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Chapter 2, Spirit belief in Tudu

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CHAPTER II

SPIRIT BELIEF IN TUDU

Overview

In the chapters that remain, I consider the villagers' religious life in terms of two of its major components: belief and ritual. Whether in Tudu or elsewhere, religion itself is to be seen as but a part of a much larger symbolic system which includes other domains of representations of meanings, such as language, color, and exchanges of various kinds. An adequate treatment of such a symbolic system is necessarily a treatment of the totality of these domains and especially of the transformations of particular meanings between and among domains. My own consideration of religion in Tudu, therefore, is only a part of the whole of local cosmology.

When I use the term "religious beliefs," I am thinking of both conventional and individual understandings, expectations, and evaluations of mystical forces, powers, and beings. It is important to note that there may be and often is a great deal of variation in religious beliefs in the same community; thus one cannot impute convention from individual statements and conversely. Viewed diachronically, this variation in beliefs may be seen to have socially adaptive implications in the face of changing circumstances, in much the same way as biological reproductive variation is the key to population survival in the face of environmental pressures. However, broadly similar belief orientations among individuals are requisite for social life; indeed, social life would be impossible without such a conventional currency of communication.

And here we should consider rituals, for they are in a sense dramatizations, often in a highly stylized form, of the religious beliefs both of the community at large and of the individuals who perform or observe them. Rituals, thus, may be analyzed on several levels: as beliefs in dynamic form, enculturating and reinforcing conventional thought, as cross-cutting secular social cleavages, as a manifestation of the dialectic between the symbolic and the social orders, and as deep-rooted attempts to manage a largely indeterminate universe. I proceed, therefore, by considering religious beliefs in this chapter, and then various rituals in the three subsequent chapters.

The ethnographic literature on Hausa religion is fairly extensive, although for the most part little effort has been made to analyze the social functions of Hausa spirit belief and rituals,
especially in the terms I have just stated. Tremearne's early study (1914) is encyclopedic in the detail it provides on Hausa spirits, rituals, and ritual objects in Hausaphone areas of Nigeria and Tunisia. Greenberg's (1946) analysis of Maguzawa (i.e., non-Muslim) Hausa religion, while a work of high scholarly standards, lies largely in the diffusionist tradition of cultural anthropology and as such examines the cosmological—rather than the sociological—impact of Islam on the Maguzawa. More recently Jacqueline Nicolas (1967) analyzed the social aspects of spirit belief and spirit possession in Maradi, République du Niger. She found that virtually all the members of the spirit possession "cult" were women and most were prostitutes. The cult, in fact, provided an association for socially marginal people. Michael Onwuejeogwu in his review essay (1969) of b ori (spirit) cults examines only the ethnographic literature for the Nigerian Hausa and implies that the b ori cults manifest a homogeneity of organization and meaning throughout Hausaland. He speculates that they represent vestiges of the Habe religion that has been severely attenuated by the spread of Islam especially after the 1804 religious and military crusade of Usman dan Fodiyo. Like Nicolas, Onwuejeogwu finds that the b ori cult members are predominantly female: either prostitutes or divorcées. I.M. Lewis, in his provocative comparative sociological analysis of spirit possession and shamanism (1971), relies on the findings of Nicolas and Onwuejeogwu to support his argument that one often finds such cults of "peripheral" spirit possession where women are excluded from full participation in social and political affairs (p.88).

The data I collected parallel in a number of important ways the findings of these ethnographers. However, it is clear that spirit belief and especially spirit possession in Tudu have several markedly different features and meanings. In fact, I would question the ethnographic pertinence of Onwuejeogwu's general treatment for the whole of Hausaland. There appears to be a wide diversity in many aspects of Hausa spirit belief, but we should expect such differences given the many different variants of culture and social organization that the vast Hausaphone region represents. I believe this range of diversity needs to be measured in both rural and urban areas, among Muslims and Maguzawa, before we can develop general statements about Hausaland (cf. Barkow 1973:70-71 and Hill 1972:4).

