter with the messianic healer Edjro Josué took place in 1966, while we were engaged in ethnopsychanalytical field research among the Anyi in the Ivory Coast Republic (Parin, Morgenthaler, Parin-Matthèy, 1971/1980).¹ Though Edjro Josué is not himself an Anyi-he is a member of the Adjoukrou, one of the so-called lagoon peoples, and makes his home in Akradjo,² far from "our" Anyi village of Bébou-at the time of our visit a great many Anyi were turning to him for help and healing. This led us to wonder what sort of person he might be, that his teachings held such widespread fascination for the Anyi. We were curious to find out what dynamic psychic forces he was able to project, and what effects they had on those he healed or converted.

In the present article we restrict ourselves to answering these questions as fully as possible, and to describing our investigations step by step in order to make our approach clear. For this reason, our account centers around Edjro Josué as a person-around his life, his conflicts, his psychology, and his function in society.

(The reader is referred to "Prophetisme et Therapeutique" [Riault, 1975] for a more recent and more detailed study of prophets and their activities and influence in the Ivory Coast. The ethnological problem of healing

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through magic has been dealt with frequently in the literature, by Ari Kiew [1964], for example, from the point of view of the psychiatrist, and by Vincent Crapanzano and Vivian Garrison [1977], from the ethnopsychanalytical standpoint.)

When we arrived in the land of the Anyi in 1965, everyone was talking about Master Kikoné. We were constantly meeting people he had healed and/or converted, people whom he had disappointed, people who were turning to him in hope, and people who were skeptical.³ Kikoné was originally a derogatory nickname-his opponents had called him "qui connait," "Mr. whatever-his-name-is." Who is this mad charlatan, this man who walks about declaring that God Himself had entrusted him with his mission of healing the sufferings of his fellowmen? His nickname had become a title of honor. People called him "Master," or simply Josué, which was the Christian

name that had been given to Edjro Meledj by his father when he was baptized into the Methodist Church of his home village of Akradjo. We were told that he refused to let himself be called "Prophet" or "Messiah." His own name for himself was simply "le médiateur" (the mediator). For God had tested him and chosen him to mediate between His will and His law and humankind. It is not God's will that men should suffer, but rather that they should help each other in a spirit of love and mercy, that they should pass on to others His gifts-health, virtue, a joy in living, and all the good things of this world, and-above all-that they should come to the aid of the sick and the ailing and relieve their pain without thought of recompense, as God Himself helps his children.

We are greatly indebted to Prof. Memel Fote, of the Ethno-Sociological Center of Abidjan University (whose mother tongue is the same as that of the healer), who made available to us an unpublished study (Memel, 1966) containing all the biographical data and social and religious background information with which the psychologist must be familiar when he undertakes to investigate the psychodynamics of a messiah in the midst of his apostles and the community of his followers. Monsieur Memel also introduced us personally to the healer and offered his services as interpreter during our first visit to Akradjo. For, although the Master enjoys receiving foreign visitors, he speaks only a few words of French.

In Monsieur Memel's studies, Edjro Josué is described as an extraordinary personality. The movement which he had started without funds of any kind and which brought him no financial profit was acquiring more and more adherents, and his helpers were becoming more and more numerous. He had been able to provide new buildings for his cult and to house his believers. It was amazing that the Christian commandment to love one's fellowmen should suddenly begin to make itself felt in the society of a country in which the Christian missions have so far paid practically no attention to economic misery. For in almost all the colonial territories Christianity has done much to promote the development of the capitalist system. while

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its moral and social ethic has proved ineffective in alleviating the specific abuses of an emerging class society.

THE BEGINNING OF MESSIANIC MOVEMENTS IN THE IVORY COAST

The earliest Christian "prophet" in the Ivory Coast area was William Wadé Harris, also known as Latabo or Latabou, a member of the Grébo people, who was born in about 1850 in Cap Palmas, Liberia. After his conversion to the Methodist (Wesleyan) Church, he devoted himself to the study

of the Bible and became a teacher of religion. In 1910, incarcerated as a political prisoner in his native city, he was visited by the Archangel Gabriel, who gave him a cross of bamboo and commanded him to convert his black brothers. During 1914 and the first few months of 1915, with cross in hand, he traveled through the southern part of the Ivory Coast, preaching the Bible in English wherever he went. Everywhere he ordered the populace to burn the heathen cult objects, and heal the sick, and by April 1915, when he was exiled by the French, he had baptized some 100,000 to 120,000 people. With their leader in exile, the congregations he had established soon lost members and influence, until the defeat of the French in 1940 (which Harris is said to have predicted as early as 1929) lent new impetus to the movement. During the course of the last thirty years new prophets have appeared at a number of places in the southern Ivory Coast (Holas, 1965). The healer Edjro Josué and his communities of believers can be regarded as one of these neo-Harrisonian messianic movements.

The deeper one delves into the available literature and into Edjro's own theology, the more inclined one is to conclude that the naively enlightened Christian William Wadé Harris proclaimed his Afro-Christian doctrine at a critical moment in history, at a moment when it proved to be stronger than the heathen tradition. As a result, the spirit of Christianity, equipped with certain syncretic features and distorted here and there by the personal mannerisms of the prophets themselves, was able to conquer and replace the old doctrines. One is tempted to regard Edjro Josué, in his capacity as a mediator, as an instrument of cultural change. The Christian West has prevailed over heathen Africa.

A slight historical correction compels us to view Edjro's role in a somewhat different light. William Wadé Harris was not the "inventor" of the Harrisonian movement; he too, had had a forerunner. In 1911, one year after Harris had been enlightened by the Archangel Gabriel, and three years before he proclaimed his faith, a healer named Yao Pékou, a native of Kumasi, was living in Niabley, in the land of the Anyi. Pékou was definitely not a Christian. He had brought with him a bowl which had come into his family by magical means; it was the abode of the god Edangoma. In other words, Pékou was a typical Akan shrine priest, whose god was more powerful

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than witches and magicians. The god was able to perform miracles; he could heal the sick and was able to unmask thieves and adulterers, but he killed all those who did not believe in him and returned to the ancient magic. Nevertheless, it was Edangoma who introduced the decisive ethical principle that today characterizes Edjro's teachings as Christian rather than heathen. For, unlike all the other spirits, Edangoma refused to accept payment for his gifts to the poor and the hungry.

Yao Pékou always appeared dressed in dazzling white, a wise, dignified ancient-reminiscent of a prelate of the Church (Chéruy, 1911/12). In his presence, people were expected to go barefoot, they were not permitted to smoke, and also had to observe a number of other taboos all of which Ediro has retained.

CULTURAL CHANGE

It is more accurate to view Edjro not as an instrument, but rather as a product of cultural change. Colonial rule had brought with it not only Christianity, but also a reorganization of the economy, designed to pave the way to a capitalist society. When a man fell sick, he no longer had any way to earn his livelihood; he had no choice but to become a burden to his family or to resign himself to abject poverty, while under the precolonial system he would have benefited from the mutual aid which the members of a lineage, a court, or a "chefferie" (village or area ruled over by a chief) automatically provided one another. Now, however, he was obliged to pay for medical treatment with money. The sacrificial gifts to the healer, even the cost of transporting the patient to the free hospitals maintained by the colonial administration, had to be paid on his behalf, whereas formerly the tributes to priests and shamans were automatically included among the legitimate social expenditures of the lineage. If the spiritual equilibrium of the lineage should be upset-as it was bound to be by the magically induced sickness of one of its members-then clearly it was in the interests of the lineage to see that the sufferer was cured and its equilibrium thus restored. Under the new economic order, however, the lineage might be compelled to incur expenses without receiving anything in return. In response to this new situation, Yao Pékou introduced new socio-economic-or as one might term them-new ethical factors into the mission of the healers. In addition to curing mental and physical ills, the healers were also expected to alleviate the material misery of the needy. Both Harris and Edjro incorporated this into their teachings and even expanded upon it. The power of the Christian faith as the wellspring of brotherly love and of the selflessness of the healer's activity is irrelevant. Christian thinking merely provides a spiritual explanation, which is absorbed syncretically into the traditional ones. Harris and Edjro-for all their brotherly love and their dedication to God-are really more rebels against Western thinking than executors of its ideas. Society is making use of an imported ideology side-by-side with the traditional

one, in order to cure its ancient ills in the traditional manner and in accordance with its own psychosocial laws. And it employs the same weapon against the inevitable economic and social consequences of colonial rule, against the reshaping of society according to capitalist precepts. The congregation established by the mediator Edjro Josué has learned to look to the Kingdom of Heaven, and in doing so it undermines the foundations of the worldly power structure; in this respect it resembles the community of the early Christians.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Meledj Edjro was born around 1921 in the village of Akradjo in the land of the Adjoukrou. His mother came from a distinguished family. She had borne her first husband one son and a daughter, Edjime, whose fate was to be of great significance for her younger half-brother Edjro, the only child of his mother's second marriage. Edjro was introduced to the teachings of the Methodist Church and to the occupation of a planter and "grimpeur" (harvester of palm oil) by his father, a pious, hardworking man who was trampled to death by a buffalo cow when Edjro was still a young boy. His mother married a third time and bore her husband a daughter.

