AFA SYMBOLISM AND PHENOMENOLOGY IN NRI KINGDOM AND HEGEMONY: AN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL ACTION.

In this work *afa* is analyzed as one of the essential features of the world-view of the Nri people, thus determining the structure of their cognitive style and life-world. Four hypotheses are tested by using ethnographic data collected in Nri and the theoretical frame-work underlining Schultz and Mills' works. The hypotheses are as follows: *afa is a system of symbol, afa is a system of social reality, afa is a system of communication and control, and afa is a system of social action.* It has been possible to determine the intra-structural and interstructural relationships of the four systems, as systems within a total system with some degrees of success, though certain structural and functional elements remain yet to be determined because in some cases the systems are not uniformly or logically coherent. These short comings may be due to various reasons such as the limitations of the methods used in this investigation, and some aspects of *afa* yet to be understood by the author. But on the whole the presentation and method of exposure, *present afa as integrated sub-systems within a larger system of African philosophy.*

The most significant aspect of this study is the autonomy of the systems and their inter-relatedness. For example, *afa* as a system of symbols is not only structurally autonomous but also closely related to *afa* as a *system of social reality,* communication and control, and social action. These systems as one totality are directed towards the construction of social reality which determines the nature, character and dynamics of social action which is defined as the relationship between the past, present and future which is the central theme of African philosophy, first systematized by Aurelius Augustine (St. Augustine of Numidia 345 - 439 AD) and Ibn Khaldun (1332 - 1406 AD) of North Africa. This relationship echoes in the work of Mbiti (1969) in a modified form, arguing wrongly that Africa has no concept of future. This work places this aspect of African philosophy in its socio-cultural context.

Professor Angulu Onwuejeogwu is the author of several well known books such as: *Social Anthropology of Africa: An introduction, An Igbo Civilization: Nri Kingdom and Hegemony, The Biafran Army: A study in Military Sociology, The Principles of Ethnogeneachronology: Dating Nri Igbo Oral Tradition,* and many articles in learned journals. At present he is a professor of Anthropology in the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.
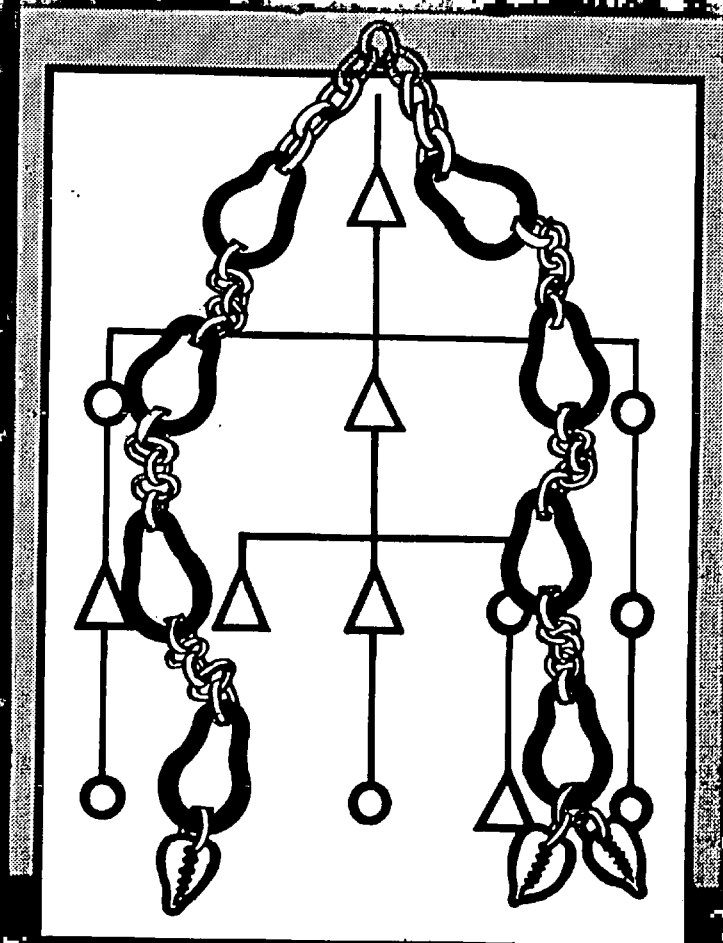
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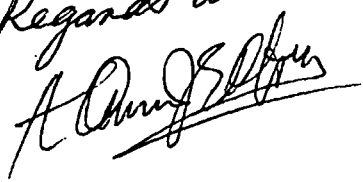
AFA SYMBOLISM AND PHENOMENOLOGY IN NRI KINGDOM AND HEGEMONY: AN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL ACTION.

Compliments and Regards to Victor Manfredi

BY

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CONDITIONS FOR SALE

DEDICATED

TO

PRINCE CHIEF RUBEN TABANSI of Nri, *(ORIMILI)*,
CHIEF PHILIP UMEADI of Nri, *(SAN)*
PRINCE CHIEF FRED AJUDUA LL.B., BL.
(Onwanetilora of Ibusa)
CHIEF ELOKA OKOCHA M.Sc. *(OBAKWESI)*
SENATOR NOSIKE IKPO *(Former Onu Diokpa of Ibusa)*
CHIEF JOE ELUEME (Present *Onu Diokpa of Ibusa*)
LATE PA D.O. ONO of Ibusa *(Onyeogadilihima OBAKWESI)*
UMU NRI or UMU NSHI in Diaspora.

PREFACE

This book begins by demonstrating how *afa*, (which for lack of an appropriate word in the English Language, may be translated as prediction), has its roots firmly embedded in the religious philosophy of the Nri, Igbo spreading its tentacles into the social, cultural, political and economic spheres where decision - making is an essential feature of social action as defined by Schutz.

In this work *afa* is analyzed as one of the essential features of the world-view of the Nri people, thus determining the structure of their cognitive style and life-world. Four hypotheses are tested by using ethnographic data collected in Nri and the theoretical frame-work underlining Schutz and Mills' works. The hypotheses are as follows: *afa* is a system of symbol, *afa* is a system of social reality, *afa* is a system of communication and control, and *afa* is a system of social action. It has been possible to determine the intra-structural and interstructural relationships of the four systems, as systems within a total system with some degrees of success, though certain structural and functional elements remain yet to be determined because in some cases the systems are not uniformly or logically coherent. These short comings may be due to various reasons such as the limitations of the methods used in this investigation, and some aspects of *afa* yet to be understood by the author. But on the whole the presentation and method of exposure, present *afa* is integrated systems within a larger system of African philosophy.

The most significant aspect of this study is the autonomy of the systems and their inter-relatedness. For example, *afa* as a system of symbols is not only structurally autonomous but also closely related to *afa* as a system of social reality, communication and control, and social action. These systems as one totality are directed towards the construction of social reality which determines the nature, character and dynamics of social action which is defined as the relationship between the past, present and future which is the central theme of African philosophy; first systematized by Aurelius Augustine (St. Augustine of Numidia 345 - 439 AD) and Ibn Khaldun (1332 - 1406 AD) of North Africa. This relationship echoes in the work of Mbiti (1969) in a modified form, arguing wrongly that Africa has no concept of future. This work places this aspect of African philosophy in its socio-cultural context.

This is a slightly modified work of my Doctor of Philosophy thesis, for London University 1978 recommended for publication. As a 'predictor' I have the authority to synthesize and analyze the principles underlining the *Afa* system and here I have done it in the language of Anthropology.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

1. Main Themes and Hypotheses:

The main theme of this book is the study of *afa* symbolism in Nri (Igbo) as a system of social action. It aims at describing and analyzing the symbolism of *afa*, (which for lack of an appropriate word in the English language, may be translated as prediction), and demonstrating that *afa* is an essential feature in the construction of social reality which determines the nature, character and dynamics of social action in Nri. [1]

To achieve this objective, the hypotheses formulated and tested are as follows:

> *Afa* is concerned with the social construction of reality: consisting of systems of symbols, social reality, communication and control, and social action. *Afa* is an African Philosophy.

These hypotheses raise several major theoretical and methodological problems. They can be broken down into three areas: firstly, the basis for analysing *afa* as a system embracing four autonomous systems, secondly, the relationship between these systems, that is, how they as systems operate interdependently in the construction of social reality in the world of the Nri people. Lastly, *afa* is a Philosophy of Social Action.

2. Methodological Problems and Approach:

The methodological problems centre on techniques used to investigate objectively a problem that is purely subjective and charged with both individual and group emotions and 'secrecy'.

My approach was to learn the processes of *afa*. I had myself initiated into the association of predictors in 1967. My first master and teacher was Anidumaka of Uruoji. He died in 1969. When I returned to continue my fieldwork in 1970 - 1972, I did more work on afa at irregular periods with different masters. In 1975, I became closely attached to another adept at prediction,

Otaji of Akamkpisi.

Between 1975 and 1977, I was able to collect and follow up in detail, 52 cases. Furthermore in depth studies of 30 cases were done by intensive and rigorous interviewing of actors that featured in the case-study and some non-actors who were interested in the case. (See 8 samples of the Case-studies in Appendix 1). I made sure that I completed a case-study and follow-ups before holding interviews with other individuals. Case-studies and follow-ups are delicate to handle, but with tact and a lot of good will and confidence, it was possible to achieve some measure of success. Interviews were not only useful for understanding the latent aspect of social action, but also served as useful means of cross-checking, verifying and testing the facts unearthed in case-studies and statistically quantified to help buttress the arguments put forward.

3. Theoretical Approach:

The theoretical framework of this analysis derives heavily from three major sources: the way Nri people conceptualize their social world, the thesis of Schutz, and the works of Mills. Their theoretical analyses are conterminous in many respects with Nri conception of social world.

On the whole, my theoretical analysis assumes two dimensions, the first attempts a critique of existing works in this field of inquiry and supports some of the major issues raised by Schutz and Mills with ethnographic materials derived from the study of the Nri people. By doing this, attempt is made to demonstrate the deep insight in Schutz and Mills' works. Schutz views the social world as a tripartite relationship of the past, present and future while Mills argues that the major issue of sociology is the relationship between biography, history and social structure. The second dimension welds together the views of Schutz and Mills by using Nri ethnography and employing them in explaining the phenomenon of *afa*. For example,

it is shown that the predictor, *dibia afa*, in dealing with the biography of the individual, the social structure and history of Nri, attempts to reconstruct social action.[2] Social action embodies the linkages and the influence of the past, present and future actions of predecessors (ancestors), contemporaries (those living) mainly consociates, and successors (those unborn), respectively. The relationship between the past (ancestor), the present (those living) and the future (those to be born) is the central theme of Nri philosophical thinking; for it represents the concept of 'what was', 'what is' and 'what shall be'. This philosophy is the major theme of the discipline of *afa*.

The analysis does not reject the mystical aspect of *afa* but puts it within its social context whereby 'old' social reality is transformed into 'new' social reality. The transformational process is expressed in the idiom of mysticism and religion though it is achieved through a complex communication network system which involves the bridging of paramount reality' and 'finite province of meaning' with signs and symbols. These two forms of realities are defined in the Schutzian sense whereby the former refers to the reality of our everyday life and the latter to the world of religious experience.

Finally, the analysis ends by concluding that *afa* may be considered as a p'.ilosophical discipline which aims at explaining relationships between past, present and future and reducing these relationships to the 'practical' realities of social life as expressed in social action.

4.   Structure of Exposition

My study of *Afa* occupies two intersecting levels of inquiry, which falls into two stages. The first deals with *afa* in its ethnographic context, seeking primarily its *locus* and significance in the religious, political, social and economic life of the Nri people. The second describes the structure and processes of *afa*, analyzing it as a system of symbols, knowledge and social reality, communication and control, and social action. It concludes by examining the integration of these epistemological levels, and how, correspondingly,

the inner and outer forms of *afa* articulate in the construction of social reality as relationship between past, present and future: the worlds of the ancestors, the living and the unborn.

NOTES ON THE INTRODUCTION

1.   This system of prediction in which 16 signs, each named, are combined to produce 256 combinations of complex signs and words, is widely known with different names among different peoples of West Africa, especially those inhabiting the forest zone. It is found in Nigeria among the Igbo, Yoruba, Igala, Idoma, Ijo and Edo - speaking peoples. It also occurs in the Republic of Benin (Dahomey), Togo and Ghana. The languages of these peoples are described by linguists as Niger Congo (Kwa) (Greenberg, 1963; Armstrong, 1964).
The Yoruba *Ifa* has been studied by Bascom (1969) and Abimbola (1976). Bascom was interested in the structure and meaning of *ifa* and its communicative function, while Abimbola was interested in the literary aspects. In this work, it is not possible to relate the *Afa* system of Nri to the Yoruba *Ifa* system because here I am only interested in *afa* symbols and social reality and social action. It will be too ambitious to attempt a comparative analysis of *ifa* and *afa* in this work.

2.   Some anthropologists may be skeptical about the use of Oral Tradition. In all my works, I regard Oral Tradition as a corpus of information handed down from generation to generation undergoing modifications. But it is a useful source of information because, when scientifically handled, important historical, geographical, demographical, literary, technological knowledge, to mention but a few, can be obtained from it.
Several African historians are developing what may be called the historiography of Oral Tradition and are now able to push the frontier of African history far beyond the advent of written records in some parts of Africa. In my book An Igbo Civilization: Nri Kingdom and Hegemony, (1981), I demonstrated how data from Oral Tradition can be cross-checked and validated for historical reconstruction and interpretation, by using archaeological, comparative linguistics and social structure.