From a theoretical point of view, Lewis' and Onwuejeogwu's analyses fail to consider the systematic connection between rituals of spirit possession and other areas of Hausa ritual and belief. Clearly, Onwuejeogwu, a geographer, made no pretense to attempt such an analysis; he limited his treatment to the more common features of spirit possession in Hausaland. Yet Lewis' treatment of female participation in rituals of spirit possession as a culturally sanctioned protest of women's lack of real power in other social domains seems entirely too simplistic. Women's roles and religious participation should be examined in the totality of their cultural and social contexts. As Victor Turner has cautioned,
...the investigator must on no account make the cardinal error of attempting to go straight from the sensory appearance of the symbol to its 'social function.' He cannot evade the fact that symbols have meanings for people he is studying which makes their ritual behavior intelligible, not only to themselves, but also to their alien investigator. It is only after he has learned to crack the cultural code which explains the symbols of ritual that he is in any position to relate the semantic assemblage—which may be discovered to be a system—to the social system, and to the dynamics of that system (1968:8).

The Spirits

Before considering local understandings of the spirits, I believe it is necessary to set forth some data concerning the relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims (arna) in Tudu. Most of this essay concerns the beliefs and rituals of the arna, and I have ignored almost completely the religious beliefs and practices of the village's Muslims. Three of Tudu's 109 households are agnatically linked to a refugee who settled there about 1910. The members of these households have built a small mud-walled mosque, and during the dry season, they send their sons to study with a mallam in nearby Madaoua.

By and large the Muslims and arna share a similar world view. They both believe in the same spirits, although the Muslims do not (and state that they do not need to) carry out the same ritual obligations as their arna co-residents. Yet the situation is hardly one of a static religious dichotomy. All the arna villagers celebrate the Id-el Kabir festivals; most give alms to pilgrims and beggars as an offering of devotion to Allah. A few say the daily prayers with the aid of their prayer beads. Young boys, while affirming their inheritance as arna, talk about their hopes to make the pilgrimage to Mecca as the ultimate act of religious piety. Some arna villages even keep the fast. For many of the arna, Islam is identified with modernity, cities, and sophistication, and several people appear to be part of a process of conversion to Islam: they perform the appropriate arna rituals, and they also meet many of the obligations of Islam. I suspect that their sons may choose the second "inheritance" in the years to come.

The relations between the Muslims and arna are entirely cordial. The Muslims' daughters for the most part have married arna husbands, and have ceased their Muslim rituals; conversely, most of the Muslim men have arna wives who have taken on the appropriate Islamic obligations. The Muslims view the arna as ignorant, but with no amelioration of that condition possible, as it is most important that all
people follow the traditions of their ancestors; the arna agree with this view entirely.

Now, let's get on with the arna belief in spirits. As indicated in the myth which I cited at the outset, Allah enjoys a superordinate status to all animate beings, corporeal or spirit. He is the ultimate source of things and events; yet he is remote. In fact, there is considerable ambiguity about his roles. On the one hand, he is described as distant and unconcerned with human events; yet at other times he is characterized as the relentless, omnipresent, and omniscient judge of human motivation, activity, and destiny. Depending on the circumstances, either image may be invoked by an individual to explain or to justify a particular occurrence. When I inquired as to why a particular old man died, the response was simply, "That's the time that Allah had allotted to him and when it was completed, he died, of course." But when another person died, reportedly the victim of a sorcerer's attack, I was told, "He hadn't yet lived out the time Allah had given him." This ambiguity seems to have little variation; I have heard all my informants make the same declarations.

TABLE 5
THE HIERARCHY OF SPIRITS

1. 

2. Mala'iku -- the angels

3. Annabawa -- the prophets

4. Rafani -- the bookkeepers

5. Aljanu -- close spirits
A. directional spirits
B. specifically evil spirits
   1. local ones
   2. those living elsewhere
C. Mushé spirits -- the soldiers
D. "Inheritable" spirits (Bori)

After Allah, there are four hierarchically ordered categories of spirits who carry out the dictates of their master Allah (see Table 5). All these spirits have as their origin the primordial humans, Adamu and Adama. First are the mala'iku or angels who are innumerable,
close to Allah in heaven and more directly concerned with Muslims than the arna. The mala'iku report directly to Allah on events throughout the world and as agents carry out the dictates of Allah's will. Next are the annabawa or prophets who administer paradise. Their superintendent is the prophet Muhammad.