Edjro married very young and was recruited for forced labor before World War II, even though he suffered from a chronic ailment. His family attributed this ailment to poison which his fellow workers had contrived to give him because they were jealous of his superior strength and skill. When forced labor was abolished (in 1946), and at the same time the price of palm oil fell, Edjro was compelled-around 1950-to give up his palm plantations and to emigrate. He lived in Abidjan for three years as a laborer, then returned to his native village when he contracted an eye ailment, which he also attributed to magic influences. His wife left him and married another man, who in turn came down with the same ailment; hereupon she deserted him and returned to Edjro, who agreed to take her back. In the meantime Edjro had cured his own ailment, which had stubbornly resisted medical treatment, by means of piety and prayer alone. In order to make a living, he began to trade in alcoholic beverages, then took up the occupation of a baker, at which he was extremely successful. Nevertheless, he gave this up as well and went into the palm-oil business. During his leisure time, even as a young man he had been very popular as an entertainer, and-together with a female partner-had earned quite a reputation as a composer and singer of lyrical folksongs.

Hardly had Edjro's financial situation improved somewhat, when his older half-sister Edjime fell ill with a lung ailment. Following established custom as well as his own deep feeling of affection

for his sister, Edjro gave up his business and traveled all over the country with her to consult healers, medicine men, and European doctors. No one was able to help her, how

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ever, and she died in 1961. At this period Edjro was very nearly desperate. His hard-won basis of existence had collapsed and his business was deeply in debt. He had paid all the costs incurred by his sister's treatment, a total of more than 50,000 cfa francs. His wife reproached him with having done everything for his sister while neglecting his own family, and left him again-this time for good. Later, he married his present wife, who bore him a son.

In 1962, about a year after Edjime's death, the mystical-religious inner struggle began-interpreted by Edjro as a call from God, which he accepted only with great reluctance. His fellows first viewed it as a form of madness and overweening arrogance, then as the birth of a prophet. In January 1965 he was recognized by the Methodist Church of his native village, and two months later it accorded him a post among the preachers, one of whom was assigned to act as his chief assistant. In recognizing him officially, the Church affirmed its belief that God had bestowed upon him the power to help his fellowmen by healing them. He fulfilled his mission as a preacher not with words, but by acting as a mediator between God and men.

THE CALLING AND THE MISSION OF THE PROPHET

God, whom Edjro calls Nyam (which is also the name the Anyi give to their supreme diety), and who is identical with the God of all monotheistic religions, had appeared to him in a series of dreams and had taken him into His service. Edjro related to us-as he had to Monsieur Memel one year before and as he has since then to all important visitors-the story of how God laid His hand on him. His eighteen apostles quote from the account of his conversion as if it were a part of the Holy Scriptures. First God appeared to him in several dreams and commanded him to care for the cemetery; this is a religious duty in the Methodist faith, and one which is ordinarily assigned to women and girls. Edjro took his task very seriously; not only did he clear the cemetery grounds, enclose them with a fence, and plant trees, but he also cleared the adjoining rain forest. He was so meticulous in his work that a comrade who had helped him in the beginning soon tired and left him to continue alone. According to the traditional belief, the spirits of the dead will not permit any fires to be set in the vicinity of the cemetery. But God empowered Edjro to light a fire in the afternoon, so that its smoke would ascend to Heaven. Thus Edjro burned off the trees and divided

the land he had cleared into two parts, which he planted in rice. He kept the profits of one half for himself and turned those from the other half over to the Church-some 1,900 cfa francs.

The spirits had no power to afflict him with sickness for having violated the taboo on fires. But because he continued to work conscientiously at the cemetery, a "woman's" task that was considered beneath the dignity of a man, he was becoming the laughing-stock of the village. Thus he resolved

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to renounce the service of the Lord and to confine himself to being a planter again. But God lost no time in chastising him for his lack of courage; one day, in the forest of Tehr mouem, he was hit on the head by a falling branch and lost consciousness. "When I got back to the village, I wouldn't let anyone take care of me. I treated myself, as He commanded, and I got well again and resumed my work."

In another dream he was commanded to tear down his house and to build a hospital on the site. He refused, and explained to God that he was a sick man. Thereupon the heralds of God tore down his house and healed him with their prayers in a dream. During the weeks that followed, Edjro obeyed God's command to build a hospital and, in his dreams, was initiated into the arts of healing-the laying-on of hands, the massaging of lame limbs, and the uses of the holy water, which he had blessed in the name of God and which came from the Mindjaff spring. He also received the gift of clairvoyance and the ability to prophesy on the basis of dreams, both of them indispensable in diagnosing disease and in selecting appropriate remedies. Even today, Edjro still talks about his early miracles, the ones he performed before he was recognized by the Church. "In those days," he admits, "I didn't believe myself that such things were possible, but God had lifted me up."

After he had already effected several miraculous cures, Edjro had a dream in which the spirit of a magician appeared to him in the guise of a sick man. The magician let himself be healed by Edjro and then offered him 25 francs in payment for his services. Edjro refused to accept the money. When he awakened, he was sick; the rebuffed tempter had worked a spell on him. Again he cured himself by means of prayer. Thus he had acknowledged the existence of evil spirits, but at the same time had proved that their power could not prevail over the power of God. The final break with the old gods was complete, and the historic step towards the new morality had been taken. Edjro emphasizes that he was in despair over the fact that no doctor had been able to help his sister and indignant at the idea of taking money from destitute patients in return for healing them. In the old order the exchange of money had served primarily to smooth over tense relations between individuals, and in the new order of things the sick were upset at the thought of having to

pay money for doctors or drugs. Edjro's refusal to accept payment placed him in the superior position of a mediator; it was God, the righteous judge, and the patient himself, who expressed his determination to be healed by making a full confession of his sins, who were responsible. The healer receives no money and thus remains a mediator. Even infants can be healed, for confession is a spiritual process; when they are questioned, it is their souls that answer. Confessions take place very undramatically, in a small room in the presence of the healer or his assistant. They are not governed by any ritual which might lend them the power of catharsis. Apart from God Himself, hardly anyone hears them;

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the dreams of the healer and the effectiveness of the cure reveal whether or not they have been complete.

The struggle against the magicians continues unabated. Whenever one of them appears to Edjro in the guise of a patient to "test" him, victory over the tempter is a simple matter. Either he drinks the holy water, which kills him in any case within a short time, or the mediator-in his prayers-calls down the wrath of God on the head of the guilty one, which has the same lethal effect. Edjro is obsessed with the fight against the magicians and witches. He mocks them with his laughter and curses them wherever he comes upon them. He clears entire villages of them and converts the liberated inhabitants to God. He used to insist that fetishes and amulets be burned, but recently he has established a small museum where these now powerless trophies of his victory over the devil are carefully labelled and placed on exhibit for visitors to see. He has no objections to European doctors; he respects them as fellow healers and even envies them their knowledge. But he hates the drugs they prescribe as much as he hates the evil spirits. For the sick are bled white by having to pay for these drugs, and this is something that God cannot allow. The mediator must see to it that they are boycotted. No one who has swallowed a pill or had an injection is permitted to drink of the holy water. It would kill him as soon as it encountered the alien drug in his body.

From 12 April to 21 May 1965, following the example of Christ, Edjro "went out into the desert" for forty days, in other words moved out to the field hut at his cocoa plantation, accompanied by his wife and child and by a number of the faithful. The reasons he gave were that after four months of intensive activity as a healer he needed a rest, that he wanted to restore his strength with prayer, and that he needed time for the practical reorganization of his work and for the renovation of his shrine. He made good use of his leisure as regards the last-mentioned objective, as became clear when he returned to the scene of his activity. From now on, Edjro's day was even more strictly organized than before. The chief apostle assigned to him by the Methodists had

deputized for him during his absence and was now the elder of a group of eighteen apostles and a large number of disciples, whose functions and ranks were fixed rigidly. The ritual-prayer, song, confession, the drinking of the water from the cup of the healer-was now supplemented by the requirement that penitents kneel in public in atonement and as a sign of their remorse.

This and other innovations were carried out in exact accordance with the instructions that Edjro received in his God-sent dreams. But by now Edjro was no longer the only one qualified to receive such messages. His assistants, acting on his behalf, were empowered to make prophecies and to heal the sick. Those who had converted or healed contributed to the welfare of all through their communication with God in their dreams. Meetings were held every morning during which people could relate their dreams in

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public. Even the name given to the holy water, "Siloe," came from a revelation experienced by one of Edjro's converts.