PART 1

AFA IN ETHNOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

MAP 1: THE ECOLOGY OF THE IGBO CULTURE AREA

IDOMA

IGALA

Nsukka

B

B

Y

C TIV

EDO

Ilah

E

Enugu

Y

Abakaliki

C

Asaba

Aguleri

B

Y

C

Agbor

E

Nri

Awka

Udi

B

Oreri

Ibusa

Awgu

C

Y

Ogwashi-Uku

Onitsha

Igbo-Ukwu

Y

MBEMBE

E

B

Okigwe

D

Afikpo

YAKO

Kwale

Oguta

Orlu

D

E

Aboh

A

A

Aro-chukwu

UMON

URHOBO

Owerri

Umuahia

CROSS R

E

A

A

Aba

IBIBIO

Ahoada

E

ANANG

Diobu

Port Harcourt

A

IJAW

OGONI

IMO R.

MILES
0 10 20 30
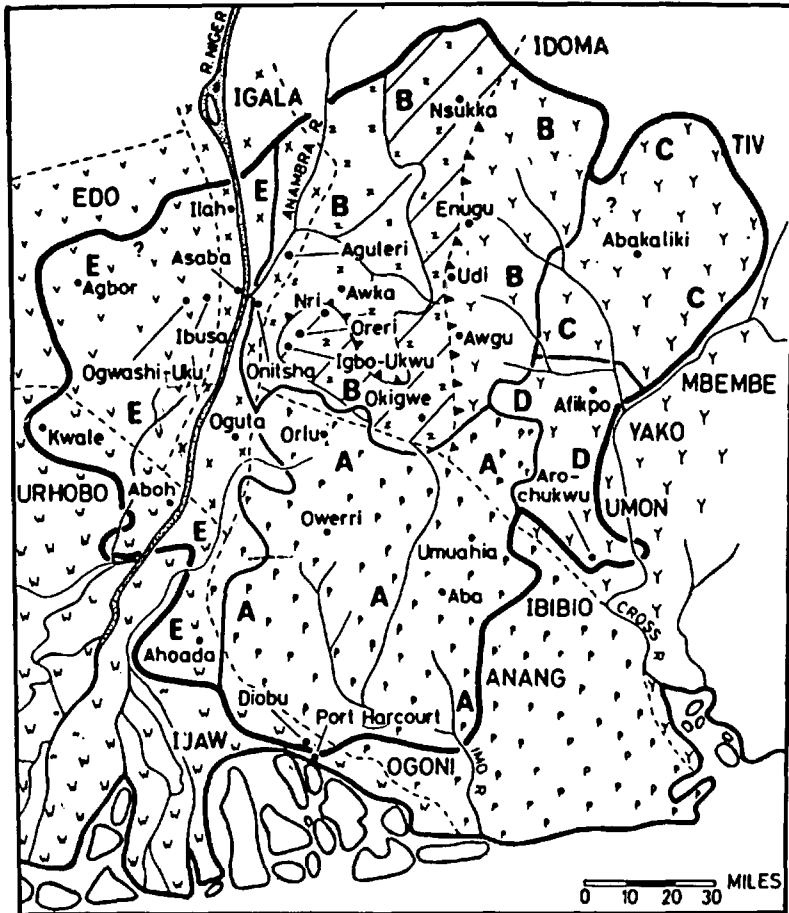
- - - - Ecological boundary
——— Boundary of Igbo sub-culture
▬▬▬ Boundary of Igbo culture area
ᵛ·ᵛ·ᵛ Escarpment
/ / / Plateau
Palm belt   ? Enclaves

Cross River basin   **A** Southern Igbo.
The Scarplands   **B** Northern Igbo
Lower Niger valley   **C** N. Eastern Igbo
Midwest lowlands   **D** Eastern Igbo
Niger Delta   **E** Western Igbo

MAP 2: ANTHROPOGRAPHIC MAP OF NRI (1966-68)

AGBANABO

N
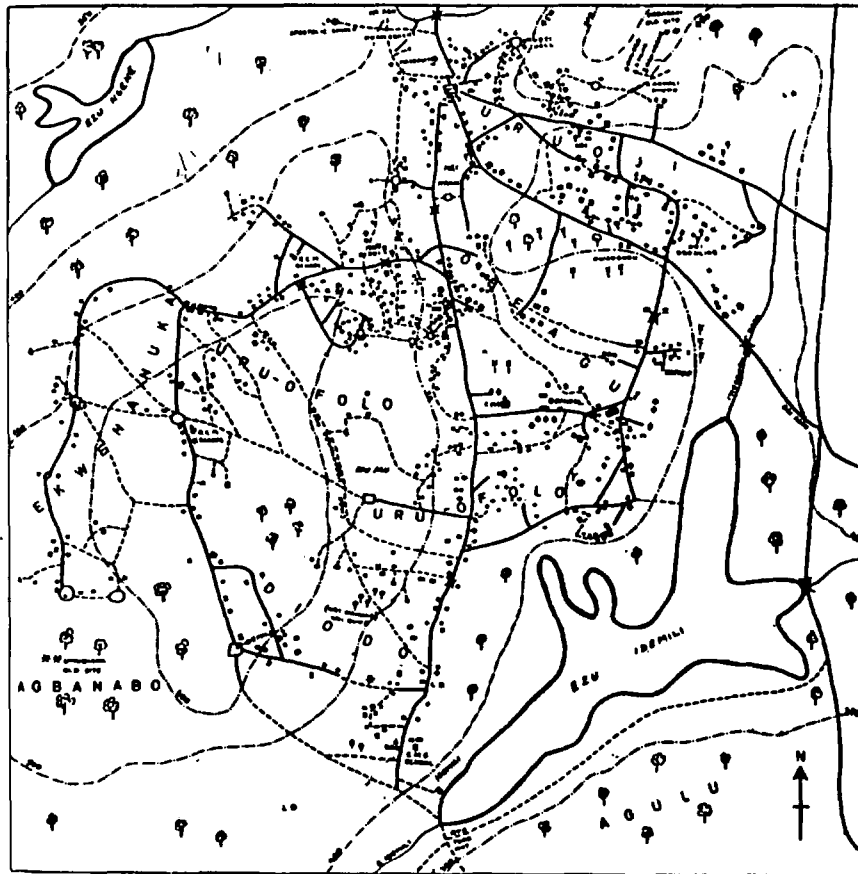
		MODERN MALE COMPOUND		NGIGE		A VILLAGE
MODERN COMPOUND WITH STOREY BUILDING		BURIAL FOREST		LAND DISPUTE IN PROGRESS
COMPOUND WITH TRADITIONAL WALL/DOOR		MIXED FOREST		MOTORABLE ROADS
WOMAN'S HOUSE		OPEN PLACES AND SQUARES		PATHS
ABANDONED SITE		MARKET - EKE, AFO, OYE, NKWO		CONTOUR
MMUO HOUSE		PALM FOREST		RIVER OR STREAM
PUBLIC TEMPLES (OBU MGBAKO)		IYI		CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSION APOSTOLIC CHURCH
MODERN STORES AND SHOPS		SWAMP		
SHRINES		LAKE		

MAP 3: NRI TOWNS IN THE IGBO CULTURE AREA·

Most of the important Towns mentioned in this work are indicated in this map
- ✦ NRI
- ▲ ORERI
- ⊙ Towns founded by the children of ERI
- ⊚ Towns with Nri lineages
- X Arochukwu
- ● ENUGU
- •/ Other Towns
- ✝ Igbo-Ukwu & Ezira Archaeological sites

0   10   20   30 Miles
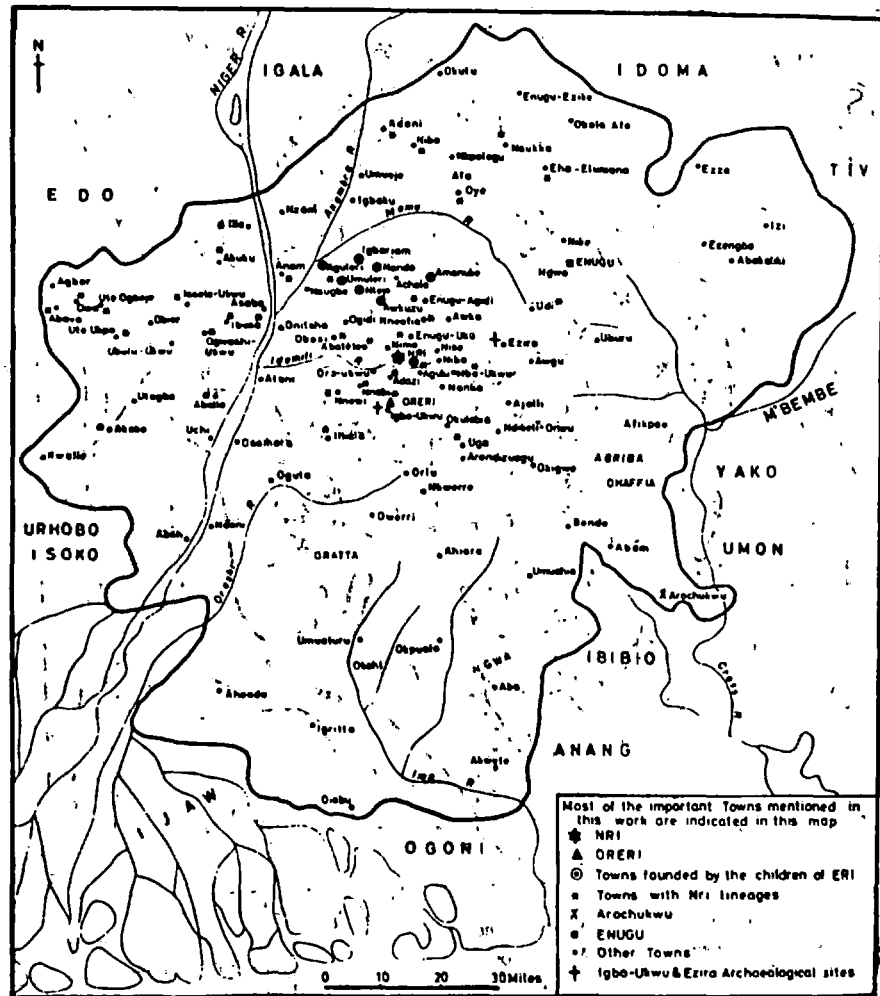
CHAPTER 1

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF *AFA* IN NRI RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY

1. Igbo Culture and Nri Subculture

In order to appreciate the full implications of Nri religious philosophy and the significance of *afa* in contemporary Nri society, it is necessary to summarize the nature, character and development of Nri culture in time and space. The purpose of this background knowledge of Nri is to familiarize the reader with some of the major social tools with which the Nri people conceptualize and reconstruct social reality which determines the dynamics of social action in Nri.

The Igbo culture area may be enclosed by an imaginary line running outside of the settlements of Agbor, Kwale, Aboh (West Niger Igbo), Ahoada, Diobu, Umubayi (Port Harcourt), (Nsukka area), Ebu (West Niger Igbo), (Onwuejeogwu, 1975a). In this area, the Igbo live in patrilineages, *umunna*, ranked from the minimal to the maximal. Patrilineages, of variable depth and span and of diverse origins are federated into villages, *ama* or *Ogbe;* villages are federated to form towns, *obodo.*

Nri culture was born and nurtured in the upper valley of the River Anambra under the founder of Eri clan before A.D. 900. Under their leader Nri, the people migrated South-westwards around A.D. 1000 to found Nri town.[1] From there, the sub-culture diffused along Nri migrations to various parts of Igboland and beyond. A politico-religious hegemony was established which reached its hey-day probably between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries. By the late seventeenth century, a decline had begun and this hegemony was finally liquidated by British administrators and the missionaries between 1911 and 1934. (Onwuejeogwu, 1974 and 1976).[2]

Permanent Igbo settlements are widely distributed in six ecological zones within the Igbo culture area; these comprise (See Map 1); the Southern half of the scarplands of South-eastern Nigeria; the Southern half of the lower Niger basin; the mid-west lowlands; the Niger Delta; the

Palm belt of South-eastern Nigeria; and the Cross River Basin. The town of Nri with a 1963 population of about ten thousand, in an area of six square miles is situated 400 - 600ft. above sea level, in the depression of Agulu Lake, on latitude 6.08° N and longitude 6.02° E. about eighteen miles east of Onitsha on the River Niger (Map 2). In the scarplands of South-eastern Nigeria, land-scapes vary as is evident from the scarp slopes at Enugu and Agwu, the eroded gullies at Agulu and Nri, the flat top ridges at Aku, the escarpment running west of Nsukka to Agwu and the Udi-Nsukka plateau (Udo, 1970). Centuries of human habitation have modified the characteristic tropical ecology of the Southern part into open mixed palm forest. Rural population densities of 450 - 1,000 persons per square mile have been recorded. Around Awka, Nri, Nanka, Nnewi, Igbo-Ukwu and Oreri, farming is not very productive as the soil has been subjected to centuries of surface erosion and leaching. This disaster which probably began centuries ago may have set off the series of famines well remembered in oral tradition.

The inhabitants of this area are distinguished by D. Forde and G.I. Jones as the Northern Igbo, with these cultural features: a highly developed titled system based on the *ozo* title, a well developed *mmuo* society, deep genealogies of eight to ten generations, and elaborate temples for supernatural beings *alusi* and ancestor temples called *obu.* Particularly at Nri and Oreri, sacred kingship developed *par excellence.* It is this ecological area that nurtured the cultures that produced and used the Igbo-Ukwu and Ezira bronze objects. (Shaw, 1970; Hartle, 1967).