Third come the seven rafani who are the bookeepers of human good and evil. At the end of each individual's life, the accounts are tallied; if good deeds outweigh the bad, the person is consigned to paradise; for the converse, the individual is sent to hell. While my informants gave no sign of disagreement about the general bookeeping role of the rafani, a few asserted that the rafani kept accounts only of Muslims; a solitary individual asserted the rafani kept track of Muslims' affairs and distributed punishments and rewards in this life, there being no future life. Most, however, stress the importance of the child's naming ceremony where a ram is slaughtered and a local koranic student prays and gives the child its Muslim name. For, it is believed, unless the rafani have a Muslim name for an individual, he will be pitched into hell when he dies. Analytically, it appears that in the naming ceremony where blood is shed—and this seems to occur whenever there is an attempt to summon the attention of supernatural beings—the individual so named is assigned a place in society, here conceived as a unity of the human and cosmic domains. The event announces to all, both immortals and mortals, the identity of the individual in an eternal scheme. In this light may be understood the severe opprobrium attaching to the designation of shege (bastard). It does not refer to whether or not an individual's parents were married at his conception or birth, but whether or not a ram was provided and slaughtered at the naming ceremony.

There is, in actuality, very little discussion of the afterlife—in fact, most people I talked with were hard pressed to provide me with details of what such a life might be like. Yet, at the same time they assured me that they would be going to paradise. A tacit assumption appears to be widespread in Tudu that all but rogues and sorcerers will make it to paradise, for there is little concern expressed about such potential eventualities.

Fourth and finally are the aljanu, those spirits who are of enormous and immediate concern to the people of Tudu. The term aljanu can be used in the sense of all spirits in general, or it may denote one specific category of spirits; context provides the key. Occasionally the terms iskoki (s.: iska) or bori (s. and pl.) are used interchangeably with this class. But in no sense does the term refer to "evil spirits" as Abraham (1962:22) and Bargery (1951:22) define aljanu.

The aljanu themselves also may be classified into four categories: directional spirits, specifically evil spirits, mushé (from monsieur, I presume) spirits, and "inheritable" or bori spirits. By way of warning future investigators, I found that informants greatly enjoyed
naming and describing to me the various spirits, and discrepancies concerning names and attributes arose both among informants and with the same informants over time. For this classification, however, I have included those spirits who were consistently identified by the same names and characteristics.

**TABLE 6**

**DIRECTIONAL SPIRITS AND AREAS OF RULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spirit Name(s)</th>
<th>Domain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jangaré na Yamma</td>
<td>-- western spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwagwa na Hausa</td>
<td>-- southern spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gayya na Adar</td>
<td>-- northern spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babako (Saggo) na Gabas</td>
<td>-- eastern spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annabi Sulémana na Sama</td>
<td>-- sky spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bazatsé na Kasa</td>
<td>-- spirits below the earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ihiritu</td>
<td>He lives with his wife Kwagwa at the earth's eastern wall and &quot;repairs the world&quot; (ya gyara duniya).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The directional spirits (see Table 6) have broad, but vague, supervisory powers over spirits in the six directions (the four cardinal directions plus up and down). All are male except Kwagwa. Each lives at the designated edge of the universe which is conceptualized as shaped like a cube. This box-like universe has four vertical walls and a roof of seven levels and a floor likewise divided into seven levels. Thus each of the spirits (except Ihiritu) has its own mutually exclusive interior facet or zone of rule. These spirits do not come near or affect directly events in Tudu. Ihiritu is variously identified as the chief of all the "inheritable" spirits and as a disciplinarian who punishes any of the aljanu spirits who strike human victims without due cause.

Next are resolutely evil spirits who live all over Hausaland and whose specific manifestations of misfortune often cannot be undone. Informants agreed that the number of these spirits is in the thousands, although each area has only a few. I collected a list of 57 from people in Tudu. For example, Baga is a spirit who resides on the road between Birni N'Konni and Tahoua and who causes auto accidents. Aljani mai Tukwa lives in all navigable waters and occasionally tips over ships.
and boats, drowning the occupants. Locally four spirits fit this category: (1) Zaki lives in the bush and attacks hunters with pains in the neck; (2) Bakin Aljani has sexual intercourse with virgins and thereby makes them sterile; (3) Dan Galadima lives in large trees; he forces people to sit down and to desire never to get up again; and (4) Sarkin Ruwafi lives in well cared-for huts in Tudu and causes severe abdominal pains.