Hundreds, sometimes even thousands, of people from outside Akradjo lived in this medium-sized African village, without suffering want and without having to pay for food or shelter. Edjro unobtrusively managed to coordinate the tradition of hospitality with the help of the Methodist community and the voluntary donations of those he had healed so skillfully that he was able to state with a smile, "God Himself feeds my congregation."

When food prices rose in Akradjo because supply could no longer keep up with demand, Edjro descended upon the marketplace and threatened the merchants with a consumers' boycott if they did not lower their prices. In that case he himself would have huge quantities of goods brought to the village. The merchants capitulated at once, and prices returned to their normal levels.

THE SETTING OF THE PSYCHIATRIC INTERVIEWS

On the morning of 24 February 1966, accompanied by Monsieur Memel, we drive past the beautifully kept cemetery (the first achievement of Edjro, the man of God) and into the village of Akradjo. Its houses are not crowded so closely together as in most settlements in the rain forest; the ground is covered with white sand. The groves of scattered palms begin right behind the courtyards lying on the outskirts of the village, and even in the center of the village there are palm trees growing here and there. Driving on past the small temple dedicated to the Harris movement, we arrive at the place where the flag of the Ivory Coast waves from a short flagpole and a broad banner with the national colors spans the road. We are motioned to a halt. Assistants of the

Master, dressed like medical orderlies in light-blue, fairly clean coats with crosses sewn on them, request us to remove our shoes and to refrain from smoking in the village. They conduct us to the reception and administration building. Behind it we can see huge open sheds, rather like hangars, with a closely packed crowd of people in the shade they provide, singing chorales and swaying to the rhythm of the music. In some of the groups of women, this movement has taken the form of a measured, yet joyful dance.

The administration building has large windows, like a mission. We are escorted into the main room, which resembles a medium-sized dining room and is furnished with a table for eight, covered with oilcloth. On the walls, behind glass, are photographs of the Master. A chest-high partition separates the office, where the typewriter stands, from the main room. All the visitors' names are entered in school exercise books that lie in an untidy heap on the table, together with notations as to place of origin, religion, and diagnosis. While newly arriving patients are being registered, the assistants order chairs to be brought and-with a good deal of ceremony-

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assign us, Dr. Parin, Madame Parin, and Monsieur Memel places around the table. Edjro's two most important apostles have arrived, the first an elderly and stiffly dignified representative of the Methodist Church, and the second the Master's brother-in-law, a bearded, middle-aged man, who speaks French. He is obviously jealous and deeply offended because we are not making use of his services as an interpreter. In an atmosphere of general embarrassment, we do our best to keep a conversation going.

Suddenly the Master enters the room, followed by a retinue of about fifteen younger men. He is an unusually imposing man, of medium height, with a muscular build but slender bone structure, and with delicately shaped hands. His frank and open face is beardless. He wears a white short-sleeved shirt extending almost to his knees, and a white cloth wound like a turban around his head. A short-bladed Mossi sword in a red leather sheath hangs diagonally across his chest.

Throughout the entire day he holds a tightly rolled piece of white cloth in his right hand, just as many aristocratic Anyi do. He uses it as a baton when he speaks a blessing or directs the singing, and towards evening he occasionally wipes his eyes with it.

Everyone has risen to his feet at the Master's entry. Still more of the faithful throng the doorway and fill the room, standing along the walls or squatting on the floor. The Master does not offer his hand. The greeting ceremony begins like a church service. Edjro recites a prayer, then speaks a blessing; this is followed by another prayer and by singing, in which all join in. This continues until the Master gives the signal to stop, and then joins the apostles and us at the table. His chair is

ornamented with an inlaid cross; otherwise it is no different from the ones we are sitting on. Edjro asks for our "first news."

We feel rather uneasy in this liturgical atmosphere, and the idea of conducting a psychoanalytical interview in this abode of faith and mystical closeness to God, surrounded by the apostles and the community of believers, suddenly appears absurd. And obviously it is quite out of the question to request the Master, whose every act has liturgical significance, to grant us a private interview. His congregation, whom he leads with confidence and evident enjoyment, has first claim upon him. On the other hand, the openness and frankness of his expression give us courage. After all, it is not often that a psychiatrist has the opportunity to observe at first hand, the effectiveness of the psychic mechanisms employed by a messiah in carrying out the mission entrusted to him.

THE FIRST INTERVIEW

I respond with my "first news," explaining that we, like him, are healers of the soul, and that in our country we heal the sick by talking with them, not by prescribing medicine. We have come, I continue, to meet him as a colleague and to learn from him.

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In his reply he points out that it is God who restores peace to the soul and asks me whether we have peace in our country. I inform him that Switzerland has enjoyed political peace for a long time, but that many of our people suffer from an inner discontent. He voices his skepticism: If this is so, then the country is not at peace; its people have not yet found God; one must pray in order to find peace. I reply that the will of God is probably the same everywhere, but that this is not enough. What is needed is a man like him, a man who can contribute to the accomplishment of God's will. And that is what we are trying to discover-what manner of man this might be. I say this in the hope that it will guide the conversation into a more personal channel, and my remark has the desired effect. The Master desires to know to what religion I belong. I tell him that I do not belong to any religion, explaining that in our country we do have physicians who are Protestants or Catholics (the Catholics in Akradjo oppose Edjro and warn their followers-in vain-against consulting him), but that their religion is not important. The best healers of the soul are those who know best what is going on in the inner life of their patients and who are completely honest with themselves.

The Master refuses once again to be pinned down. He starts to speak of one of his most cherished ideas, the ecumenical concept. He insists that God is present in every church, and that all religions are equally good provided the believer casts off his sin and entrusts himself whole-heartedly to God. Even nonbelievers like the white doctor, he says, are equal in the eyes of God; what is important is not one's religion, but the purity of one's soul.

The Master obviously has taken a liking to me. And if my remarks should become too personal, he can safely retreat into his liturgical role, delivering another lengthy sermon and having it translated sentence by sentence, or reciting a prayer and then giving his blessing. The throng of hearers follow with eager interest. When our dialogue begins to be more direct and more personal, they listen uneasily, intent on every word. A return to the established ritual calms them. The Master is most successful in withdrawing completely into his messianic role when he directs his followers in a chorale. His voice, slightly hoarse when he is speaking softly, is a powerful baritone when he sings. He leads all the singing himself, and often joins in. Later on, in the church, he sings the top line as a solo in the two-and three-part songs performed by the chorus. We have no choice but to wait patiently until the ritual comes to an end and we can resume our conversation. It is perfectly clear to us, though, how much the Master, whom no one has dared to speak to as an equal for months, enjoys taking part in a free-for-all discussion and demonstrating the agility of his mind, arguing, and disputing. I do my best to accept the challenge to meet him as a rival; I make no attempt to spare him-the respect I show him only has to do with his social role, with the significance he embodies for the listening congregation.

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Edjro now begins to relate the story of his conversion, which is already thoroughly familiar to his hearers. This time, though, he does not start with the illness of his sister Edjime and the clearing of the cemetery-as one might expect-but goes back even farther, to the time he lived in Abidjan as a laborer. There God appeared to him in a dream and presented him with a staff. This was a sign that he was to leave Abidjan and return to his native land. The staff symbolized the doctrine that he was to bring to mankind.

None of Edjro's hearers had known about this dream, not even Monsieur Memel. In my opinion he had invented it, as a phallic fantasy, on the spur of the moment, and this prompted me to retain the background atmosphere of phallic rivalry, so that our conversation would have an emotional foundation that was gratifying to him. The intentness of the listeners -there were now about eighty of them standing around us-suggested that this new dream vision of the Master would be incorporated forthwith into his teachings.

When he has finished the tale of his conversion, Edjro calls for a Bible and asks me to read aloud a verse which he has the chief apostle find. It is a rather aggressive verse (Luke II:23), in which Christ vows to lead men along the path of righteousness whether they will or not.

I comment: "You, too, look like a fighter, and not like someone who brings only the love of God." He indicates the sword at his side. Then I point to the photos on the wall, with the remark: "You also impress people as being intensely male because of the virility of your body. „This does not embarrass him in the least; on the contrary, my remark pleases him. A bit earlier, in fact, he had looked my wife up and down once or twice with a clearly sensual expression on his face, but had decided to continue the conversation on a "man-to-man" basis, where he could be sure of his erotic appeal.

As was only to be expected, Edjro now repeats the characteristically humble formula of the Christian to the effect that his strength is God alone, but at the same time orders a wooden stick to be brought in-the branch that God had caused to fall on him to punish him for his lack of courage. I weigh it in my hand, commenting that it does not seem to be very heavy. He asks the interpreter to explain that it was still fresh, and very heavy indeed, when it fell on his head. Again and again he tries his strength with me, and again and again I succeed in withdrawing from the contest by conceding that I respect him and his role as God's mediator. He summons a group of people he has healed. He has them step forward one at a time and-regardless of how ill at ease they may feel in such an illustrious gathering-orders them to relate the story of how they were healed. When they finish, everyone applauds, and the Master asks me whether I believe them. I reply that I have listened to what they had to say and I have no reason to doubt their statements.