Nri hegemony and kingdom, were based on a ritualized political system and domestic economy. Trading activities were ritualized by associating markets with the supernatural beings *eke, oye, afo.* and *Nkwo.* Yam, palm produce, cocoyam and vegetables were ritualized in the *ifejioku* cult. Leadership was ritualized in the various title

systems epitomised in the *ozo* title which was controlled and directed by the king, Eze Nri. Similarly, crude agricultural tools such as the hoe, the cutlass, digging stick, club, single and double - headed iron spear, and swords of various types were all ritualized. It was an abomination to spill human blood in violence on the surface of the earth, which itself was ritualized as a supernatural force, *ana* and *ajana*.

The concepts peace, harmony and truth were ritually symbolized and enacted in the ceremonies of the *ozo* titled men, who were the political elite. Nri men with the *ichi* title always carried the spear of peace, *otonsi*. With *otonsi* in their hands and *ichi* marks on their faces, they were identified as the 'sons' of the Eze Nri, *nwa Nri*, who controlled the mystical 'force'. They travelled unmolested among Igbo settlements as agents of the *Eze Nri*, performing political and ritual functions: removal of abomination, dissolution of the codes of abomination and enactment of new codes, ordination of ritual and political officials, crowning of chiefs, peacemaking and creation of markets and shrines. Performing these activities, Nri spread into different parts of Igboland; thus the Eze Nri held some degree of control over the external and internal politics of the older Igbo settlements.

These settlements regarded themselves as under the spiritual umbrella of the Eze Nri, who in turn, regarded them as settlements to be mystically protected from the catastrophes emanating from the mystical forces believed to plague human existence. Thus a hegemony of politico-religious ascendancy was established. By 1911 Nri had made significant inroads into other ecological zones within the Igbo culture area (the extent of which cannot be discussed here). The word NRI, has today assumed six contextually determined connotation: an Nri settlement which has grown into a town, the subjects of the Eze Nri, any clan claiming relationship with the Nri of Agukwu, Diodo and Akamkpisi villages, and the culture disseminated by Nri over a large portion of Igboland and beyond, for over one thousand years (Onwuejeogwu, 1974).

2.   Nri Religion

The concept of *afa* is contained in the religious philosophy of Nri people. A general description of Nri religion is therefore necessary to show the significance of *afa* before its place in economic, political and social life can be fixed. Traditionally, Nri are farmers, traders and traditional priests. At present many are private businessmen and government workers, while many remain traditional priests. Nri cosmology and religious belief, like that of other Igbo peoples, inter-weave five interdependent concepts: *Chukwu, alusi, mmuo, Uwa,* and *ike mmadu.*

Chukwu (from *chi ukwu*) is the creator of all things, with four manifestations of his existence. First, *Chukwu* is *anyanwu,* in a symbolic meaning of 'the sun': as the sun's light is everywhere so is *Chukwu's* presence everywhere manifested; as the sun's/ rays are powerful so is *Chukwu* all powerful; and as the sun's rays reveal things so is *Chukwu* the source of knowledge. Secondly, *Chukwu* is *agbala,* the fertility of the earth and of the beings that inhabit it. Thirdly, *Chukwu* is conceived as *chi,* or the power in living beings enabling them to procreate from generation to generation. Fourthly, *Chukwu* is *okike,* Creator of everything visible and invisible, and of the laws that govern them. These laws are neither good nor bad, but simply enable things to work. Good and evil are the products of invisible beings or forces, *alusi. Alusi,* the invisible creations of *Chukwu,* are the 'beings' or 'forces' that manipulate the hidden laws to shower good and evil unto the visible world of men. The Nri distinguish four types of *alusi:* those directly established by *Chukwu* such as *ana,* and *Igwe;* those established by *Eri* such as, *Ifejioku, eke, oye, afo,* and *nkwo;* those established by the ancestors such as *idemili, udo, aro;* and that called *agwu* which is an ambivalent supernatural force associated with *afa.* It reveals the secret of the invisible and visible world to the traditional medicine-men and predictors called the *dibia.* During disputes, individuals can swear on some *alusi:* 'May the *alusi* strike the person who commits the offence.' The roles of the *alusi* in oath-taking, *iyi,* and in contractual relationship,

* àlụsị ≈ òrìṣà*

igba ndu, are central to the system of social sanctions in Nri society where ancestors are conceived as playing an intermediary role between the *alusi* and the ancestors' living descendants.

The Nri also recognises another set of spirit forces known as *Mmuo. Mmuo* are the spirits of the dead, classified into good and evil. The good *mmuo* are placed in a hierarchy as follows: the spirits of all Eze Nri, the collective royal ancestors, *Nri Menri;* the spirits of dead *ozo* titled men, the *ichie ukwu* or 'the great ancestors'; the spirits of all dead untitled fathers known as the *ichie nta*'the small ancestors'; and the spirits of the *umu ada* or women of the lineage group married to other lineage groups but now deceased. The Nri ancestor - cult establishes relationships with these categories of good spirits by offering sacrifices and libations. The bad spirits are of three types: *akalogoli,* those who lived worthless lives, *ekwensu,* those who died prematurely or accidentally, or committed suicide; *ogbanje,* children who die shortly after their birth or during childhood, and remain in this world to revisit the womb and are born again and then die prematurely if nothing is done ritually to stop them.

The Nri concept of a good man involves a judgement based on individual character and success. A good man is upright in his dealings and does not pervert the truth or disturb the justice and peace of Nri. He keeps all taboos and he does not do anything which the ancestors will disapprove of. The reward for a good life is, becoming an ancestor and freedom from the molestation of *alusi* during one's lifetime. Goodness is achieved by obedience to the invisible higher powers, *Chukwu, alusi* and *mmuo,* symbolized in the world of man by a visible higher power, the Eze Nri. Obedience to the Eze Nri is obedience to the invisible higher power, thus no Nri dares to disobey the Eze Nri because of the dire consequences. This is the norm and the ideal.

The spirits of the dead can reappear in the form of *mmanwu* to entertain, bless, reprimand or curse individuals, groups or the whole of Nri society, that is, those who dwell in the visible world occupied by men, animals, plants, water and

other inanimate things. *Uwa* is constantly visited by *mmuo.* Men live in towns and *oboDo* Nri is occupied by a mystical group of people ruled by a mystically powerful king. This is how Nri see their world and this is how some Igbo see Nri today; a lot more Igbo saw Nri that way thirty years ago, and a greater majority before the arrival of the British to Igboland between 1906 and 1920.

The institutionalized ritual relations between persons of similar or different categories are framed in terms of *nso* taboo and *alu* and abomination. *Nso* if broken defiles the offender, who is said to have committed *Alu. Alu* is then removed by ritual cleansing. Nri society depends on such symbolic codes to communicate, to order and control social life. It is stratified into five taboo-observing groups (Fig. 1) Each, except for ritual minors, has its distinctive taboos to observe. The strata are both pyramidal and hierarchical, reflecting kinship, ritual, economic and political inequalities inherent in Nri society. (Onwuejeogwu, 1974).

Fig. 1: POPULATION PER 10,000 FOR 1963 - 1975: TABOO GROUP

Eze Nri	00.1%
Ozo	30%
Okolobia	18.4%
Married Women	21.5%
Children and Minors	57.0%

The taboos applicable to these groups are controlled by the Eze Nri whose authority is elaborately delegated. But the ritual determination of the content and functional interpretation of the details of these taboos are the main functions of *dibia afa.*

The last cosmological concept to be discussed is individual achievement which is based on the power inherent in every man, *ike mmadu.* It is conceptualized in five personality cults: *Ikenga,* the right hand with which a man earns his living; *iru* the face which attracts anyone that gazes on it; *uho* the persuasive tongue; *ukwu na ije* cult, the feet adventuring successfully into foreign land and *umu oku,* conservation of accumulated wealth.

Every adult Nri in the past, placed objects associated with these five cults on his ancestral altar and sacrificed on them as occasion determined (Onwuejeogwu, 1974, 1975a and b).

3.   How Actions and Sanctions are Evaluated in Nri.

It is important at this stage to analyze how Nri evaluate an action and work out its sanction. Cases handled at the Nri palace and at the lineage levels, and of disputes in market squares and various political groups, lead one to recognize three major interdependent categories for rating actions: good, neutral and evil. Good and evil actions directly affect fellow human-beings with or without ritual consequences which in turn attract major or minor degrees of reward and punishment. A neutral action directly affects animals, things and super-natural beings.

A good action may be ritually good or practically good or good for its own sake. To help a friend is practically good, because one has broadened one's social horizon; one will be praised for it. To help a stranger is good simply for its own sake, and may or may not elicit praise, depending on the amount of help and the circumstances surrounding the action. To offer sacrifices regularly to the *alusi* and *ndi ichie* and to act responsibly are good acts which not only give ritual protection against evil and misfortune, but also increase the prospect of progress on earth. In this case, ritual good entails practical good.

To commit an assault upon an *ozo* titled man is an evil action which is a major abomination tantamount to laying a hand on a prospective ancestor, and so calls for a major ritual purification. To assault one's non-titled elder is a serious action and a minor abomination, to be treated by minor ritual purification. To assault an age-mate is not an abomination, but is practically evil and one may be heavily or lightly fined, depending on the motivating circumstances. To kill a python, however, is a neutral action that is ritually a major act and very serious abomination because the python is considered the child *alusi*. It demands major ritual purification. To

a snail is a neutral action which is a major abomination for a titled adult and no abomination for a minor, minor purification is required of the titled adult. And to break one's personal taboo, prescribed for one to observe for one's personal ritual welfare by the traditional medicine-man, is simply a ritual infraction that is not an abomination: one can be ritually reinstated to one's former state by the performance of a special minor cleansing called *ofu ese*.

Figure 2 attempts to summarize diagramatically these categories of action and abomination.

The supreme position of the Eze Nri in this system of sanctions is very clear. He alone can pronounce the abrogation of any taboo or enact new ones. The Eze Nri is *mmuo* and *alusi*, living apart and hemmed in by taboos. He rules his people through his *Nzemabua* council whose members are similarly hemmed in by taboos. Adult males, women and children follow in the degree to which their actions are restricted. All cases of major abomination are brought to court in *nzemabua* council which discusses the nature and character of the taboo; minor taboos are dealt with in the various lineages affected and specialized persons are specially authorized to act as purifiers. The Eze Nri controlled all the taboos in the greater part of Igboland; only Nri men had the power to enforce or remove them. As reported upon at the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. (Leonard 1906, p. 34-37) To some extent, Nri men perform this function today in those Igbo towns still accepting the elaborate control system which produced Nri politico-ritual hegemony (Onwuejeogwu, 1974 and 1981).

Those who interpret the mystical relationships of this system in practical social terms and actions are the *dibia afa*. It has to be emphasized that the concept of law exists independent of taboo in Nri society. Law *iwu*, is that form of control which is enacted, by the *Eze* and his council or by lineage leaders, not in terms of taboo. An infraction of a law does not constitute the breaking of a taboo. Law-breakers are punished or fined. Lineage leaders and heads of various organizations and groups also make laws and enforce the law

FIG. 2: CATEGORIES OF ACTION AND ABOMINATION:
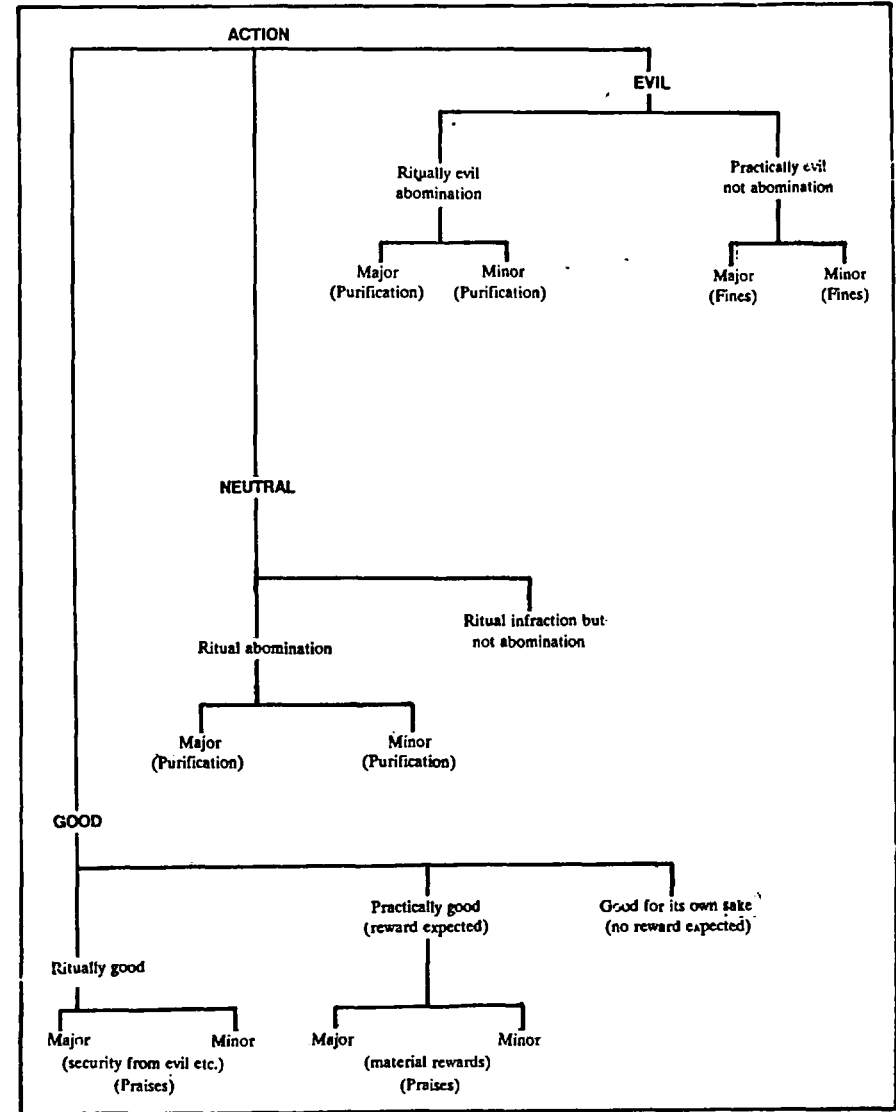
penalties ranging from a fine to social ostracism.