Third, the mushé spirits are believed to have come to the area in 1903, accompanying French troops and mercenaries. According to legend, the spirits liked the area so much, they decided to remain. They number 13 (12 male and 1 female) and several have names with a decidedly francophonic tinge (see Table 7).

**TABLE 7**

THE MUSHÉ SPIRITS (MUSAWA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Yating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Lisidan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kunniri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Kabram Banya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Kabran Sakitar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Kommandan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Macékari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Mai Yaki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Alludamanga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Bakin Baturé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Dan Mama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Donboro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Halima (the only female spirit)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These mushé spirits are reckoned to be soldiers who protect the general welfare of Tudu and its nearby villages by disciplining other recalcitrant spirits. These spirits, after the French departed, developed and continue to develop a relationship with particular people in Tudu who demonstrate soldierly qualities. The sign of the inception of this relationship is severe headache, nausea, and recurring convulsions. When a diviner determines that these symptoms are evidence of an entreaty by one of the 13 mushé spirits to obtain a familiar to dance for it, he will recommend that the individual be inducted into the association of mushé devotees, the 'yam mushé. This, it is reported, satisfies the spirit, and the symptoms are relieved. Periodically then, the entire association performs public dances to entreat these spirits to deal with other errant spirits.

The individuals who endure suffering with the soldierly qualities of perseverance, courage, and patience are thus apotheosized and reckoned collectively to hold an important key to the restoration of harmony.
between humanity and the cosmos. I discuss the culmination of this apotheosis in the dance ritual of the 'yam mushé' below in Chapter V.

### TABLE 8

**A SAMPLE OF THE INHERITABLE SPIRITS, THEIR SIGNS, AND CUSTOMARY SACRIFICE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sign</th>
<th>Sacrifice(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tsirahaku</td>
<td>severe neck pains</td>
<td>Black male goat is killed and a black blouse is set aside to be drenched in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>perfume once a year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Yar Zanzanna</td>
<td>eye difficulties</td>
<td>Red male goat is killed, and a blouse and gourd are set aside annually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aljana Fara</td>
<td>scrotum pains</td>
<td>White goat is killed and a blouse is set aside annually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malam Alhaji</td>
<td>helps school children</td>
<td>White ram is killed once each year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>do well in their</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>their studies and helps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>people in their</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>arithmetic calculations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, the fourth class of aljanu are those who impose particular obligations on all arna; these are the spirits most similar to the bori spirits described by Omwuejeogwu (1969) for the Nigerian Hausa. This group of 47 spirit beings have the following general attributes: each has a particular sign of activity among people, e.g. Sarauniya gives people pains in the lower back so that they have great difficulty standing up. For all but one spirit—Malam Alhaji—the activity is some similar form of misfortune (see Table 8). Further, each non-Muslim in Tudu has obligations to provide sacrifices for as few as two spirits to as many as 14 spirits. These duties may be acquired from one's father, or from one's mother, although most obligations are said to be agnatically inherited, thus I have termed the spirits "inheritable."

While each individual has ultimate personal responsibility in a strict sense to provide annual sacrifices for his/her inherited spirits, the duty in practice falls on the shoulders of each household head to provide the sacrificial items for all people who reckon his household to be their natal residence. The household head is understood to appease the same spirits that his own father did before him. In addition he might learn, through consultation with a diviner (madibi), of obligations
to sacrifice to still other spirits that his own father did not sacrifice to, but who are reckoned to be acquired from either his or one of his co-resident's mother. I was told that households more than likely would avoid misfortune if the household heads diligently met their responsibilities to take the relevant sacrificial items to the appropriate matsafi (the person who ritually slaughters the sacrificial animals—see Chapter IV). In fact, more often than not, the sacrificial animals are taken to a matsafi only after misfortune strikes and divination indicates the cause has been failure to sacrifice. Even such a posteriori sacrifice may not relieve the symptoms, for there is no necessary connection between sacrifice and the absence of misfortune. The spirits are believed to have a zest for the blood of sacrifice and may become angry if they are forced to go without it. Also the spirits themselves are reckoned to be capricious—just like people, I was told—in that after consuming the bloody sacrifice, they may wreak destruction on their devotee. Sacrifices, thus, are regarded as probable, but not iron-clad, protection against (further) misfortune. With proper spiritual safeguards, an "inherited" spirit who is reckoned to be unresponsive to sacrifice may, in fact, be dismissed. It is believed that this disinherited spirit will wander until he finds a household to reside in. There he will give his sign (some misfortune), and be identified by a diviner as a spirit inherited from the victim's mother.