Our conversation has lasted longer than a normal visit, and great

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quantities of lemonade and ice cream have been consumed. We were to have paid a visit to the museum next, but it is already time for the service. A long procession files through the village to the Protestant church. Edjro marches at the head of his apostles, while I walk at his left.

In the church three chairs for us visitors have been placed in front of the first row of seats. The brief sermon is delivered by an elderly Methodist preacher. It is the Master, however, who is the center of attention. He directs the chorales himself, his melodious voice soaring above the rest.⁴ Assistant directors pass on his signals to the choruses, grouped attractively around the altar.

Outside, in front of the open doors of the church, a group of girls and women perform a dance to the music. They accompany us on our way back to the reception building. The dinner to which we are invited is excellent and opulent-a French meal with the requisite number of courses, followed

by an African one. The Master is charming, friendly, ironical, jesting and talking earnestly by turns; he seems very human and approachable. He eats with good appetite, sending only the French ragout (which really hasn't turned out quite as it should) back to the kitchen uneaten. Towards the end of the meal there are only about thirty people left in the room, together with some of the apostles who are dining with us. We could now resume our conversation of the forenoon. Suddenly the Master asks the interpreter to tell me that someone is asking for me outside. He comes outside with me and stands next to me, pointing up at the afternoon sun, which has just appeared from behind a cloud of haze. Obviously he wants me to look at the sun. I try to do so for a moment, then turn away. He himself stares steadily at the sun, blinking a little, for an entire minute-despite the fact that he once suffered from an eye ailment. Back in the dining room, he asks me to tell the company what we were doing outside, whether I had been able to stand it and whether he had. Firmly, but without the least sign of impatience or timidity, he insists upon getting the answers he wants, until I finally give in and admit: "The Master was able to stand it; I wasn't." Everyone applauds once more. When the clapping subsides, I say loudly that there was no need to tell me that "someone" wanted me outside. The Master himself wanted to test his strength against mine. There was no reason why he should not have said so frankly. Naturally, I would have gone out with him just as willingly.

Edjro is taken aback for a moment, then declares with a laugh, "Yes, that's quite true; I did want to go myself," and-forgetting the holy power that resides in the touch of his hands-gives me a friendly clap on the shoulder. As we take our leave, he says: "Return to your country and tell your people what you have seen here in my village; tell nothing but the truth."

Unfortunately, the Master seems to regard our departure as final. We had hoped to be invited to come back again. He accompanies us to our car

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and has chairs brought outside; he would like to chat with us a bit longer. After a while I point to my grey hair and mention that we have a long drive ahead of us. Edjro removes his turban and shows us that he, too, has a few grey hairs. "I am the greatest here," he declares. His mood has changed, and he now looks forward to our next visit. He insists that I must come again. But I must not tell any lies about him. He has never claimed to be God, but just the greatest man here in the village.

We thank him and say that we would be delighted to come again. I mention that I'll arrange to bring along a young man as interpreter. Edjro's brother-in-law is visibly annoyed at this. He says that there is no need to bring anyone, he himself will do the interpreting. The Master is amused

and insists that I can come with whomever I like whenever I like. Before we get into the car, he repeats a joking remark he had made earlier to the effect that I should take him with me to Switzerland, where he would bring peace to the hearts of my countrymen with his prayers. All I would have to do is accompany him and explain to people who he is-telling them nothing but the truth that I myself see in him. Then he turns and walks away before we have driven off.

EVALUATION OF THE FIRST INTERVIEW

Little as Edjro understands of our language, it is extraordinarily easy to talk with him-and to laugh with him. He never really feels that he is under attack, merely that he is being challenged. Towards the end of our visit it is apparent that he no longer feels the need to withdraw into the protection of ritual.

By the time we left, I was quite sure that his feelings towards me were positive. When we inspected the room used for confessions, there was a bucket there containing the holy water. I lifted the lid and pretended that I was about to take a drink of it. He stopped me immediately, saying that I must not drink; the water would kill me because I had not yet confessed. Before we left, he referred to the incident once again. He declared that he could see into men's hearts and that mine was pure; thus I could have drunk the water without danger even though I had not made my confession.

The Master had captivated us completely. He is a man of great personal charm and a good deal of physical attractiveness, which may well appeal to men more than to women. His character is phallic-narcissistic in structure. His ego functions well and, in the well-organized environment he has created, appears to be strong. Probably he has had to ward off projectively and suppress by means of active-phallic counterathesis quite intensive anxieties in connection with magic and sickness. Neither the religious components nor the readily available rivalry aggressions seem to be in the least pathological. Everything is well integrated into reality. He himself points out that he has been working for a year and a half without accepting payment

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of any kind, and admits that this is a heavy burden. Still, he is willing to take it upon himself because-in keeping with God's will-he feels great sympathy for his fellowmen and wants to prevent their suffering. When he states that he has given himself to God, he means it materialistically, not esoterically. He has ambitious plans for the future. He intends to travel all over Africa and later all over the world to free men everywhere of their suffering. He realizes that

his movement would gradually lose its appeal if it were restricted to his home, to his beloved, beautiful, but admittedly insignificant village Akradjo.⁵

When we were back in B bou among the Anyi, we found it easy to understand why so many of them, with their essentially passive characters, were bound to succumb to the Master's appeal. They yearn to submit to a chief, to someone who will tell them what to think and what to do, who will take care of their needs and provide them-in the form of song and dance-with the perfect collective experience which they long to achieve but which again and again they find marred by strife and by their own inhibitions.

But we were also disappointed. We had not been able to witness a healing at first hand, and were still unable to answer the question of how such a personality as Edjro's could develop in this culture. For the Adjoukrou people, like the Anyi, tend to admire masculine-active, independent attitudes, but at the same time to prevent the development of these qualities in children and young people by implanting anxieties and inhibitions in them.

THE SECOND INTERVIEW

Monsieur Memel did not accompany us on our second visit to Akradjo, which took place on 4 March. He had arranged for an eighteen-year-old high school student from a neighboring village to go with us as our interpreter. On our way, we stopped at the market of Dabou to buy a sack of rice as a gift for the faithful.

This time our reception is less ceremonious. We remove our shoes, and an apostle conducts us to the reception hall and asks us to wait. We can hear chorales from the large hangar, where the Master is engaged in healing the sick. We ask permission to go there ourselves, hoping to mix with the crowd and observe the proceedings. Soon we are informed that Edjro is expecting us. We find him standing in the middle of a cleared circle some three meters in diameter. There are 300 to 400 people crowded into the hangar, those in front seated in rows and the rest standing in the rear. When the Master catches sight of us, he smiles broadly, but does not interrupt his work. Chairs are brought in for us and placed to the right of where the Master is standing. Meanwhile, his secretary is calling off the names of those who have come to be healed from a list in his hand.

Edjro speaks a blessing and recites a prayer. His expression which was

half pleased and half uneasy when we came in, is now grave and calm once more. He notices that he has lost the roll of cloth that he uses as a baton. His little son, a boy of about four or five, is

playing with it at his feet. The boy gives the cloth back to his father and from now on follows the ceremony with obedient attention. Edjro starts singing a chorale, in which the women join precisely on cue.

There seems to be some uncertainty as to how our visit is to be handled. The Master interrupts the singing. We are to be presented to the Methodist preachers, ten or so elderly men who are also sitting on chairs. We shake hands with each of them. After a second chorale, Edjro recites a prayer in which the names Paul and Elizabeth occur. After this we are expected to greet the crowd. We bow and raise our clasped hands to indicate our applause.

Now it seems to be the turn of the next patient. Suddenly the Master instructs that we be escorted back to the reception hall to deliver our "first news." Actually, they need not have bothered to bring in chairs for us. As we go out, Edjro follows us. He has assigned an apostle to continue with the healing and now leads us into his bedroom. This is a very simple room, decorated only by photos of the Master on the walls.

When we return to the reception hall and sit down, a taxi-bus arrives with an emergency case, a lean man of about thirty who peers, silent and bewildered, at the crowd. We are permitted to take a look at him. Edjro leaves his treatment to one of the apostles. One hour later, the man, now cured, is brought into the reception hall and instructed to confirm in a loud voice that he is now well again. His words are greeted with applause; Edjro looks at us encouragingly, and we join in with moderate enthusiasm. While we are driving our young interpreter home to his village later that evening, he tells us that the man is an epileptic. Every time he has a fit, he is confused for a while afterwards, but the Master's prayers and holy water always bring him back to normal.