The effects of law and taboo are the same namely, social control, but operate at different levels. Structurally, law and taboo are systems of control and communication using different coding systems. Law rationalizes the use of physical force while taboo is encoded in ritual symbols. Nri society in the past depended more on the taboo (symbolic) code than on law but both systems persist and are still interwoven. Thus in 1968 a lunatic woman killed a child; the police arrested the woman for commiting a criminal offence, but the matter did not end there, for to kill is also taboo. The woman had committed a major *alu* and a long purification ceremony was performed after referring the matter to *afa*. In the past, by the time purification was over, the woman would have paid to the lineage that lost the child, a sum of money, equivalent to a bride-gift.

4.   The Meaning of *Afa*

The locus of *afa*, thus determined in Nri religion, is its functional or outer form, to which is tied its ideational content, a system of connotations. *Afa* may be translated as prediction, the process of reaching a judgement of the unknown or future through the study of physical and 'metaphysical' evidence found in various signs. Nri predictors agree that *afa* operates on the principle of mediating the known by the unknown and the unknown by the known. They explain this by arguing that the known has two components, past and present. The unknown is primarily the future, but past and present also contain some unknown elements. *Afa bu uche; 'afa* is commonsense knowledge', refers to the ability of the *afa* predictor, to manipulate known elements of the past and present, to generate unknown elements which determine the course of future actions. The unknown elements of past and present, as well as future, are revealed by *agwu*, the supernatural being force mentioned above. Another proverb: *afa bu agwu; 'afa* is the supernatural being force used to explain elements of the unknown.' Among the Nri the metaphysical (supernatural) and the physical combine in determining the unknown.

To avoid proliferation of terms I shall use these ones: *afa*, roughly 'prediction' and *dibia afa*, 'predictor.' Together with *agwu*, the concepts of *afa* and *dibia afa* are tied together in a meaningful complex. The *dibia* is one of the traditional political-ritual groupings in Nri, a professional corporate group believed to have power to communicate with and manipulate the supernatural being *agwu*. At present, there are only about four active *dibia* in Nri; at one time, they numbered nine or ten.

There are three categories of *dibia* in Nri: *dibia afa*, specialists in the process of prediction; *dibia aja*, specialists in preparing the various sacrifices associated with the different *alusi* and *mmuo* as prescribed by the *dibia afa; and dibia ogwu* specialists in diagnosis of disease and treatment with herbs, setting fractures, performing minor operation such as circumcision and clitoridectomy. Some claim to have remedies against witchcraft, sorcery, snake and insect bites and a few of them are believed to be capable of preparing charms to make their clients immune to sword, knife and bullet injuries. A few are said to possess the power to make charms for vanishing and transmutation.

The *dibia*, especially *dibia afa*, operate in Nri not only in time of distress but also in normal times. They are well informed about the current state of human affairs and relationships in Nri and they know the life-history of almost every group and individual. They employ their knowledge of the past and present actions in Nri to interprete and determine future actions. In Nri, the decision-making process, especially when connected with major issues, is long-winded dialogues conducted at both the lineage and state levels (Onwuejeogwu, 1974 Chapter 8). The lineage and state leaders at various intervals, are expected to consult the *dibia* afa whose interpretive pronouncement, accelerates, retards or alters the decision-making process. They also play a crucial role in crystallizing public opinion on Nri policy, and in constructing social reality and generating social action at both individual and group levels.

It is a complex process to become a *dibia afa*. The person, child or adult, will be ritually inspired *(iwa)* by *agwu* before being apprenticed to an established *dibia*. A child apprenticed at ten, takes over fifteen years to qualify and more than twenty years thereafter to gain public respect, credibility, and recognition for excellence. During this long period, the person develops acumen, exercising intelligence and patience in dealing with clients' problems. The young novice memorizes the *afa* signs and learns to decode them with speed and accuracy: to throw and manipulate the *afa* beads and recite the *afa* ritual incantations, to interpret the language of *afa* with proverbs, riddles, idioms and other figures of speech, to relate aspects of Nri religion and philosophy to the social world. He learns the general history of neighbouring towns and villages. Beginners frequently drop out from the formal and informal training programmes. The master, in order to help his pupil through the long and tedious apprenticeship prepares a charm for him called *ako na uche*, (the seat of thoughtfulness and commonsense). The charm enables the person to settle down and learn fast. Another charm prepared is *atu*, for effective use of the tongue in talking, cursing, and predicting. *Afa* as a discipline involves both theoretical and practical aspects. Some *dibia afa* who are exceptionally brilliant and successful emerge as custodians and repository of knowledge of Nri culture and society. Anidumaka was a typical example.[3] But the *dibia afa* does not operate independently. His knowledge of human society is finite and he knows nothing of the unknown. *Agwu* the supernatural being force discloses to the *afa* man the secret of the unknown world of the supernatural and the natural. *Agwu* has been discussed above as being conceptualized as a supernatural being and also a force that reveals the secret 'actions' of the invisible world of *alusi* and *mmuo* to the visible world through *afa* as manipulated by the *dibia afa*. As a supernatural being *agwu* has its household composed of its family and pets, each specializes in performing one function. The tables below list the membership of *agwu's* household in the supernatural world.

TABLE 1:   AGWU'S HOUSEHOLD FAMILY:

Agwu	The owner of *afa*
Inyom Agwu	The wife of *agwu*
Okolo agwu	Son of *agwu*
Agbogo agwu	Daughter of *agwu*
Unnuazi agwu	Little children of *agwu*
Agadi agwu	Old relations of *Agwu*
Ichie agwu	Grandparents of *agwu*

TABLE 2:   AGWU'S HOUSEHOLD PETS AND CULTS

Ulili agwu	*Agwu's* small forest rodent
Udene agwu	*Agwu's* vulture
Ulu agwu	*Agwu's* tortoise
Nkita agwu	*Agwu's* dog
Ikenga agwu	Cult of *agwu's* right hand
Oselu Ogu agwu	Attractor of *agwu's* charms
Okponsi agwu	*Agwu's* ancestor cult
Ukwu na ije agwu	Cult of *agwu's* adventure
Uho agwu	Cult of *agwu's* influence

Every predictor has carved images of *agwu*, its household and pets, and sacrifices are made on these images to persuade and activate *agwu*. For example, *Ezumezu* (Plate 1) is a wooden figure in which all images of *agwu's* household, pets and cult are carved on one piece of wood. As a supernatural being, *agwu* is supposed to have all the attributes of a human-being: having wives, children, parents; grandparents and pets. *Agwu* behaves like human beings, it can be happy or sad, wise or foolish, calm or turbulent etc. As a supernatural force, *agwu* cannot be represented as a carved image but as a bundle made up of three
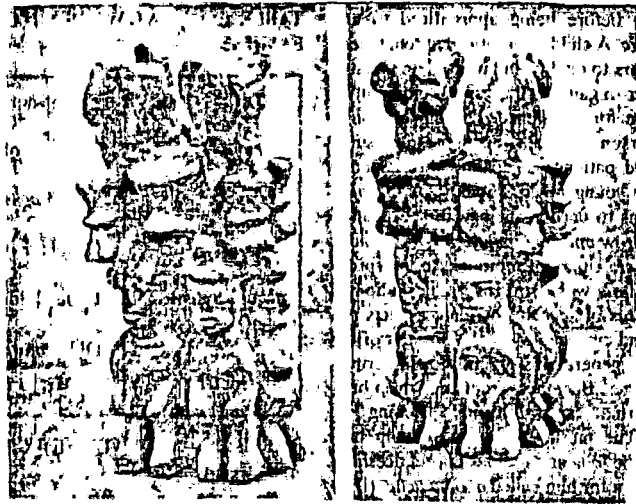
PLATE 1:   EZUMEZU OF AGWU:

types of life plants call *igita, dandanura* and four, six inch long *ogilisi* stems tied together and planted near the temple *(obu)* of the *dibia*. The site becomes the altar of *agwu* where sacrifices are made to it.

Agwu maintains two types of relationship with human beings. The first is *agwu-dibia* relationship and the other is *agwu-ofeke* relationship. The former is established by an initiation ceremony of a new aspirant into the *dibia* association and sacrifices are offered on *agwu* images and at the shrines. In 1994 an aspirant is initiated by a payment of N12 - N16 to the *dibia* association that shares the money. He presents seven chickens which are used for sacrifices on an *Eke* day. Each chicken is offered to the main *agwu* pets and household as follows:

> One cock offered to *ikolo agwu*
> One hen offered to *inyom agwu*
> One cock offered to *oje ozi agwu*
> One cockerel offered to *ulu agwu*
> One cock offered to *agadi agwu*
> One cock offered to *udene agwu*

One hen offered to *ichie agwu*.

All the *dibia* present prepare two *ogwu* (medicine/charm) for the aspirant: the *atu* (effective tongue) and *ako na uche* (thoughtfulness and commonsense). These charms are stronger than the first one prepared by the master alone. After three *izu* (twelve days) a hen is offered to *agwu* and after seven *izu* (twenty-eight days) a cock is offered to *agwu*. A cockerel is also offered in a violent way by pulling off with two hands the neck of the cockerel and saying:

> "We offer this,
> All troubles *agwu* brought,
> Here we pluck off the cockerel's neck
> So we pluck off all troubles".

The aspirant is given the *oji*, iron staff with rattlers indicating acceptance of his membership in the cult association. At the end of his apprenticeship the *dibia* come together to transfer mystical power to the young *dibia*. He opens his palms and his master first touches them with seven strokes of a 'medicine knife', and takes a pinch of soil and places it on them. Finally the master hands over the *ofo* staff to him and thus a young *dibia* is made. He now starts to practise independently and gradually builds up fame by being effective in his work.

The second aspect, namely the *agwu - ofeke* relationship, is that established by all persons who are not *dibia* with *agwu*. Every Nri man who intends to take the *ozo* title must, one time or the other, establish relationship with *agwu*. All male children are initiated into the *mmanwu* cult at the age of seven. During this period, the child is taught that *mmanwu* is 'man' and a relation, and warned to keep the secret from women. The child can now participate in the *agwu-chi* drama discussed below. Both men and women can have an *agwu* shrine where sacrifices are offered. The shrine is constructed by sticking into the ground eight *ogilisi* life sticks, each six inches long. The eight *ogilisi* are arranged into two groups of four, the first four on the right represent the males of *agwu* and the other four on the left represent the females. Between them, two *ogilisi* are also stuck into the ground, the one nearer the males represents *ikenga agwu* and the one nearer the females represents the *ulu agwu*. A sacrifice of a cock is made to the male *agwu*, a hen to the female *agwu* and a cockerel to the *ikenga* and *ulu*. Mashed roasted yam, fish, cooked and fried *ukwa*, kola-nut and other items are sacrificed to all the *agwu*. No alcoholic drink is offered to *agwu*. After this first sacrifice, one is expected to offer sacrifices of mashed roasted yam to *agwu* annually during the *agwu* month. This is important to stop the negative aspect of *agwu* from disturbing the person.

Of all the supernatural beings/forces represented in Nri religion only *agwu* has distinct dual character. This dualism represents its anomalous status and role in the spirit world. It spies on them and sends information to the world of men. Some of the dual characters of *agwu* can be listed as follows:

Being	Force
Human forms	Plant forms
Disorder	Order
Unfaithful	Faithful
Frenzy	Calmness
Insanity	Sanity
Heedlessness	Mindfulness
Closeness	Openness
Unknown	Known

In Nri religious philosophy, *agwu* is the embodiment of contradictions. It can be A and not - A simultaneously or alternatively. Hence it is conceptualized as a being force that mediates and resolves contradictions in human life and bridges the gap between known and unknown in the universe of knowledge, in which social actions are directed.

It has been mentioned that *agwu* as a supernatural being has cults and pets. Their significance in *agwu-* complex is clearly indicated in the corpus of oral tradition associated with *afa*. Since *agwu* is regarded as a being, it is also vested with the attributes of human beings so it has a human personality. *Agwu* has to work hard to earn a living; hence it has *ikenga*. It has to travel to distant lands to gather information about the unknown so it has its *ukwu na ije*. *Agwu* also has *uho* because it has to be persuasive to influence and control both its supernatural and human agents, and it has *ini* because it has to be famous and renowned and able to captivate the minds of men through the *dibia*.

Agwu has four important animal pets: the *ulili* (a small forest rodent), *udene* (vulture), *ulu mbekwu* (tortoise), *nkita* (dog). These are regarded as the messengers of *agwu*. *Ulili* is a fast moving, small animal that lives in the equatorial forest. It moves fast but with great caution: it stops at intervals, stands on its hind legs, raises its body, looks round, claps its front legs together and rubs them vigorously. It is believed that it examines its palms and if they turn bloody, it signifies danger behind or ahead. The *ulili* turns backwards; obliterates the latter part of its trail, then turns left or right and proceeds in its flight. Human life is analogous to that of *ulili* living in the forest. It has to be lived with caution, from time to time one must stop and take stock of one's deeds in order to decide what next line of action to take. The *dibia afa* has to be consulted occasionally just as *ulili* consults its palms. If danger is sensed, a new line of action must be

taken, if however there is none one can then go ahead with confidence.