A final broad characteristic of these spirits pertains to their ontological status. Each has its appropriate home (for example, Aljana Fara lives in chew-stick trees); yet a spirit is omnipresent. The spirits are understood to be capable of assuming human form and of being indistinguishable from strangers, although in their non-human form they possess one eye, one ear, one arm, one leg, and wings. The "inheritable" spirits are thus conceptualized as neither fully human nor fully divine.

Nearly all these spirits have the capability of striking a victim with such force that the only cure—determined by a diviner—is induction into the association of spirit devotees, the 'yam bori. (I describe and analyze several features of this association's ritual and social organization below in Chapter V.)

Sorcery

When the misfortune that the spirits bring is extreme, such as the sudden death of a person believed to be in good health, the ultimate cause may not be attributed to the spirits through some failure to sacrifice to them on the part of the victim or his household head, but to the deliberate invocation of the most feared female "inheritable" spirit, Aljana, by someone angry with or jealous of the victim.

This spiritual harming is termed by the Hausa maita, which is customarily translated as "witchcraft" (v. Abraham 1962:639 and Bargery
1951:749), but which I prefer to regard as sorcery. My reasoning is that the Hausa of Tudu regard the causing of spiritual harming to one's neighbor or to one's kinsman to be a consummately voluntary effort. For Aljana to wreak her destruction, it is believed that a person must of his/her own will invoke the spirit's power through specific ritual steps. According to the distinctions Evans-Pritchard made concerning Azande beliefs in spiritual harming, such imputations of deliberate acts to cause spiritual harm may be regarded as sorcery. He writes, "Azande believe that some people are witches and can injure them in virtue of an inherent quality. A witch performs no rite, utters no spell and possesses no medicine. An act of witchcraft is a psychic act. They believe also that sorcerers may do them ill by performing magic rites with bad medicines" (1937:21). For me, the diacritical feature distinguishing sorcery from witchcraft is whether the spiritual harming is reckoned to be intended or unintentional. However, one reasonably could argue that maita should be considered witchcraft because such intention and the attendant ritual actions are only imputed and never admitted by the one accused of maita, nor is there any evidence of anyone actually observing such harming rites. However, whether one assigns maita to the witchcraft or to the sorcery category is largely insignificant; the important point, as Victor Turner has reminded us (1964), is the actual dynamics of spiritual harming.

The Hausa of Tudu maintain that people generally seek to maximize personal interests, often to the detriment of social welfare. When people gossip about a fellow villager who has cheated someone else, one nearly always hears the utterance, "Well, isn't that just human nature?" Public actions are clearly more desirable than private ones, for it is in public that personal proclivities can be checked or canalized for the general good; no such community protection exists for the private act. Thus the person who spends time by himself, talks to himself, and does not easily converse with others is suspected of seeking to pursue his own private goals at his fellows' expense. When I pressed my informants to tell why silence and private actions are potentially harmful, I was told that only sorcerers (mayu) need privacy and desire no conversation. Sorcery, thus, is the quintessential antisocial act.

In terms of local notions of sorcery and their dynamics, we must begin with a calamity—such as a sudden, unexpected death. According to all informants' accounts, such an event could be attributed to one of two causes: either the household head had failed to propitiate the appropriate spirit which, in turn, provoked its vengeance, or he is the object of a sorcerer's attack. A diviner then determines which of these is the actual cause of misfortune. Most often the diviner indicates that a spirit is displeased, and to assuage its anger, an animal sacrifice is prescribed. Occasionally, however, the root of a man's trouble is identified as sorcery. The villagers could recount a total of only 42 firm instances over the previous 67 years where sorcery had been divined as the source of such a misfortune.