As I begin to present our "first news," I turn to our interpreter, who is already thoroughly intimidated. At this point Edjro's secretary and brother-in-law declares very rudely that this young man has not yet mastered the language and that *he* will interpret instead. He adds that it was absolutely unnecessary for us to bring anyone along. The boy is so flustered that he is unable to utter a single word, and he remains standing in an oddly twisted pose when the others kneel to pray and we sit down. I talk with him gently, but it is some time before he relaxes sufficiently to sink down on a chair. Nevertheless, he has an important function in the proceedings that follow. The secretary interprets the Master's speeches accurately, one phrase after the other, as he is accustomed to doing. But whenever he starts to paraphrase my sentences too generally, or when I suspect that he is tiring or is distorting my words, I turn to the young man. Whenever this happens, the older man is afraid of being eliminated and starts to be more careful

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That evening I verify the correctness of my notes with the help of the young man, who in spite of his state of near-paralysis during the course of the conversation demonstrates outstanding ability to recall what was said.

After the "first news," which I deliver as "an inhabitant of Bébou," Edjro recites the Lord's Prayer, then pronounces a lengthy blessing during which our names are mentioned. At this point I take over the conversation:

"We already know about all the events which led him to God and about his success as a healer. What we still don't know is what kind of man God has chosen for this mission. Even before he received his call, he must have shown somehow that he was fit to be chosen."

The decisive turning point that I need now is a comparison of Edjro's life with that of Christ. Even the earliest experiences of the boy Jesus, I explain, were a part of his mission, and I suggest that this must have been the case with the mediator, too. I remind my listeners of the story of King Herod, of how Jesus's parents left their home and fled in poverty with their child to Egypt, not only because he was the Son of God, but because they loved their child and wanted to save him. I conclude with some emphasis: "It is the love of the parents for their child that enables it later on to perform deeds of love itself. ,,

The Master is obviously deeply moved. Even the secretary seems satisfied, and repeats several times what we have said.

Edjro needs a little time to think things over. In psychological terms, his resistance is just beginning to intensify; he withdraws into his identification with God and into the messianic ritual. I am counting on the fact that the power of seduction of my latest interpretation, in combination with the positive transference that took place during our first interview-phallic rivalry, in which libidinal homosexual components predominated-will be stronger than his defenses. I look at him gravely and remain silent from now on, even when he turns to me for confirmation or for an "amen" during the liturgical responses that follow.

The Master speaks of God and His intentions, in a sermon which always seems to lead up to the question: "Is it not so?" The congregation responds with an "amen." Edjro's expression is vacant, his eyes staring intently at nothing. The sermon flows effortlessly, almost automatically, from his lips.

Finally he launches into a long prayer-no one can say that he himself is God. There is only one God, who blessed his son. Suddenly, he straightens up, throws me a challenging look, and turns purposefully to the interpreter. "God is always with you, even when you are driving your car. Tell them that I am heavy. You cannot lift me. Can you lift me? I tell you that you cannot. No one

can." Then, directly to me, using the familiar pronoun of address: "Will you tell lies about me? Will you slander me?"

I employ the formal pronoun in my reply: „I will be able to attest the truth of all that I have seen and heard of you. As regards what you have

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concealed from me, I can say only that I do not know. I have listened to the statements of those whom you have healed and the story of how you were called by God. All this I can report. But if I am asked what manner of man God has chosen, I will not lie. I will say: 'The Master refused to speak of this.' " In this way I show him that he is hiding behind his legend; I appeal once again to his rivalry instincts-which of us two weighs heavier?

Edjro is suddenly tired. He yawns and wipes his forehead with his roll of cloth. He begins to speak in a low voice about the work he did before God called him, of how strong his arms were when he was a planter, and later a baker. I interrupt him and go on myself with the story of his life. He realizes that I am familiar with this part of the legend as well and that I have no intention of accepting it as final. He continues:

"A child must obey his father. I always did what my parents demanded of me. Then my father died. Later, I had a stepfather, who was a cousin of my real father. I tried my best to obey him, too.

"One day my father sent me to the pond to get a bucket of water. I went to the pond. The water was very high. Somebody was standing behind me and gave me a push-I fell into the water. Then someone pulled me out. I didn't have to drink the water (i.e. I did not drown). It was God Himself who rescued me.

„(Later) I went out to the field hut and worked for him (i.e. for the stepfather). Before my brothers were old enough to help him, the work was already done. I was the one who cleared the land on all his plantations.

"At that time my mother was living in Dabou. I wanted to visit her. It's very far from here to Dabou (fifteen kilometers), and I was still very small. So I went with some friends of mine. At that time there was a man named Melek living there, who owned a buffalo steer. He wanted to give it to my friends so that they could take it along to Akradjo. My friends refused. They didn't want to take on the job; Akradjo was too far away for them.

„After my friends had left, Melek said that I shouldn't refuse to help him. He gave me the buffalo. I was still a young boy and not very strong. The buffalo dragged me all the way along the road to Akradjo. But when I got to the village, I wasn't even sick.

"Soon afterwards Melek came to our village to see to his buffalo. I asked him how much money he wanted to leave the buffalo with me. Melek said that if I would take the buffalo myself, I could have it for 500 francs. He didn't want to sell it to my stepfather. He said that for him it would cost 800 francs.

"So he gave the buffalo to me. But my stepfather took it away from me and brought it to Orbaff. He promised me a share in any calves it might sire."

Edjro interrupts his narration and has the interpreter explain the custom to me. The son works for the father and shares in any profits they make. If the son is thirty or older, the father gives him a length of cloth and 50

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francs; after this, the son is entitled to all the profits accruing from his own work.

Edjro continues: "He (i.e. the stepfather) didn't give me anything. He had the buffalo taken to Orbaff. He had promised in front of Melek, but he didn't keep his word.

"I reminded him of what he had promised, but he refused to keep his word. Then I put a curse on him. All the buffaloes and all their calves died. Then he realized how wicked he had been and promised to make it up to me."

But the stepfather had failed to keep this promise, too. Secret advisers had counseled him to bide his time, saying that Edjro himself would bring another buffalo steer. Edjro did, and the stepfather took this one away from him as well.

"I reminded him again of his promises. And he reminded me that I owed him respect. Then I told myself that it was the same thing all over again, and I put another curse on him. After this I borrowed a rifle and shot the buffalo. So neither one of us got anything out of it."

In the pause that followed, I commented: "In this country, when someone is treated unjustly by his father, he says nothing. He buries his hatred in his heart, and this is why he has no strength later on. But it's different with you. You refused to accept injustice. You put a curse on your father and shot the buffalo. It is because of this that you now have the courage to stand up for what is right."

Edjro wipes his forehead and opens his mouth as if to say, "Yes, that and a good deal more!" And he relates how his stepfather played still a third trick on him. He gave Edjro a cocoa plantation on the condition that he do the work of clearing the land himself. Then, three years later, when the first crop was ready to harvest, the stepfather took it away from him again. But now Edjro's arms were strong enough. He left home and went to Abidjan. And there God took him for His own. "He took me in His arms. He didn't force me into anything. „This statement contradicts the official

version of the Master's call. He has the interpreter repeat it twice. The man who serves his father faithfully and is repaid with injustice will not be abandoned by God.

Just as the Master is on the point of exchanging the wicked stepfather for the good father of his early childhood, whom he calls God, our youthful interpreter leaps to his feet and interrupts the proceedings, clapping his hands for attention as African schoolchildren do and admonishing everyone to speak more slowly because the white man cannot keep up in his notetaking. Quite apparently, the awe that has hitherto paralyzed him in the presence of the Master is subsiding.

I save the situation by laying my notebook aside and saying: "Go on talking. What my head may forget will remain written in my heart." The Master laughs, leans back, and from now on speaks directly to me, no

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longer waiting for the interpreter to finish. He mixes in a few scraps of French, so that I am almost able to understand what he is saying even without the help of the interpreter. He complains that he was just as cruelly deceived by his first wife as by his stepfather. At this point the story becomes confused. I cannot tell whether the interpreter is deliberately distorting Edjro's words, or whether Edjro himself would rather not talk about this episode. Without exactly praying, he begins to speak of God once more. I interrupt him, asking him how it is with sick people. For the first time Edjro is angry-at people who take money from the sick. Sick people are poor and as weak as children. His sister Edjime was that way. The people who took her money and were unable to cure her had deceived her in the same way as his stepfather had deceived him.

In reply I point out: "When you refuse to accept money from the sick, you are doing just the opposite of what your stepfather did to your. „Edjro is deeply impressed. His refusal to accept payment is the core of his doctrine. He relates still another mean trick played on him by his stepfather. The stepfather promised to give Edjro a house if he would make the bricks and help to build it. Then, when the house was finished, he went back on his word.

I tell him that even before he received his call, he had discovered one thing for himself-that when one is treated unjustly, one must not accept it docilely, but must protest against it.

He breaks in eagerly and says: "God recognized me much earlier (i.e. before the official call), when I was still a baby on my mother's lap, still drinking at her breast. God bided his time. Today I speak with God just as I used to speak with my mother...."