The *udene* (vulture) is the animal that removes all sacrifices made by human-beings to the supernaturals. All sacrifices are generally prescribed after consulting *afa*, so that *agwu* has its share in all of them. The proverb that signifies the role of the vulture in this respect is as follows:

> "*Achu aja ma afunu udene,
> Amali na ife me na be mmuo.*"

Meaning: *If a sacrifice is made and the vulture is not seen around, It is an index that something is happening in the supernatural world.*

This proverb is saying that the presence of a vulture when a sacrifice is on, is a sign that the supernaturals have accepted the sacrifice. The vulture is the messenger that collects *agwu's* share of the sacrifice. It is also believed that just as the vulture can fly so high up in the sky and is able from there to locate dead animals, both on the surface and underground, so also can the vulture identify men who, through their actions are polluted by 'social dirt' and reveal them to *agwu* who reacts by sending warnings of minor misfortune to such persons.

Why are the dog and tortoise *agwu's* pets? Dogs are regarded as rogues. They even rob their owners. They do not chew the cud and never reserve food against tomorrow, this lack of foresight leads to poverty. Dogs disappointed man as revealed in Nri *iro* (folktale).

> *Dog and tortoise were appointed by mun to take a message to God the Creator, Chukwu okike. Dog was to ask that man should not die but live forever while tortoise was to ask that man should die. To reach God they had to 'cross seven wildernesses and seven seas' (this is the convention to indicate long distances). Dog was given the more important message because he was trusted for his speed. While he was speeding, Dog saw remnants of palm oil on the way and stopped to lick it, but tortoise meanwhile with his slow and steady pace over-took dog and arrived first*

at his destination to deliver his message to God. Since then dogs have been regarded as loathsome pets that merit no position as domestic animals. They vomit and lick up what they reject. It is forbidden to eat dog flesh because it disappointed man and has dirty habits. Tortoise returning from his message and afraid that he would be killed, sought the protection of alusi (supernatural being). Hence it must not be eaten. The tortoise spent its time learning all the tricks with which to outwit all animals including man. The tortoise is the 'king of tricks' (eze ntu).

The 'tortoise' symbolizes animal intelligence *per excellence*. Most folktales refer to it as a master of trickery. One such story runs thus:

> One day all the animals decided to hold a competition of EATING PEPPER without showing any sign of discomfort. On the appointed day, all the animals gathered together and the spider who was the umpire read out the rules of the competition thus:
> 'Each competitor is expected to eat a handful of pepper without showing any sign that it hurts by drinking water and/or making the sound fu ha! A competitor that breaks the rule is disqualified'.

All the competitors that participated failed, because they showed sign of pain - fu ha! fu ha! When it was the tortoise's turn, he shouted out to the animals and said "all animals, see my hand full of pepper. I shall eat all without doing fu ha! or drinking water. But I will tell you a story while eating, because I like eating and talking." The animals listened with great interest. The tortoise began to eat the pepper and at the same time told his story as follows: 'One day all the animals in Eze Nri's kingdom gathered to eat pepper without doing fu ha! The umpire said that no one will eat pepper and do fu ha! or drink water like this (the tortoise swallowed a cup of water demonstrating). The goat came and ate and did fu ha! fu ha! and was disqualified, (the tortoise eating some of his pepper and continuing his story). The cow came

and ate a little and did fu ha! and ran to the pot and swallowed a cup of water, (the tortoise ran to the pot of water swallowed a cup of water demonstrating). The sheep did fu ha! and was disqualified, the pig did fu ha! and was disqualified. It is only the tortoise that ate all the pepper without doing fu ha! fu ha! and without drinking a drop of water. This is the end of my story."

At this point, the tortoise had finished eating his pepper and received ovation from the animals for winning the competition. The animals did not realize that they had been tricked by the tortoise who was eating pepper and telling them the story and doing fu ha! all the time and occasionally drinking some water as if he was demonstrating a point in his story. This type of story about the tortoise and other animals including men are common in Nri. Children when they are young, learn such stories told for enjoyment and entertainment Shorter forms showing the cleverness of the tortoise are used idiomatically and in figure of speeches by elders in everyday speech or while discussing grave matters or delivering a speech.

Agwu as a supernatural force is represented by plant life especially *ogilisi* and *dandanura*. *Ogilisi* is a tree which is used to indicate the presence of *alusi* and since *agwu* is sometimes regarded as *alusi* it is entitled to a set of *ogilisi*. *Dandanura* is a creeping plant known for its peculiar type of growth in the equatorial forest. It spreads out covering a large area; it creeps on other trees and climbs to the top of the tallest tree where it spreads out on the upper foliages to capture sunshine. It is *agwu's* plant because through its versatile growth it is able to capture sunlight and invade a wide territory. The roots, its main base, can be a few kilometres from its frontline tentacles. It is *agwu's* versatility that makes it invade not only the invisible world but also the visible world of men. *Agwu* is like *dandanura*; hence it is *agwu's* favourite plant. *Dandanura* is also unpredictable because it is difficult to locate its main root, for it has many, and more difficult still to locate the direction of its growth. But it can easily be found in the forest, because it spreads far and wide.

I have shown that animals and plants associated with *agwu* have elements of unpredictability associated with them in Nri thinking. These animals and plants are symbolic expressions of Nri concepts of *agwu*. It will be interesting to explore this concept of unpredictability at this stage.

5.   Chi: Agwu: Predictability: Unpredictability

This paragraph opens with Levi-Straussian formula which shall be fully discussed in Chapter 5. Here I apply it because it is "good to think" with and understand Nri thinking. The formula reads as follows: *chi* is opposed to *agwu* as predictability is opposed to unpredictability. The implication of this mode of thinking about *chi* and *agwu* is analyzed below.

Chi has been discussed as an aspect of *Chukwu Okike*, the Creator. *Chi* is manifested in the potentiality given to living beings to procreate themselves from generation to generation. *Chukwu Okike*, created everything, and to all human beings, it gives the 'procreative - force' called *chi* to ensure the perpetuity and continuity of the lineages. All types of man's actions are regarded as aspects of his creativeness manifesting the active presence of *chi*. Thus *chi* is manifested in talking, learning, carving, farming, dancing, working and in everything a person does. But the supreme creative act of a human being is achieved through the sexual act resulting in the bearing of children. Child-bearing is creative act *par excellence*. Thus the course of a person's life-history is determined by his *chi* which is regarded as a stable potential 'force' throughout life. Both men and women have their *chi*. The *chi* of a man is manifested when he bears his first child and is symbolically enacted by planting the ritual tree *ogbu* in front of his compound. The planting of the ritual tree marks the fulfilment of marriage and the formation of an elementary family which is regarded as the basic unit of procreation. It also signifies the fulfilment of a supreme creative act. As the man grows in age and wisdom and his creative potentials increase, so his *chi* tree grows. Once every year during the fifth month, called *onwa agwu*, in the Nri traditional calendar. (see

Table 14), the *chi* tree is pruned and this ritual is called *igbuka chi*, which means the revitalization ritual of a man's creative potentials. Women ritually perform their *chi* immediately they have their first child. The husband takes a piece of rock *mkpume*, and places it in the front of the woman's house *mkpuke*, and plants four *ogilisi* life trees near the rock. Sacrifices of kolanut, hen, food, cassava chips and wine are offered. This shrine is called *mkpume chi*. When the woman has given birth to many children and has been married for up to ten years or more she performs another ritual in connection with the *chi* called *irota chi*, (bringing down *chi*), which involves going back to her patrilineage and requesting her oldest sister or classificatory eldest sister to hand over her *chi* to her. The sister performs the rite by taking a palm frond *omu*, and two shrubs called *dandanura* and *elo*; pointing them to the sun four times and giving them to the recipient saying:

> *Aronya mi chi*
> *Je ga donya ya na ani*
> Meaning: I have brought down your *chi*,
> Go and plant it in the earth.

The woman takes the items and returns to her husband's patrilineage where she hands them to the head of the patrilineage in the presence of her husband. The lineage head digs a hole and buries the items and plants an *ora* and *ogilisi* life trees beside the spot. Every year the woman's husband performs the *chi* ritual for her.

In Nri thinking, *chi* is important, because it directs the actions of an individual. One often hears Nri people exclaiming:

> *Chim egbuem!*
> *Ajo chi!*
> *Chim dubem!*
> Meaning: My chi has killed me!
> Bad chi!
> My chi leads me!

Such exclamations are also commonly heard in other parts of Igboland and have led some casual observers and writers to think that *chi* is similar to the Christian religious idea of guardian angel or a household god. This is a misinterpretation of the concept which even the great novelist Chinua

Achebe made (Achebe 1972 pp. 72 and 189). Nri religious philosophers will argue that *chi* is one's procreative potentiality which dwells in the person as part of his human essence and manifests itself in all his actions. This potentiality is a stable 'force' that is determined at birth and remains constant. Its initial manifestation is through the birth of a child and is ritually enacted by planting the ritual tree of *chi*. Occasionally it is revitalized by the ceremony of ritual pruning of the *chi* tree or by sacrifices during the birth of subsequent children.

Chi dominates all creative activities of a person and ceases to manifest at the death of a person. Hence immediately an adult who has fulfilled his *chi* dies, the first public mortuary rite to be done is to cut down the person's *chi* tree thus symbolizing and enacting the end of his creative activities as a human being.

If *chi* is a stable supernatural force associated with creative potentiality of a person, how do Nri religious thinkers explain the expression that *chi* can be ill-fated or bad? The paradox is resolved by putting the blame on *agwu*, the double-character, ambivalent and unpredictable being/force. They argue that every living being is constantly under the influence of *agwu* which can take possession of a person temporarily. When this happens, the person's personality changes and he becomes unpredictable. His actions alternate between frenzy and calmness, disorderliness and orderliness, distructiveness and creativeness, insanity and sanity, violence and peacefulness, ignorance and wisdom. Such temporary changes in personality traits are generally described in two ways either by using the popular concept of describing *chi* as 'bad *chi*', or using the specific concept of saying that *agwu* has taken possession of the person's action, *agwu atu ya*.

Where has one's *chi* gone to during the period one is under the influence of *agwu*? His *chi* has abandoned him because it cannot inhabit and manifest itself in a defiled person. People, are constantly defiled consciously or unconsciously, and directly or indirectly by their own actions or by the actions of others. So individuals in their daily activities are constantly exposed to

defilement. When a person is defiled, for example on breaking a taboo, his *chi* abandons him and dwells in the *chi* tree until the ritual of purification is done, after which his *chi* returns to him to direct him along creative lines. During the period of defilement when *chi* abandons his subject, *agwu* takes possession and the person acts like *agwu*. Occasionally, it happens that a person remains in a state of defilement for a long time and his personality becomes grossly distorted. He is permanently disorganized and in some extreme cases disoriented. In that case, it is believed that the person's *chi* has gone from the chi tree to the sky, *anyanwu*. The *dibia afa* must be consulted to find out, why *chi* has abandoned the person, why *agwu* has decided to act in a negative way. Some examples of cases of those whose *chi* have abandoned them leaving *agwu* to take possession of them are cited in Appendix 1 of this work.

The *dibia afa's* interpretation of such a state of affairs is based on the person's past and present actions in relation to those of his ancestors, in short his biography and history of the social structure. The *dibia afa* reconstructs the social reality of his disorganized client and certain lines of actions are taken to re-establish him into the structure of normal social action. The *dibia afa* refers him to the *dibia aja* who specializes in the performance of all types of sacrifices to the supernaturals, in purification rituals, in exorcism of *agwu*, in chaining of *ekwensu* and *akalogoli*, and in preparing protective charms. The client, in some extreme cases, is also referred to the *dibia ogwu*, or the specialist in the use of herbs, roots and rocks for healing purposes.

A resume of all that has been so far analyzed, is that *chi*, is predictable because it is from Chukwu and its attribute is connected with creative activities of human-beings as manifested in child-bearing and regular creative and predictable actions. When one's actions are ill-fated, frustrated and irregular, one generally refers to his *chi* as bad, one is not contradicting the dogma of the "predictability and creativity of *chi*", rather one is saying that *agwu* the unpredictable has taken possession of one's being, because, at one time or the other, one was in a state of

defilement resulting in one's *chi* abandoning him and *agwu* taking possession. *Chi* manifests as the creative, predictable and stable personality of man, while *agwu* manifests as the unpredictable and unstable personality of a man. Both affect the structure and quality of a person's personality. They are two supernatural forces that determine the action of men and are conceived not in dialectic but in alternating relationship.

The alternating relationship in which *chi* and *agwu* are conceived, namely predictability and non-predictability is annually displayed publicly in the ritual drama of *agwu*.

6.   The Drama of *Chi* and *Agwu*

The fifth month of the Nri traditional calendar is called *onwa-agwu*. During this month, young men who have taken the *mmanwu* title perform mask dances. The mask dancers are called *agwu*; they are violent and turbulent at one time, constructive and calm at another. Thus, within one show, the action of the mask dancer alternates between two extremes. To be masked during the *agwu* month is to be transformed from predictability to unpredict-ability and to be unmasked is to be predictable. One can mask and unmask several times a day. Thus one alternatively plays the role of *chi* and *agwu* by moving from the outer to the inner forms. In the outer form, one experiences social reality characterized by orderliness, creativeness and stability. In the inner form, one experiences another aspect of social reality characterized by disorderliness, violence and instability. The drama of *chi* and *agwu* are thus translated into two forms of social reality discussed by Schutz as the "paramount reality" by means of which we suspend any doubts that the outer world and other people exist and that they have a past, present and future, and "infinite provinces of meaning", (within the paramount reality), in which we may allow ourselves to doubt by suspending our commonsense beliefs about the real world. (Schutz, 1974, pp. 22 - 28).[4]

7.   *Afa* and Social Order

A person has two main types of relationships, namely: the relationships between him and the

creator *Chukwu*, the supernatural beings *alusi* and the spirits of the dead *mmuo*, on the one hand, and the relationships between him and the living members of his patrilineage and that of other patrilineages, on the other - (Fig. 4). The relationships between him and the dead members of his patrilineage, especially those called *ichie ukwu*, *ichie nta* and *umu ada*, (see Section 2 above for explanation of these terms), on the one hand and between him and other living members of his patrilineage and related patrilineages on the other, are defined in terms of kinship.