Sorcery is usually assumed to be the work of a close relative
(either consanguine or an affine) who has become a sorcerer by making a private agreement with Aljana, this most fearsome of the "inheritable" spirits. Such a person, it is believed, initiates contact with Aljana out of a desire to secure a good harvest of millet and sorghum without having to employ the customary work party (gayya). If, for the individual, Aljana is an "inheritable" spirit, such contact takes place when the person secretly sacrifices a rooster of entreaty to Aljana in a corner of his household. If a person does not "inherit" an obligation to propitiate Aljana, then contact is established by secretly taking a calabash of cow's milk to the bush and leaving it there for a few days. If when he returns, there is no milk remaining, Aljana is reckoned to have drunk the milk and thereby signified that she will grant him the rich harvest he wants in return for a sacrifice of "something with two legs." After the person has had a good harvest, his bill falls due; he can pay Aljana with a rooster or a person. Here an individual has a moral choice; either he may sacrifice a rooster to Aljana or he could nominate a particularly troublesome relative—perhaps one he has quarreled with—for Aljana to molest and eventually to kill and to eat. I was told that any person who refused to cooperate in farm labor was miserly; such people are said to be so morally corrupt that if they had made a contract with Aljana, they invariably would have chosen to give her a human victim rather than a rooster.

Now as to how the people of Tudu deal with sorcery, there have been two solutions. Up to 1960, a diviner who determined that his client had been the object of a sorcerer's attack took his divination to the village headman. If the headman disagreed with the divination, using such evidence as the character of the accused and whether his crops had been good that year, the diviner was told to do his divining more carefully, in which case he always prescribed that his client sacrifice to one of his "inheritable" spirits. If, on the other hand, the headman agreed with the divination, the accused was taken to the vassal prince (sarki) in Madaoua who either dismissed the case if the accused paid him a fine of 4,000CFA (U.S. $16) or sent the accused to the village of Gumbin Kano, nearly 80 kilometers west of Madaoua. There the accused would be given swamp water to drink. If he had vomited it, he would have demonstrated his innocence; had the water been swallowed, on the other hand, he would have shown his guilt and would have to pay the sarki 8,000CFA. According to my informants' accounts, all 42 villagers publicly accused of sorcery have been sent to Gumbin Kano, and all but five were "proven" guilty. Upon the return of the sorcerers to the village, there were no further punishments; however, any person shown to be a sorcerer was feared and could never hold a village office.

In 1960, right after independence, a ruling was promulgated by the sub-prefect which treated accusations of sorcery as defamations of character. Anyone so defamed could take his accuser to court to be prosecuted. This act had the effect in Tudu of eliminating the headman's role in sorcery cases. For no longer did diviners dare make their charges of sorcery public, lest the ones so charged take them
to court under the new rule. Obviously sorcery beliefs could not be legislated out of existence, and new means were necessary to control sorcery in Tudu. One of the more prominent diviners, Abdu 'dan Umma, innovated a procedure for sorcery control which other diviners quickly adopted. If a diviner determined that his client were the object of a sorcerer's attack, he would have the client drink an intoxicating herbal brew—the one the 'yam mushé drink before their dances—and then he would take him to a prominent path intersection in the village. (It is interesting in examining the significance of space here: the path intersection is outside all residential clusters; yet all people use these paths; it is a locus apart from each but integral to all.) There, in public, the diviner would kill a rooster and let the blood spill on the center of the path intersection, while the client reclined close by. Then, supposedly thoroughly intoxicated, the client was addressed by the diviner as Aljana and implored to reveal the name of the person who invoked her. Several names were given, and each person mentioned was summoned and asked by the diviner to jump over the client's body three times. In this way, I was told, Aljana would depart from the client's body and return to her invoker, there to wreak havoc in his household. Of course, no one would know to whom Aljana had fled until misfortune struck in his household. If an individual refuses to jump over the client's body, he would be admitting culpability for the sorcery; however, according to informants, this has never happened.

With this new procedure, no one would be directly accused of being a sorcerer, hence no charge of character defamation could be taken to court. Yet, many people were privately critical of Abdu for his innovation—which he claimed was revealed to him by the mushé spirits in a dream—because the sorcerer would not be identified immediately and ostracized, and would remain free to ensorcel until Aljana finally made apparent her revenge. Abdu's response is simply that Aljana and ultimately Allah will see that justice is levied and that those who are unhappy with the new procedure are merely impatient with that slow but sure justice.