The Master discourses on the kindness and the sternness of God. My latest interpretations have relaxed the atmosphere. Meanwhile the room has grown dark. Edjro's assistants have looked at him inquiringly several times to see whether he wanted them to bring a lamp. Now he leans back,

falls silent, and gives a sign that it is time to leave the hot, close room. He walks out ahead of us. The table and chairs are carried out into the courtyard between the reception hall and the hangar. We sit down again, taking the same chairs we had before. It is growing dark and the moon has risen. When the Master appears, the crowd moves closer. Most of them are standing expectantly in a circle and listening devoutly, their eyes on the Master. Others seem to be resting and are less attentive.

In order to get the conversation started again, I make a remark to the effect that one must find the strength not to let oneself be weighed down by feelings of guilt after one has put a curse on one's own father.

Edjro does not reply directly, but begins to speak of his real father. How it was when he was trampled to death by the buffalo, and how it used to be before his death. "Because your father gave you a cloth when you were naked, and because he didn't get angry when you were little and got his suit

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all dirty, you can never forget him. And then when your stepfather does something bad to you, you remember how it used to be, and God says "What has been done to him, I will undo, I will take him to myself." He continues to praise God in a series of lengthy prayers. Step by step the Master is linking the love he experienced from his real father with his system of ethics and his theology-the refusal to accept payment and the feeding of the sick. The debt one owes to God is paid in the form of prayer. Speaking of mastering one's hate brings him to talk of Africa: „Africa wept, and that is why God came to Africa. He gave the Ivory Coast Houphouët (i.e. its president) in order to free the blacks so that they will all be brothers and have no need to hate anyone anymore."

The people around us are growing restless. They want Edjro to pay some attention to them, too. Their expectations that the Master will end the long day with an evening of song are projected so intensely that he has difficulty in concentrating on what he is saying. Nevertheless he refuses to submit to the pressure and continues his conversation with us. Just as I had had difficulty earlier in getting him away from his followers to talk privately with him, the community now finds it difficult to detach him from his relationship with me and to induce him to resume his role as a prophet.

Finally the faithful take the initiative and begin singing a psalm. Edjro hesitates for a moment. Then he rises to his feet, marks the entry of the voices with his cloth baton, and sends his own voice soaring above the chorus. He sounds a little hoarse now. Towards the end of our talk he had

seemed increasingly weary and apathetic. As he sings, his bearing becomes more erect, and his expression serene and confident. After the song has come to an end and Edjro has pronounced a long blessing for the night, many of his followers depart. Lamps are brought out into the courtyard.

In the meantime the chief apostle has struck up a conversation with Goldy Parin. He is obviously jealous of us and feels himself at a disadvantage with respect to the second apostle, who is in the center of interest as our interpreter. Clearly he would like to prevent the Master from inviting us to stay for the evening meal as well. Since he does not dare to say so openly, Goldy asks him whether it is time for us to leave. Before he can reply, Edjro has seen through his scheme and turns to me with the query: "Is the man to revere the woman? No. It is the man who holds the bushwhacker in his hand. God says no. Paul! Who brought you here? Did she bring you here to me, or did she just accompany you?" Laughing, I concede that he is right. He remarks with a laugh: "You see, that's the way it is. You are the man, as I am. It's not the woman we should revere, but God." In other words, I am supposed to say that we will stay for supper.

The table is set with typical African ceremoniousness and the meal is served, again a French menu followed by fufu and a fish sauce. We eat the fufu and sauce with our fingers, but-elegantly-from two separate plates. During the first few courses, the Master chats about women. He disapproves

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of polygamy. But he is unable to understand men who live without women and maintain that this is the will of God. Again and again he comes back to the subject of monks, shaking his head in amusement and astonishment. He would like us to send him photographs of ourselves, and has two photos brought from his bedroom to present to us. One shows him in bathing trunks, with his sword, and in the other he is giving a patient the holy water to drink.

By now it has cooled off. The air is mild and pleasant, pungent with the fragrance of wood smoke. The moon is bright on the sand of the road. The night is incredibly peaceful. A few older people are still there, listening to us talk. Most of the faithful have departed, others have fallen asleep on the sand. A couple of children are playing quietly nearby.

I ask one of the Master's assistants to come to the car with me to get the sack of rice we had brought. When he sees that it is a large sack (holding 25 kilograms), he calls the secretary, who sends the chief apostle over to help. They examine the sack carefully, but do not let me take it out of the car. They call over a young man of unusually slight build and load the heavy sack on his head. He staggers off in the direction of the kitchens, near the rear hangar.

Meanwhile Goldy has been telling Edjro that we find it hard to leave because it is so peaceful here in his village. He replies: "Yes, the earth here is blessed." He recites no more prayers and gives us no official blessing, saying merely that God will ride with us in our car and will make sure that we get home safely. As master of the house and our host, he escorts us to the car and waits until we have gotten in. Then he returns alone to his house, while the dignitaries and assistants stand around and wait until we drive off.

EVALUATION OF THE SECOND INTERVIEW

Young Edjro's journey to Dabou to visit his mother, his encounter with the man Melek, the trip back to Akradjo with the buffalo, which the stepfather had taken to Orbaff...taken in themselves, all these episodes are of trivial significance. In Edjro's life, however, they play a decisive role. Against the rural background of village and family, God had proclaimed His will, had spoken in person with Edjro Josué-and all because Edjro had been strong enough to rebel against the wicked stepfather and then to exchange him for a good, spiritual father. Thus the groundwork for his later call as a mediator was laid. Something very like this must have happened in the community of the early Christians. There must have been some individual who was capable of solving conflicts that the rest had not been able to solve; and from then on the others could turn to him and lean on him. He was able to show them how they might organize their lives to bring them greater contentment and less anxiety.

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Edjro's personality includes no traits that could be called megalomaniac or hysterical. Nor is he schizoid or schizophrenic, as some of the shamans of other peoples have been accused of being. He possesses the self-esteem, the ease of contact with others, and the sensual and intellectual alertness of an artist who needs his public, who permits himself to be loved and revered, and is himself capable of loving and hating. He has the professional ethic of a prophet who can offer his fellows the effective solutions he has found for his own conflicts, provided they are willing to identify with him in ritual, in prayer, in the acceptance of a few simple, basic ideas, and in song and dance. The knowledge that there is someone who knows what God wills is an enormous relief. Not only does such an individual unite by syncretic means the traditional yearnings, threats, and anxieties with those imposed by Europeans invested with prestige; he also offers a new identity to those who identify with him. And this new identity lends their egos the qualities needed to free them sufficiently from anxiety that fears of sickness, witchcraft, and death

(castration anxiety at the oral and anal levels) can be mitigated by a correspondingly stable countercastration. Though the role of the mediator seems to be active, and that of the community passive-receptive, in reality the mediator is just as dependent on affirmation by the community as the community is on him; he needs his followers, not to heal himself, but to maintain his role as a healer.

On the basis of Edjro's life story and the course of the two interviews with him, it is possible to reconstruct the conflict resolutions that predestined him for the role of a healer. What we cannot explain is why it was precisely he who found these solutions, why he did not turn out to be an alcoholic, a neurotic, or a perfectly ordinary person instead.

The most surprising development was his direct transference to me. The chance to enter a rivalry relationship with relatively little aggressive content, the chance that I offered him at the very beginning and consistently held open by avoiding any counteraggression that might injure him and by presenting myself in the person of a healer of souls with whom he could identify, fell on particularly fertile soil. For this naturally gregarious man who had been revered as a saint day and night for the past two years yearned for a direct exchange of emotions. His identification with the good and powerful God-Father prevented his experiencing any castration anxiety. Since he had included animals in his liturgy, assigning a particular animal to each apostle, and since the one assigned to the apostle Paul was the buffalo, it is possible that my first name, which he used when he talked with me, may have paved the way a positive transference. And so may the fact that I had come together with my wife and Monsieur Memel. The presence of my wife diminished the dangers lurking in homosexuality, and that of Monsieur Memel provided an additional bridge to identification.

Whereas during the first interview he was testing my ability to compete with him and the extent of my tolerance, towards the end a positive

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emotional bond, based on identification and affection, clearly emerged. He concluded that my heart was pure and that I had nothing to fear from his power (the holy water), even though I was a nonbeliever. During the second interview I put this transference to a severe test in demanding that he question once again the conflict resolutions that he had already achieved and that had so far proved adequate. The prehistory of his conversion was in essence the history of a neurotic breakdown, induced by the conflict between his love for his sister and his love for his wife (who turned out to be wicked, like his stepfather) and between egotistic-narcissistic and altruistic urges. The conversion represented a resolution of these conflicts which not only restored his strength, his

health, and his peace of mind, but also acquired social significance in the legend that grew up around it and in the profession and the ritual of the healer, and brought the poor planter great renown.