Kinship behaviour, is regulated mainly by sanctions derived from ancestor cult and other supernatural cults which are central in Nri religion. Since kinship and religion have a common nexus, it is therefore, necessary to examine the significance of *afa* regulating social action in the kinship and domestic domain. A man who is socially mature should have a family and live in his own compound. A traditional compound, large or small, is enclosed by a rectangular mud wall with two exits, front and rear. Near the middle is a rectangular open-walled house, the temple, *obu* (a large compound may have several). Temples are central to Nri social organiza-tion. The compound owner sits in his temple to receive visitors. His and his spouses' sleeping houses are behind or beside it, in the domestic section, which is separated from the public section where the temple is, by a short wall with several entrances. At the centre of the temple, or at one end is a raised platform, the ancestor's altar, *iru ndi ichie*. Temple custodianship is inherited from the lineage founder by primogeniture. Members of one or several nearby compounds, excluding sisters' children, wives and whatever strangers are living there, belong to the same patrilineage.

Nri kinship terms differentiate relatives according to generation, order of birth, sex, lineage, and affinity. The principal terms which are used and combined to form other terms are: *nna* 'father', *nne* 'mother', *nwunye* 'wife', *okpala* and *ada* 'first-born son' and 'eldest daughter', as opposed to *nwa nwoke* and *nwa nwanyi* 'son' and 'daughter', *nnamochie* and *nwadiala* (*nwadiani*)

'mother's brother' and 'sister s son', *ogo* 'in-law'. Other relations are named by combining these terms to reflect generational, patrilateral and matrilateral differences. (See Figure 3).

Various levels, of inter-personal and inter-group communication and symbolic control are based on the principles of reciprocal, moral and legal rights and duties among kin, the effectiveness of which is determined by proximity of relationship along matrilateral, patrilineal and sex differentials.

Women are exchanged in return for bride-gift among about twenty-seven exogamous groups, which also serve to define sexual prohibitions. Lineages claiming a common female ancestor consider it an abomination to exchange women among themselves. The basic criterion of exogamy is common mother-hood, as modified by other principles which may be invoked. Nri marriage transcends the social and cultural union of man and woman and their acquired rights and duties, being an agreement between two exogamous units to accept the legal and moral responsibilities generated by that union. A woman moves from her own to her husband's patrilineage, thus completing a group contract which was initially symbolically sealed in elaborate rites of exchanging wife for wealth. The agreement is perpetuated in three important relationships created by the exchange: *ogo* 'in-law', *nnamochie-nwadiala* (*nwadiani*) 'mother's brother sister's son' and *nwa nwanyi/ada* 'daughter/eldest daughter'.

Nri inheritance mirrors the ideology and practice of patrilineality, combining the principles of primogeniture and ultimogeniture. In broad outline: the first son, *okpala*, inherits the temple and the adjoining land, one piece for growing yam, and another, for cocoyam, each of the other brothers or half-brothers inherits one piece of land near the compound. The last son of a woman inherits his mother's house *mkpuke*, and the adjoining land. The remaining land is divided equally among all sons irrespective of age and maternal differences. If a man has only one piece of land for yam and one for coco yam, the *okpala* inherits one and divides the other among his brothers and half-brothers. If a man has only a temple and the adjoining land, all the sons will

CHART OF KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY - NRI (Igbo)
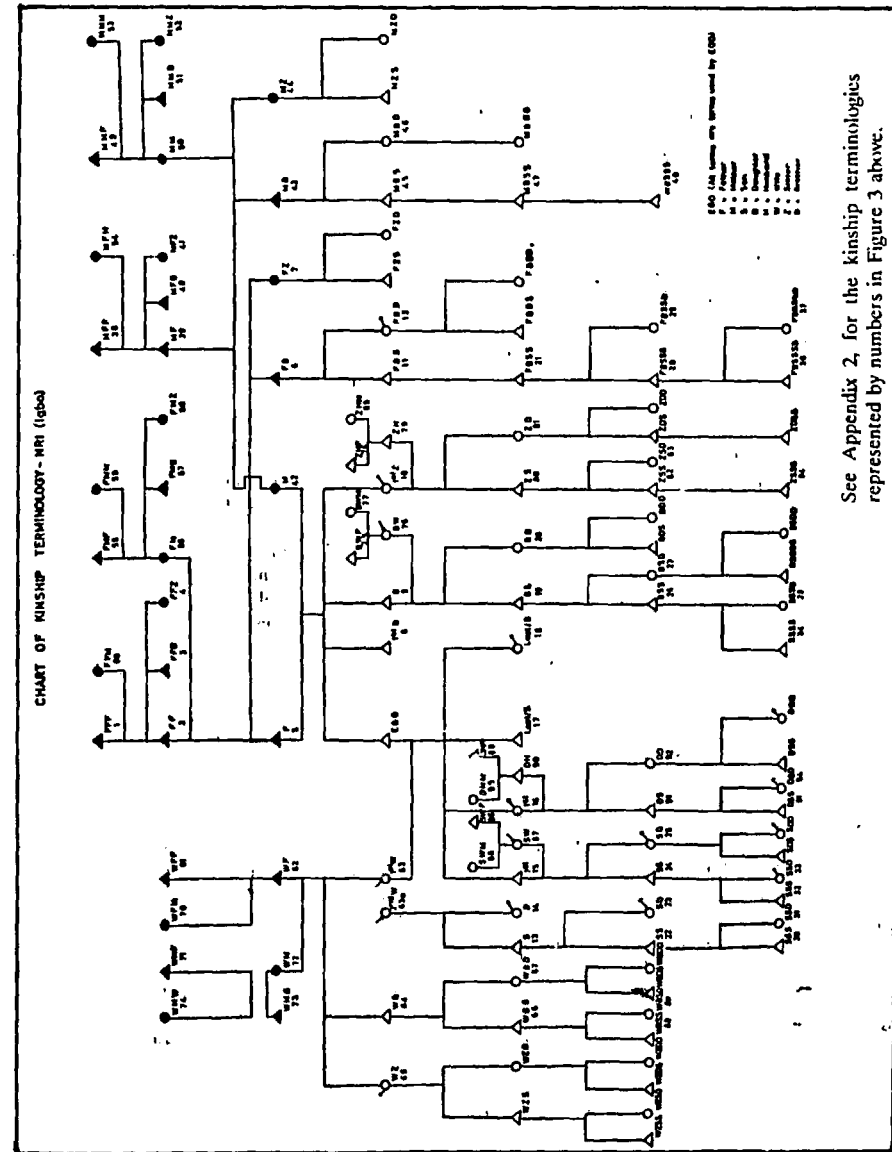
See Appendix 2, for the kinship terminologies represented by numbers in Figure 3 above.

live inside the Land housing the temple. Trees are shared as follows: the *okpala* takes two palm trees, one *iroko* tree and one *ukwa* (breadfruit) tree. The other trees are divided equally amongst the remaining brothers. The inheritance of land and that of trees are distinct: one can inherit land without the trees on it, and one can inherit the trees without land on which they stand.

After performing the father's mortuary rites, the *okpala* inherits all personal belongings except the remaining money which is shared amongst those sons who contributed toward the rites; those who did not contribute forfeit their shares until they redeem them by payment. Similarly they all contribute to pay their father's debts; a defaulter has his share of land held by the other brothers until he redeems it by payment. Women can inherit some of their mother's property but not land although a father can, during his lifetime, give land to any of his daughters, to be inherited by the daughter's children who are regarded as *nwadiala*, provided they live in their mother's patrilineage or that the land was bought by their mother's father from another patrilineage. Since the minimal lineage owns land collectively, individuals cannot sell, without consent of its members, lineage land which they inherit. But an individual can sell land he has bought from other lineages upon performing a ritual of transfer. Land can be leased or pawned or held as security for a loan. Recently, individuals have sold land more frequently than in the past.

Major issues and problems arising out of the domestic and kinship domain are interpreted with reference to the lineage ancestors. The actions of the living are anchored to that of the ancestors *mmuo*, supernatural beings and forces *alusi*, and to that of the unborn members of lineages. The linkages between past, present and future are expressed symbolically and interpreted as reality through the *afa* system and thus social order is conceived of and maintained.

The term 'social order' means a number of things to different anthropologists and sociologists. To some, it means reciprocity or restraint, or predictability or consistency or persistence and to others it means a combination of any of these. In

plaining social order, five main theories have been advanced, the first is the physical coercion theory which emphasizes the use, or threatened use, of physical force or the use of symbolic and moral coercion (Hobbes, pp. 107 - 108, see references). By this theory, men do what is expected of them because they are compelled to do so by those who control the means. The second is the contractual theory based on the idea that social order is achieved by men striking bargain with each other for both individual and collective advantage (Rousseau, 1973 pp. 165 - 277, See Ref.). The third is the Interest Theory which holds that social order arises from man's interests in having some kind of arrangement and pattern (Durkheim, pp. 2 - 3). Another version of this theory holds that order is achieved by unplanned consequence of the action of men each separately pursuing his own interests. Thus order is established unwittingly before it is discovered to be in the interest of man in society. The fourth theory holds that order is based on some minimum existence of consensus on certain fundamentally moral values. Thus if men are committed to the same values, they are 'forced' to accept common goals. This theory was advanced by Auguste Comte and even Emile Durkheim (pp. 364 - 71) but became well developed by Davis (1959 pp. 143 - 4). The fifth social order theory relates to self-perpetuation. This theory maintains that a number of factors contribute to the maintenance of social order and, if these factors persist and co-exist that they tend to resist both internal or external factors that cause disruption. All these theories have their limitations and weaknesses which cannot be discussed here. I simply wish to remark that none of these theories explains all that we wish to know about social order.

It is not surprising, however, that Nri people have a different way of looking at the origin and persistence of social order in their society. For one thing, they may in effect reject the physical coercion theory but accept ritual and moral coercion theory. The consensus theory would not sound strange to them since lineage polity is based on consensus. But they would consider the

contractual theory too individualistic and atomistic. Individuals or groups could enter into contractual relationship in the ritual of *igbandu*, whereby they swear to work for a common goal. But they would not understand how this could be applicable to the whole of Nri which has a long history. But Nri elders have more to add when asked about how they achieve social order. They hold that the origin of order in their society is based on their myth of origin, set in a time when Nri clans were founded and Eze Nri became the political and religious head. It is asserted that two types of relationship emerged and these relationships are constantly reinforced to keep the social order going. The first relationship is that between the society and the supernatural beings/forces on the one hand, and the beings/forces and individuals on the other. This is what I refer to as the 'moral aspect' of social order. The second relationship is that between persons genealogically related; this I refer to as the 'structural aspect' of the social order. Let us examine what is meant by these two aspects of social order. Nri religious myth refers to the foundation of Eri clan as follows:

Chukwu, the creator, sent *Eri* down.
Eri came down from the sky.
He sailed down the River Anambra,
And established himself at the present site of Aguleri.
He had mystical power and won over the people of the area.
They had no king. He conquered them and became king.
Then he begot Onoja, Agulu, Nri, Igbariam, Iguedo Onoja migrated to Igala country.
Agulu stayed at Agulueri.
Nri migrated to Nri and founded the Nri lineages.
He took the Nri title and established the *ozo* title.
He got it spread over Igboland.
He killed his son and offered him as a sacrifice to get yam.
He killed his daughter and offered her as a sacrifice to get cocoyam....

God sent four supernatural beings to Eze Nri.
He discovered their secret names ... *Eke! Oye! Afo! Nkwo!*
They told Eze to establish the four-market days and disappeared.
Eze becomes the living head of *alusi*.
Mmuo are our dead ancestors.
They are great ancestors *ichie ukwu* and small ancestors *ichie nta* and spirits of benevolent daughters *umu ada*.
All living Nri are linked genealogically with these ancestors to Eri.
We are all linked by the tradition they passed down.
We must pass it down to our children.
Ancestors re-incarnate ... by re-incarnation the past is present and the present is future.
(Abridged ... from Nri Religious Myth.)
(Collected from Odenigbo, Anidumaka, Akunne).

This is the summary of the charter that holds Nri together. It contains the mystical aspect whereby every one is linked with the past and everyone is the embodiment of the present and future. The Eze Nri is the embodiment of the past, present and future as defined in the concept of *ichie ukwu*, *ichie nta* and re-incarnation (*ino uwa*). It also contains the structural aspect. Every Nri is linked genealogically in a complex network of kinship relationship (Figs. 7 and 8).