When we examine all the cases of sorcery accusation (the 37 before 1960 and the 5 cases since), a pattern revealing domestic strains emerges. In every case, the reputed sorcerer was male, and his victims were either brothers, patrilateral parallel cousins, or their dependents. Further, the sorcerer and his victim lived either in the same household or in one of the immediately adjacent ones. The tensions between brothers and brothers' sons emerge, I believe, as a consequence of their competition to inherit the best farm land from their aging fathers, and from jealousies arising when one brother harvests more grain than another.

Analysis of Spirit Beliefs

Before we can turn our attention to the performance of the religious rituals associated with these beliefs, several analytical
comments concerning Hausa notions of spirits are in order. First, let me repeat that this set of beliefs about the spirits just presented as well as notions about sorcery are publicly expressed and widely shared among the arna of Tudu. This is not esoteric knowledge limited to a few diviners or old men concerning a bygone era. The spirits themselves appear to occupy a spectrum from those very remote to those very near. Allah as the remotest spirit expresses best the notion of divinity: singularity, directly unreachable, with undefined roles, almost otiose, yet at the same time omniscient and omnipresent. At the other end of the spectrum are those "inheritable" spirits who are quasi-human; indeed the myth of their creation is a statement of their fundamental humanity. They are many; their normative roles are clearly defined; humans have direct access to them; and they are clearly concerned with everyday events. They do not have the powers of knowing that Allah has, and they may be capricious in their actions with the people they are associated with.

Spirit belief in Tudu generally may be seen fundamentally as an attempt to bring order and management to the disorder of real calamitous experiences. Several themes at different levels of abstraction appear relevant here. At one level, the entire spectrum of spirits provides an existential etiology for all sorts of unpredictable calamities; at the same time, however, there are many physiological maladies that are regarded as having entirely natural causes. The local arna belief in the spirits should not be seen as a charter for a simple fatalism.

At a more abstract level of analysis, it appears that while order is clearly desired, the cost of maintaining it is very high. That is to say, there is great concern to forestall calamitous events, and even when they do occur, to keep their deleterious effects to a minimum. However, this control may be achieved for each household only by the diligent provision by the household head of the proper animals for sacrifice. When relief of some individual malady is not obtained through the death of animals, the person's suffering is often apotheosized in his or her induction into either the 'yan mushé or the 'yan bori spirit possession association.

Another theme that is associated with the attempt to manage the disorder of calamities is that order and control appear to be consonant with the patriline and with hierarchy; disorder and danger with the matriline and with individuality. Sons who head households should provide the same sacrifices as their deceased father did before them; this is reckoned to be the most fundamental way to minimize calamities. Further, if a person suffers some malady, it is the duty of the household head where that person was born to provide to the matsafi the sacrificial animal for the spirit divined to be the source of the difficulty. Yet a diviner may determine that a particularly troublesome sickness has been caused by a spirit hitherto not given sacrifices in that individual's natal household, but in his/her mother's natal household. The spirits who have been dismissed--released from the order of the patriline and from obligation--are free (i.e., uncon-
trolled) to wander until they find a familiar whom they strike with a particular misfortune. Such a spirit is diagnosed by diviners as a "spirit from the mother's direction." Further, sorcery may be seen as the very antithesis of the social and moral order, of the patriline, of hierarchy. Here the sorcerer on his own—not through his natal household head—performs a sacrifice to cause and not to relieve a calamity. The ritual is reckoned to be performed totally in secret. Aljana, the patron of sorcerers, is the one spirit whose normative roles are ambiguous.

The attempt to control the calamitous effects of the spirits may be discerned in the very dynamism of spirit belief. Spirits are dismissed; others are acquired, whether for individuals personally or for the community. Yet in this dynamism three central themes remain: (1) disorder and danger come about through the failure of individuals to fulfill social obligations; (2) what is hidden or secret is unordered and by definition evil—witness Adama's hiding her children in the quote on p.1 or the heinous activities of sorcerers--; what is open and public is ipso facto ordered; and (3) order is achievable only through the ritual killing of animals and the apotheosis of individual suffering.