Measured against the inner dangers that my questions about his "worldly" life were bound to evoke, the resistance that emerged was surprisingly slight. He took refuge repeatedly in prayer and in ritual and consistently refused to let us witness a healing. Most of all, his identity as a mediator was, in effect, a form of resistance, both directly, and even more indirectly, in that his followers were unwilling to give him up to us.

The fact that he dared to cast aside the protective cloak of a mythical figure gives evidence of the elasticity of his ego, which had emerged clearly from the story of his life and from the energetic and capable fashion in which he had organized his movement. And what he revealed when he cast this cloak aside was new to everyone. For in his environment disobedience towards a father figure, not to mention open defiance and rebellion are not merely rare attitudes-they are unheard of. And then, in our interview, he had even been able to "improve upon" his dedication to God; for God now divested of all traces of the wicked stepfather, had no longer forced him into anything, but had taken him to Himself and made him one of His chosen.

In Edjro's case the oedipal conflict had been resolved in a very special way. The early, violent death of his real father did not lead to a devastating feeling of guilt, but rather to an identification with the father, whom the boy had experienced as kindly and protective, an identification with his diligence and with his religious convictions. Edjro's desire, as a prepuberty teenager, to possess a buffalo, as well as his relationship to God, whose instrument and mediator he became after his conversion, are to be understood as results of his identification. There was no need for him to internalize rivalry aggressions, for-as was to be expected on the basis of the form the transference took and as was confirmed by the story of his rebellion against his stepfather-these aggressions were actively directed outward, against the wicked stepfather and later against the witches and magicians, against the evil in men's souls and against social injustice. The

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sublimation of aggression followed the socially acceptable resurgence of incestuous love (for the ailing sister), the subsequent loss of this love object, and a period of crisis;⁶ all this strongly suggests that the dreams in which God appeared to him were characterized by temptations, threats of castration, and renewed identifications with the aims of God the Father.

As nearly as we can tell, castration anxiety was experienced by Edjro in hypochondriac-paranoiac form, in other words in the form of a regression to the level of oral development. Yet he was able

to banish these anxieties in an unusually active fashion, by countering his own impotence with the omnipotence of God, the danger of drowning (i.e. dying) with the lethal power of the water and the redeeming identification with the good father and the nourishing mother of early childhood. Thus his ego development during the phallic phase made possible a relaxation of hypochondriac and projective anxieties so that, instead of fearing sickness, misery, and death, Edjro was able to combat them-in fact had no choice but to combat them.

Edjro equates sickness with fetishes, with the black arts, thus with evil as such, both deliberate and unintentional evil, and with social injustice and the tyranny of money that hangs over the heads of the poor and the weak. Christian as his teachings may appear at first glance, in reality he believes wholeheartedly in witches and evil spirits. If he should succeed in defeating the last of them, he himself would be doomed to fall sick once more; their destructive power would then be directed inward.

"There is no remedy for hatred," says an Anyi proverb. "People must be made to tremble in the face of evil," says Edjro. Sick people are themselves witches or bewitched, or perhaps magicians who appear on purpose to test their power against his own, God-given power. These magicians can be killed with the holy water. Moreover, there are patients who have caused their own illnesses by their wicked acts.

All the dreams of Edjro's apostles, assistants, and converts revolve around the Master's person, his teachings, and his belief in witches. Linked with these motifs are allusions to the personal problems of the dreamers themselves.

Moments of collective experience, living together in this free "hotel of God," singing in the chorus, and taking part in the joyous and harmonious dancing-solidly of this world and not exalted by ecstasy of any kind-afford a high degree of gratification for collective-identification1 needs. This is particularly true in the case of the Anyi, who at home in their villages are constantly striving to satisfy their dependency desires and to find support for their deficient identities, but who just as constantly fail to achieve these aims because of aggressive tensions and the lack of identification1 ideal figures. (Since there are no longer any political enemies against whom they must unite, they are deprived of even this possibility of bringing about a collective identification.) Healing in itself, incidentally, is essentially an individual process, though

it does fulfill the function of resocializing the patient who is healed. We have been able to reconstruct the process more or less accurately on the basis of our exploratory interviews with healed persons. The sick person is accused of "evil." In the beginning he invariably denies this,

insisting that he has never had anything to do with witchcraft. This is why the Adjoukrou ironically call the sick "me kum," "I-saw-nothing's." The patient's denial is held up to him as a lie, and gradually he accepts the accusation against him and identifies with it. He makes a confession, or perhaps a number of confessions, each successive one incorporating more of the suggestively implanted points of the accusation. This suggestion operates according to the mechanism of identification with the aggressor. The healer, in his role as a phallic aggressor who is not destructive if one identifies with him, replaces the aggression stemming from the introjected objects of the patient's family. The patient, who has fulfilled everyone's expectations by confessing to his "sins," no longer feels that he is excluded from a group that is hostile to him. Once he has drunk of the holy water, he experiences himself as a loved object and thus loses his feeling of guilt in connection with his frustration aggression. To put it in another way, the conflict between the patient's instinctual demands and the punishing component of the individual superego is resolved in a way that permits the patient to identify with the demands of the clan conscience, which is what makes it possible for him to conjure individual guilt by means of collective ritual. The amended confessions are embellished with details from the patient's individual experience, over and above the general confession of evil (magical) deeds demanded by the healer. The victims of his magical manipulations are persons known to the patient, whose misfortunes were caused "through him"; objects belonging to him are denounced as the instruments of magic. The psychological process leading to confession links components internalized through identification with things remembered or forgotten (repressed). Often wishes the patient has unconsciously disavowed emerge very clearly, for example when a boy admits that he wanted to kill his father or get rid of an envied smaller sibling. The process can be compared with the working through of resistance in psychoanalysis. The difference lies in the fact that the psychoanalytical interpretation is addressed to the ego, while the healer in the beginning represents a modified, collectively accepted superego. Presumably there is no essential difference in the outcome. We know today that in resistance analysis, too, what takes place is primarily a reorganization of defenses. The process employed by the healer can also be compared to the ritual of confession in the Catholic Church. Both are characterized by an accusation brought forward by a representative of God. Originally, Christian confession was concerned only with the worship of idols, murder, and adultery (Simmel-Staehlin, 1961), and these are precisely the sins that require confession in Edjro's movement as well. But Catholic theology assumes that

everyone is in need of confession, while the healer is consulted by (and ascribes the practice of witchcraft to) only those persons in whom an inner conflict has already manifested itself individually-in the form of sickness-or socially. One difference is that the process employed by the healer is applied collectively, rather like the public confessions that were once customary, so that from the very beginning there is an identification not only with the values, but also with the persons of the environment. The healer demands total confession, not total remorse. For that very reason, however, he has no power to remove the sin by granting absolution. His form of communion, the drinking of the holy water, does not consign the conflict (sin) to an external, higher instance (God); instead, it instills in the patient an active principle which in the future will represent the interests of the superego. The healer relies, so to speak, neither on the mercy of God nor the sincerity of the sinner's remorse, but rather augments the patient's psychic structure (superego) with a new component, which serves as the vehicle of libidinal and aggressive cathexis. The holy water in the patient's body represents the internalized component of the clan conscience.

FOUR CASES: TYPICAL RESULTS OF THE PROPHET'S INTERVENTION

A visit to the healer may affect those who consult him in various ways. The four postconsultation studies outlined below are typical of many others.

Adou Agnimou had consulted the healer, but had experienced no significant improvement in his ailment (which had its origins in his hysterical hypochondria). He attributed the Master's failure in his case to the fact that Edjro's powers had diminished during the forty days he had spent "in the desert." Quite probably, Adou's own European education was not to blame. For he believed implicitly in the healer's effective powers in treating the blind. It was only during the psychotherapeutic sessions with me later on that Adou gradually succeeded in breaking down his strong defenses against the unconscious passive-homosexual desires that frightened him so. It was probably these defenses that prevented a positive transference to Edjro. After I had treated him, I had the impression that Adou would have liked to try out the healing process once more. During our last session he spoke of his need for just such a healer as Edjro, having forgotten apparently that he already had consulted him. It was not the gravity of his neurosis, but his specific psychic structure that made Adou Agnimou such a stubborn case for the mediator.