Relationships are defined linguistically and each relationship has specific rights and duties attached to it. Kinship is the central hub connecting ancestors, individuals and groups, that is, the structural order with the moral order defined broadly as *chukwu*, *alusi*, and *mmuo*. Through genealogical linkages the ancestors (past) are linked with the elders (present) and the unborn (future). The linkages from Ego's point of view are expressed in terms of behaviour patterns translated into rights and duties. Since Ego's actions have reference to the living, the dead and the unborn, they have moral and mystical references. Similarly, since individuals and groups related to the genealogical structure are associated

FIG. 4 KEY: STRUCTURE OF NRI (Igbo) COSMOLOGICAL AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS
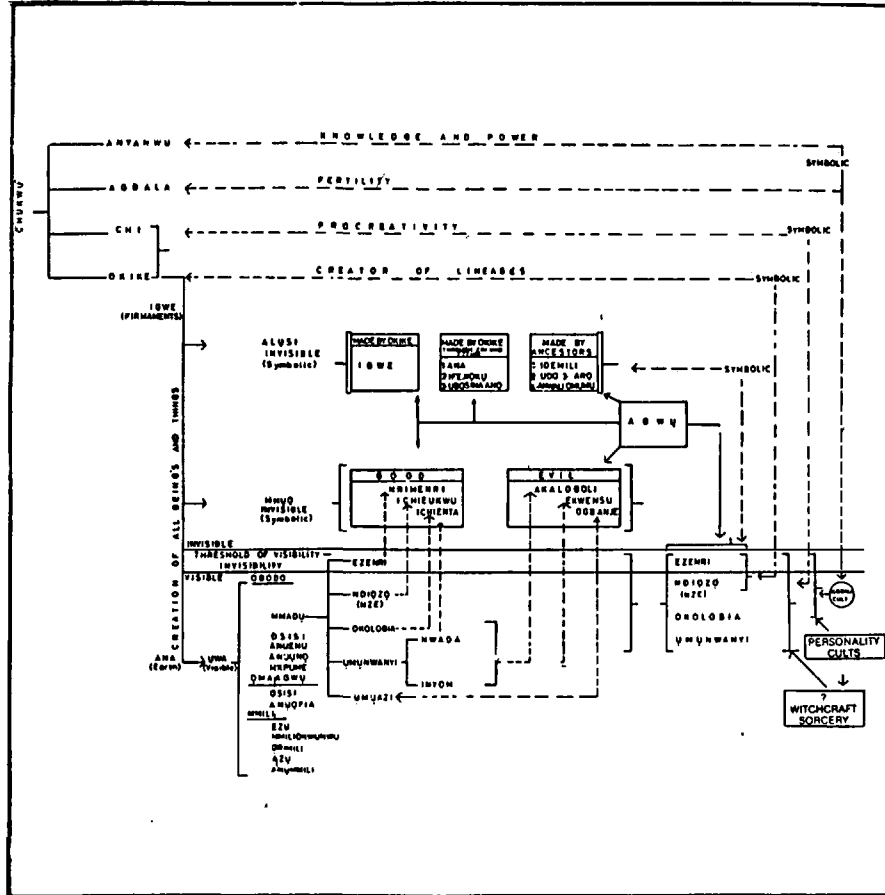
KEY: Ego is referred to as *Mmadu*

with certain supernatural beings and forces, actions directed towards such individuals and groups are regarded as directed towards the mystical world. One is therefore accountable to the living and the invisible beings. The moral and structural orders are bridged by a system of symbols.

Parsons has defined the essential feature of social action as the actor's reaction to the meanings of the people and things around him, his perception of these meanings and his reactions to the messages they convey. (Parsons, 1937). The Nri case shows clearly that actors react also to the meanings (concepts) of the invisible beings which transcend their immediate environment. Thus the immediate and the transcendental define the locus and direction of social action. The *dibia afa* who is believed to have communication with both the visible and invisible, is regarded as qualified to interpret social reality in terms of social relationships both mundane and mystical. He does that by explaining the structure and form of Ego's relationship with the supernaturals and Ego's relationship with persons genealogically defined. Figure 4 shows the linkages Ego has with the supernatural beings/forces, which have been explained in this chapter.

Figures 3 and 7 illustrate kinship links Ego has with groups and persons in the genealogical structure which I shall attempt to explain briefly. Ego as a member of a patrilineal society in which patrilineages are the basic unit of social organization (see Chapter 2) has different categories of collateral and affinal relations in other lineages. Tables in Appendix 2 show the kinship terms used and the behaviour patterns they generate. In this study, eighteen patrilineages are examined. But they can be classified into three broad groups associated with three dominant behaviour patterns.

They are as follows:

(a) Patrilineages related to Ego through fathers. The dominant behaviour pattern is authority.

(b) Patrilineages related to Ego through mothers. The dominant behaviour pattern is affection.

(c) Patrilineages related to Ego through affinal relations. The dominant behaviour pattern is respect and reciprocal aid.

This should be taken as a very broad generalization. These learned behaviour patterns used to involve or include the supernaturals. Thus supernaturals associated with Ego's patrilineage are generally disciplinarian, those associated with mother's patrilineages are 'reciprocative'. Within a universe of existence, there are two provinces of reality spanned by symbols whose chief interpreter is the *dibia afa*. Soyinka identifies what he calls the 'irreducible hermeticism ... within a universe of forces or being' of socially perceived phenomena as the transcendental motivating context of tragic drama. One may argue that the *dibia afa's* problem in reconstructing and interpreting social reality and social communication has a common source with that of a tragic dramatist, as also its solution:

> Because of the visceral intertwining of each individual with the fate of the entire community, a rupture in his normal functioning not only endangers this shared reality but threatens existence itself... (The) principle (of integrating experiences form outside social cognition) creates for society a non-doctrinaire mould of constant awareness ... (The Principle function (of the interpreters of such a mould) is to reinforce by observances, rituals and mytho-historical recitals the existing consciousness of cosmic entanglement in the community, and to arbitrate in the sometimes difficult application of such truths to domestic and community undertakings. (Soyinka, 1976 pp. 53-54).

The expression of social order pervades Nri cosmology. Cosmological involvement produces symbolic form and its chief interpreter is the *dibia afa*. The interaction between the social and the mystical is manifested in *afa*. Such mystical manifestation is called *iwa afa*. Thus if a person is mean to his mother's patrilineages, the dead ancestors of his mother's patrilineages will gently reproach him. *Agwu* will take the place of the person's *chi* and direct the person into minor mischiefs which generate minor misfortunes. These minor misfortunes are called *iwa afa*. They are signals from *agwu* warning the person and directing his attention to consult the *dibia afa* to find out more about his biography in relation to the social structure and the supernatural beings and forces associated with the social structure. The *dibia afa* in his construction and interpretation of social reality attempts to maintain a delicate balance between a person's social actions vis-a-vis others genealogically or socially defined on the one hand, and various supernatural beings/forces on the other. The *dibia's* interpretation is generally framed in terms of relationships linking past, present and future social actions.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 1

1.   See history of Nri in Onwuejeogwu 1974, for discussion on the relationship between Eri and Nri.

2.   See Onwuejeogwu 1974 and 1981 on how dates mentioned here are obtained.

3.   Anidumaka was one of the renowned dibia afa in Nri. He died in 1969. I worked with him between 1966 - 1968.

4.   For a detailed discussion of Schutz, see Chapter VII.

CHAPTER 2

AFA IN NRI POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS.

1. Political Groupings

Nri political organization is characterized by a sacred kingship which functions to harmonize the conflicting interests of various corporate political groupings by the application of religious sanctions with minimal physical force. Figure 5 shows the nature of these groupings and their relationships. In this short treatment, it is not possible to fully analyze the composition of each group, but some general description can be given.

Three types of political groupings exist:

(a)   Those based on lineage principles, that is, the segementary lineage groups with such manifestations as their collective temples; their territorial organization; their hierarchial groupings based on the equality and inequality of lineage status; the royal descent groups; groupings based on lineage ritual, economic and political roles; the *ozo* alliance groups; the marriage alliance groups and the *amulununo* (woman born of Nri parents) group based on descent principles.

(b)   Those based on non-lineage principles such as the *ndi nze* title groups, the *nzemabua* group who are the palace chiefs of the Eze Nri, the *okolobia* group of non-titled men, the *ilimmadunato* women's association, the age-grade groups, the *dibia* associations of traditional predictors, the *mmanwu* mask group and the *Agbala Nri* oracle cult group;

(c)   Non-traditional groups such as the Nri Progress Union, the non-traditional religious groups and the Community Council which links Nri system with the machinery of the Nigerian State system.

Political action in Nri can be viewed from two standpoints: first, as an aspect of the power struggle between lineages and within lineages and between other types of political groupings; and

secondly, as a means of making binding decisions, of which there are three types: the decisons made and carried out by the various lineages, by other groups, and by the state council of *Ndi Nze* and *Nzemabua*. All major and some minor decision-making processes, both by individuals and groups, are validated by *afa*.

Without going into the detailed dynamics of Nri politics and government, I shall briefly describe Nri territorial organization, segmentary lineage system and leadership structure because they are the infrastructure from which other political groupings take their form, content and function and are bases on which social action can be interpreted by the *afa*

2. Territorial Organization;

Politically, Nri recognize two types of territorial divisions: tripartite and dual. The tripartite division is: *Agukwu, Diodo* and *Akamkpisi,* and the dual division is: *Agukwu* and *Diodo-Akamkpisi.*

The dual division is expressed as a bipartite opposition between *Ezi:* those living to the north-east where roads leading to Nri converge, and *Ifite,* those living in the southwest interior. For clarity, the territorial divisions of Nri are summarized in Table 3 below.

The territorial divisions of Nri, formerly three distinct villages separated by thick forests, are becoming gradually blurred due to the expansion of the former villages in all directions (see Map 2). The location of the original settlements, temples and shrines can still be determined from landmarks and the ever shifting but roughly identifiable boundaries between the former villages and lineages (see Onwuejeogwu, 1974 and 1981). Residential areas are constantly changing, because individuals and members of a segment of a lineage occasionally move their home from one area to another. If deaths occurred frequently at a particular site, people were forced to move, because the 'earth is hot'. Such movements could

Fig. 5 NRI (IGBO) POLITICAL STRUCTURE

THE TERRITORIAL DIVISIONS OF NRI
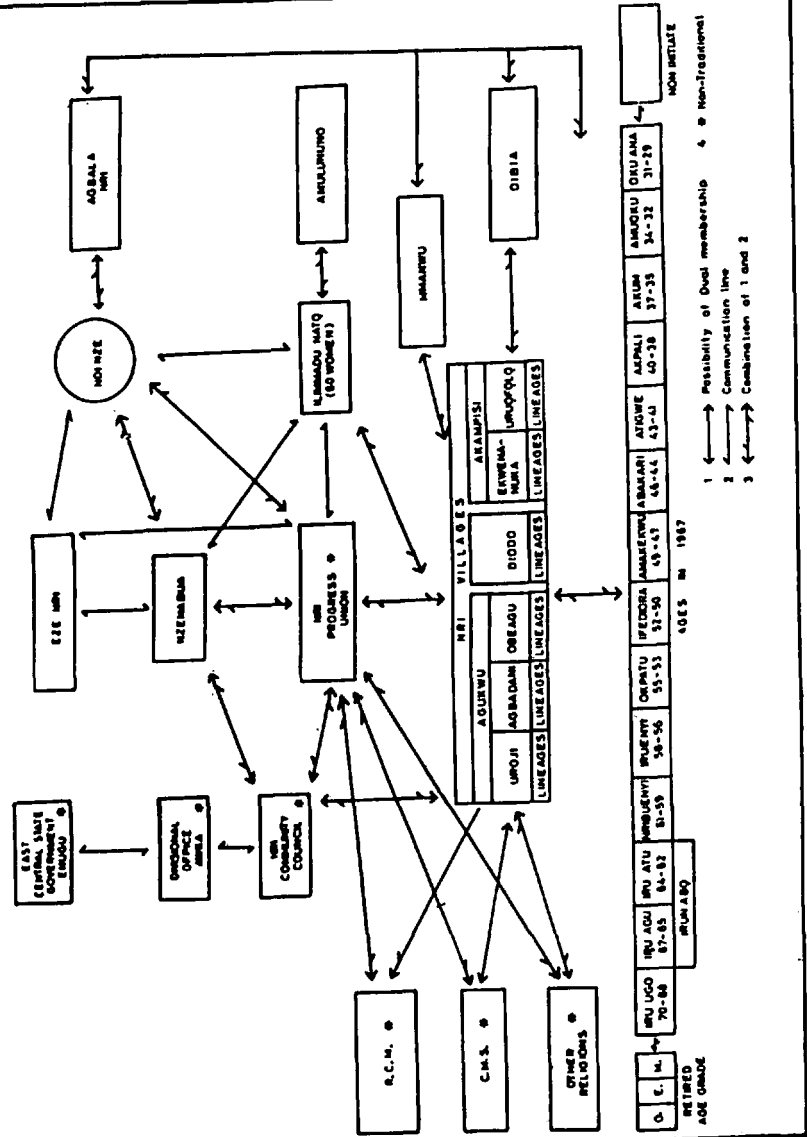
DUAL	TRIPARTITE (Villages)	WARD SECTIONS (Sub-Villages or maximal lineage cores)
EZI	AGUKWU c. 7,000 POPULATION	(a) AGBADANA (b) URUOJI (c) OBEAGU
IFITE	DIODO c. 500 POPULATION	(a) NRINAMOKE (b) NSEKPE (c) ACHALLA
	AKAMKPISI c. 2,500 POPULATION	(a) UMUDIANA (b) ENUORA (c) UROFOLO

not be made without consulting *afa* which not only determine the cause of the frequent deaths by associating them with the past social actions of ancestors who inhabited the sites, but also help the people to decide on the location of sites for new settlements.