Monsieur B., a thirty-two-year-old dignitary, divorced, the father of two sons and the chief of a court, was successfully cured of his psychosomatic ailment by the healer. Since adolescence, this

extremely capable, wellbalanced, and intelligent man had suffered from a recurrent, nonspecific inflammation of the urethra which, though it frightened him a good deal,

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did not interfere with either his sexual life or his professional life. Two years ago, he had drunk of the "water of the Master's," and since that time he had felt himself perfectly well and had been able to overcome his fear that the family of his mother might be poisoning him. He had left his father many years ago and had come to the village to work for his uncle (the brother of his mother), and to wait for his inheritance. The uncle was relatively young, however, and hoped to be able to exploit the labor of his industrious nephew for his own profit, by giving the latter a small courtyard of his own. Since his visit to the Master in Akradjo, Monsieur B. has found himself far better able to stand up for himself in the face of his uncle's presumptuous demands. Monsieur B. came to see me just a few days before we were to leave and told me that he wanted to submit to psychoanalysis. He had observed, he stated, that Adou Agnimou had become "normal" as a result of my treatment, but that only now had he plucked up the courage to come himself. He tells me that soon after puberty he had fallen in love with a girl. His father had opposed the affair, so he had left home and gone to the court of an uncle, where he had then married someone else. That was when his urological ailment had started, and he was convinced that the reason his marriage had failed was that he was carrying on the fight with his father "in his heart." I was able to calm his fears in connection with the seriousness of his ailment, gave him a superficial interpretation of the interaction of the factors involved, and recommended that he go back to Edjro once more rather than take a series of penicillin injections. The positive identification with Edjro achieved during the healing process does not seem to have been complete. For example, Monsieur B. retained his European/rational attitudes and rejected Edjro's religious teachings. On the other hand, the introject acquired during the ritual sufficed to cure the symptoms of his ailment. It may well be that Edjro's treatment was diminished in its effectiveness by Monsieur B.'s conviction that he had found a more promising identification figure in me. His seems to be the case of a psychodynamically understandable cure of the symptoms, but one which failed to help the patient master the underlying neurotic conflict.

Ahoussi de Bernard, the village chief of Bébou, gained a lasting advantage from his visit to Edjro. Out of curiosity, and because an Anyi king always has to know everything that concerns his subjects, Ahoussi had accompanied his blind friend and political opponent Assoua to Akradjo. At the same time he had vague hopes that the healer might be able to at least slow down the loss of his vision (he suffers from the cataracts of old age). In any case, when the healer reemerged from

"out of the desert," Ahoussi was among the thousands awaiting him in the courtyard. The very first day the healer asked who he was and summoned him into his presence. He invited him to join him in his evening meal, and during the days that followed the

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two of them could often be observed lying in the sand under the palm trees, deep in conversation. Their talks took the place of the confession normally required. Ahoussi drank the holy water, gave up his "fetishes" without further ado, and returned to Bébou a converted man. Assoua died on the way back, which Ahoussi, like everyone else, interpreted as proof that his confession had not been complete, that he had concealed something.

The Master's skill in picking out a genuine chief from among the thousands in his courtyard and his tact in avoiding any affront to the self esteem of this unusual man became the basis of the friendship that united these two, both of whom were essentially lonely men because of their roles as leaders and because of the personalities that fitted them for these roles. They were more or less equals; Edjro's powers had been bestowed upon him by God; Ahoussi, on the other hand, was nearly twice as old as the healer. Since the beginning of their friendship, Ahoussi had felt himself far better able to accept his eye ailment and the increasing infirmities of old age. When it came to having a tropical sore on his upper arm treated, Ahoussi decided to compromise. He refused to have injections of any kind, saying that the holy water of the Master would kill him if it encountered any magical, pharmaceutical substances in his body. External treatment or a tincture made of the juices of plants, however, would not violate the taboo of the water. When Ahoussi says, "I used to be wicked, but now I am preparing to follow the path (to God)," he is calm and serene. He often thinks that, with the exception of his former patron "Clozel" and his sister Denda, who had cared for him when he was a child, there is no one who has done so much kindness to him as "this handsome, handsome man, Kikoné." The moral effects of his healing have brought about a shift in his feelings of identity and thus in the way he behaves towards society. Although Edjro was unable to cure Ahoussi's physical ailment, the influence he exerts on the chief is clearly apparent in Ahoussi as an individual, and even more strikingly so in Ahoussi's dealings with society.

But a visit to a healer also can have a tragic outcome. The eighteen-year old schoolboy Koffi, from the village of Taakro, had been expelled from school because his increasingly poor eyesight made it impossible for him to keep up with his class. Like most of the inhabitants of his home village, he suffered from onchocerciasis, a disease caused by a parasitic worm, which in all probability would leave him completely blind within a year. His parents, both of them blind as

well, had completely given up hope and were not even taking care of their son any longer. The boy was deeply depressed, and would hardly have been capable of telling us anything when we saw him, if his friend and roommate at the boarding school had not brought him to us and acted as his "spokesman," until he regained the power of speech. Koffi had been to see Edjro and had drunk of the holy water, but since then his vision had grown worse and worse. He rejected European treatment of any kind. In his desperate panic he clung to the conviction that

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the water would kill him if he were to take any of the medicine prescribed by European doctors. At that time we had what we thought was a new and effective remedy that at least could halt the progress of his disease, and as a matter of fact it was by no means certain that the conventional treatment might still not be effective. Since we did not know at that time how tolerant the healer was, it never occurred to us to go with Koffi to Akradjo and to ask Edjro whether he couldn't diminish the power of the water so that it would be safe to try our European treatment on Koffi. About two months later we ran across Koffi again. He was dressed like a village dandy and was in a manic-euphoric mood. During a second visit to the Master, he had supplemented his earlier confession and drunk of the holy water once more. This time he considered himself cured and in need of no further treatment. In fact, he was now almost entirely blind and could no longer venture out into the road without having someone with him.

It is the tragic cases like this that lead to a conflict between European and African medicine, that make the European-trained doctors the enemies of the healers. African doctors are often all the more adamant since at the same time they must fight their own inclinations to succumb to the healers. But when European medicine is powerless to help, as it often is in advanced cases of onchocerciasis, a manic identification with a good and powerful introject is tantamount to a soothing, permanent state of narcosis. For some of the faithful, it may last indefinitely.

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¹ The present text was published originally in German, in the book "Fürchte Deinen Nächsten wie Dich Selbst" (Paul Parin, Fritz Morgenthaler, Goldy Parin-Matthèy, 1961, pp. 314-334), but had to be omitted from the condensed American edition (same authors, 1980).

² In 1963 Akradjo had a total of 2,336 inhabitants. The village is located some twelve kilometers from Dabou (on the Ebrie Lagoon), fifty kilometers from Abidjan, and approximately 250 kilometers from Bébou.

³ Within a period of about three weeks (28 May to 17 June 1965) a total of 803 newly arrived patients (approximately 2/3 women and children, 1/3 men) were registered in Edjro's books. The total number included 37 Anyi (4.6 %) and 230 Baoule (28.7 %). Considering the relative smallness of the Anyi population and the distances between their villages and Akradjo, the percentage of Anyi patients is disproportionately high as compared with that of other ethnic groups. Most of Edjro's patients come from among the peoples living along the coast and in the rain forests. These peoples have a culture similar to that of the Anyi, and there are a number of them who also have a matrilineal family organization.

⁴ These are Christian hymns which Edjro has taken over from the Methodist community. The melodies are reminiscent of Gregorian chants.

⁵ We paid another visit to Edjro Jesue in 1971, five years after the first one. In the meantime the mediator had acquired quite a respectable knowledge of French. He was delighted to see us and eager to sit down and chat with us for an hour or so together with the two or three apostles who were still living with him. He had aged very little. He was still dressed in a white Moslem shirt, this time the cloth wound round his head was yellow in color; he seemed to be in a cheerful, happy mood. He told us that only a few people (at most 100 each week) were coming to consult him now-just as he had predicted during our previous visit. And why were there so few? This was the will of God. He went on to tell us that he was still healing them with the holy water, on the basis of his dreams, but was turning over more and more of them to his assistants for treatment. This had given him extra time to layout new plantations and to resume his business with palm oil. Both ventures were prospering; for the blessing of God lay upon them. In addition he had been promoting other good works. He escorted us to the new chapel, much larger than the old one, and showed us a fairly large outpatient clinic which he had had built in Akradjo at his own expense. This time our conversation was not interrupted by liturgical ritual of any kind.

In 1978 Paolo Bernasconi, Chief District Attorney of the canton of Tessin in Switzerland, had called upon Edjro without knowing anything about our visit. He found him in the midst of a large crowd of believers and supplicants. To judge from Bernasconi's account of the visit, Edjro, who obviously enjoyed talking with him, was in his element as a "mediator." The holy movement was flourishing once more and had become just about as important as it was when we were there in 1966.

⁶ The progress of this crisis corresponds exactly to the course of the vocation of a shaman, as described among other cultures. First the material existence breaks down and the social identity of the subject is challenged or destroyed. This typical event was named by *Maya Nadig* with the apt term "the social death." The social death leads to a psycho-

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(mit Goldy Parin-Matthèy): The Prophet and the Psychiatrist. In: Journal of Psychological Anthropology, 3, 2, 87-117.

somatic breakdown. Finally the vocation is brought about by means of a dissociated state (often induced by a ritual) and/or by dreams originating the shamanic role and identity.