The *afa* also enabled the people to determine what would be done to the old shrines in the deserted site and how new ones were to be set up in the new site. Most Nri migrations involved the consultation of *afa*. Evidence for the movements of people in the Anambra valley resulting in the foundation of many towns is contained in oral tradition. For example, at Nri and Aguleri, we are told:

Eri was sent by Chukwu (the Creator) from the sky to rule mankind; he came down the Anambra, near the present site of Aguleri. His first wife bore Nri the founder of Agukwu Nri, Agulu who founded Aguleri; Onogu the founder of Amanuke; and a daughter Iguedo who bore the founders of Nteje, Nando, Ogbunike, Umuleri and Awkuzu. His second wife bore Onoja who left for the Upper Anambra near Ogulugu to found Igala land (collected from Nri and Umu-Ezeora Aguleri). (See Map 3 for location of these towns).

as a charter for the group, welding together twelve settlements scattered over two hundred square miles into one kinship unit with past political and present cultural consequences. The Anambra dwellers feel and act as one, with identical culture. Their arrival down the Anambra gave rise to the Nri movement which probably occurred between A.D. 9 century and 1911. (Onwuejeogwu, 1974 and 1977). The decision to move to new sites was finalized by *afa* and these long-range movements were tied to the growth and collapse of Nri hegemony.[1]

Nri Ifikuanim the son of Eri, a great *dibia* after *afa* revelation left the Anambra southwards into the forest. He lived first at Amanuke, then near the present Enugu-ukwu. Nnofia and Enugu Agidi were founded by the son of Nri. Before he moved to a new site he consulted his *afa*. (Collected from Anidumaka).

During Nri ascendancy, between the twelfth and eighteenth centuries, Nri Lineages proliferated all over the Igbo Culture Area, continuing with lesser intensity until 1911 when the British banned their activities (Onwuejeogwu, 1972, 1974). Nri lineages are today found at Issele-Uku, Agbo, Ila, Ibusa, Owa, Ute, Abavo Atuma, Akwukwu, Uchi, Ogwashi-Ukwu, Asaba, Abala, Onitsha, Nnewi, Oreri, Abatete, Olu, Okigwe, Ihiala, Awka Udi, Nsukka, Agulu, Adazi, Nneni, etc. (See Map 3). The web-like migration pattern employed to occupy other Igbo territories (though generated by religious, economic and political factors) might have been influenced by *afa*, for as tradition has it, the final decisions of when, how and what direction to move; what stops to make and what *alusi* to go with, were taken after consulting *afa*. In recent times, some Nri men, both traditional and non-traditional still consult *afa* in deciding what part of Nigeria to move to in order to start a new business.[2]

3. The Structure of Nri Segmentary Lineages:

The basic social structure of Nri consists of different levels of segmentary patrilineages. The institution of sacred kingship is superimposed on this structure. I shall examine the importance of

segmentary lineages in determining the formation, structure, autonomy and continuity of groups whose main objectives are directed towards religious, economic and political actions and their inter-relationships in terms of equality or inequality.

The families occupying a compound pass through a cyclic development of several stages. At the early stage, the compound is occupied by a simple or compound family with few relations and strangers. The owner and head of the compound is agnatically related to the owner and head of other adjacent compounds. Such a compound has a small population of about 5 - 15 persons. Compounds in their later developmental stages are occupied by one to six extended families whose males, except for a few strangers, sister's sons or daughter's sons, are agnatically related to a common ancestor to whom a collective temple is dedicated. The head of each family has his own temple. The collective temple is inherited following the rule of primogeniture. The inheritor is the custodian, but the chief priest and head of the unit is the first man to take the *ozo* title. Such a big compound may comprise 15-30 persons. Compounds are traditionally separated by plots of farmland but some can be built close to one another.

Groups of compounds having a common ancestor and a common temple, form patrilineages of various depth and span. These are ranked in order of seniority and importance: a maximal lineage ideally has greater political authority than a major, a major more than a minor, and a minor more than a minimal. Similarly a leader who is associated with a maximal lineage has more political power and authority than a leader associated with a major lineage, and so forth. It is therefore proper to refer to Nri genealogy as hierarchically structured, for its component lineages are organized in grades of authority from lowest to highest.

Four types may occur, lineages with one to four levels respectively (see Fig. 6). A four-level type has minimal, minor, major and maximal lineages. A three-level type has minimal, major and maximal order of segmentation. A two-level type

has a minimal and a maximal lineage. A one-level type has a minimal level of segmentation which however operates functionally as a maximal lineage. The variations which occur are due to factors of history, population and leadership struggle among others. The total genealogy of Agukwu, Diodo and Akamkpisi, in which the various levels of lineages described above are featured, is shown in Figures 7 and 8 (for details on the formation of these lineages see Onwuejeogwu, 1974 or 1981).

The minimal lineage is the smallest segment of political significance, generally four to five generations from the present living elders born in the latter part of nineteenth century. In some cases the generations may be more or fewer. The minimal lineage is named after the founding ancestors, whose children call themselves; for example, Umu Ewenetem. (*Umu = children; Ewenetem = name of founder*). The minimal lineage is the only unit to administer the *Ibene* oath to its members. *Ibene* is believed to destroy only the person who swears falsely, while all other types of oath also destroy the person's patrilineal and matrilateral relations. Since the oath is used in administering justice within the minimal lineage, it is one index among others to ascertain whether a lineage has fully assumed minimal status. The minimal lineage is also a land-holding unit. Full members generally live together, in a discrete territory prior to expansion; although my personal observation shows that some members are now dispersed, the former territorial core is usually maintained. Even in the new territory, there is a strong tendency for members to keep together.

Men and women identify themselves first with their minimal lineages, where membership is defined by birth, adoption, or long residence. Since marriage is virilocal, women, especially the elderly, strongly identify with their husbands' patrilineages. Social, moral, jural and ritual rights and duties based on inheritance, succession, residence and title taking are defined first in terms of the minimal lineage. Hence, an Nri man or woman answers the question "where are you from?" with the name of his or her minimal

FIG. 6: TYPES OF LINEAGE LEVELS IN NRI

FIG. 7: AGUKWU GENEALOGY

FIG. 8: DIODO AND AKAMKPISI GENEALOGY
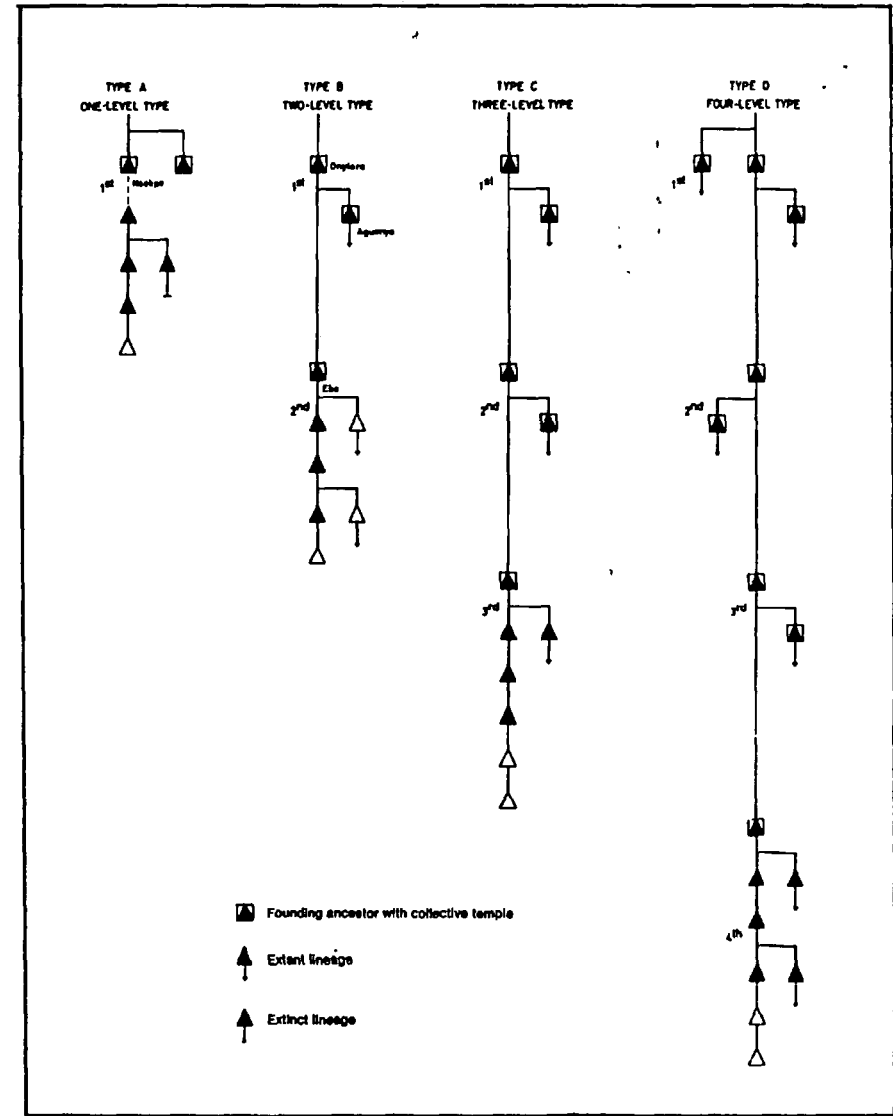
lineage. The more inclusive lineages above the minimal in the hierarchy, also define rights and duties at each level, since each of them is a corporate group. Members congregate for ritual and political action in a common temple dedicated to and named after the founding ancestor. They own other cults together, and in some cases common land as well. They live together when land is available. There are Nri lineages segmented below the level of the minimal lineage, but these are regarded as politically unimportant, with primarily domestic significance.

Lineages and temples of the same order of segmentation are not necessarily equals in status and importance. Some maximal lineages have lost their functional role and accompanying status having been relegated, at least temporarily, to the role of a minimal lineage. Similarly, some minor lineages have abdicated their function to component minimal lineages and some minimal lineages have absorbed the function of their major lineage. In the Nri system, lineages of the same order of segmentation and of the same span and depth differ considerably in terms of equality and dominance. This is one important difference between the Nri segmentary system and that of the Tiv or Tallensi (Bohannan, 1954; Fortes, 1945 and 1949). This unequal status of parallel lineages is attributable to variations in the age and status of their founders, population size, ritual and political role differentiation of founding elders and lineage members, historical accidents and leadership struggle, and also to the fact that unlike the Tiv, the Nri have well-organized non-lineage-based political structures. Such inequalities impose limitations on the type of political strategy adopted by individual members. These limitations are known by the *dibia afa* who constantly applies them in interpreting the actions of individuals and groups in relation to the social structure and the supernatural beings and forces, and ancestors associated with each lineage hierarchy.

4. Equality and Inequality:

Other things being equal, the political status of a lineage and its temple is determined by its horizontal and vertical placement in the total genealogical structure. The ranking of lineages upwards from the minimal is a consequence of vertical placement. But lineages and temples which occur at the same horizontal level are not necessarily of equal status, that is, vertical placement is very relevant. Some are dominant and others subordinate in political action, while yet others are completely absorbed by the collaterally-related lineages which dominate them. These two types of lineage inequality in Nri genealogical structure generate further political action. This can be illustrated with a brief description of lineage inequality in the Agukwu (see Fig. 7).

To appreciate the argument here, it is essential to refer to the genealogical chart (Fig. 7). According to Agukwu traditions of origin, Eri begot Nri Ifikuanim who begot Onyiora, Odili, Alikenri, Ogboo, and the father of Esoghana and *Ezekammadu*. Onyiora was the first son, *Okpala*, with the same mother as Odili. Alikenri was the second son and Ogboo the third. Ogboo died without the *ozo* title when his youngest son, Nribuife became Eze Nri, an office restricted to younger sons. He unified the town. Nribuife genealogically displaced his father Ogboo and is now considered the founder of the lineage, renamed Umu Nribuife. Thus Nribuife's lineage and temple became dominant over his father's. Odili, Onyiora's brother, was regarded as his 'sons' and so, lost his status through vertical displacement in the genealogy (along with the temple dedicated to him). Two of Odili's lineage became minimal lineages under the maximal lineage of Onyiora, and are jointly accorded the status of major lineages, named Uruanuta. Similarly, the father of Esoghana and Ezekammadu, who died young without *ozo* title, lost structural equality with his brothers Onyiora and Alikenri. The lineages of Esoghana and Ezekammadu assumed the status of major lineages in their respective maximal lineages. Since Alikenri cared for Esoghana, the major lineage of the latter became attached to Alikenri's maximal lineage and, since Ogboo cared for Ezekammadu, his major lineage became attached to Nribuife's maximal lineage.

These three displacements, of Odili, of the father of Esoghana and Ezekammadu and of Ogboo, continually affect the political status and actions of the various lineages that were formed by these persons. At the Onyiora generational level only three maximal lineages are recognized instead of five: Umu Onyiora, occupying a territory called Agbadana, Umu Alikenri occupying Uruoji and Umu Nribuife occupying Obeagu. The status of Umu Onyiora vis-a-vis that of Umu Alikenri was then lower by the factor of achievement who took the *ozo* title before his senior brother Onyiora and so became senior by title. The descendants of Alikenri inherited the *ozo* temple and title paraphernalia of Nri Ifikuanim. Lineages derived from Alikenri consequently enjoy status superior to those derived from Onyiora. The political, ritual and social status of Nri lineages on the same genealogical level, is often skewed by factors of this kind (for greater detail see Onwuejeogwu, 1974 or 1981).[3]

Minimal, major and maximal lineages are headed by the elders, *ikenye*, and by *ozo* titled men. They meet in the house of the eldest man, *okpala*, or in the temple of the founding ancestor, to discuss lineage affairs. Leadership devolves on the age and experience of the *okpala*, or on the achievement of the *ozo* title holder, if the *okpala* is not *ozo*. In this system, age is superseded by achieved ritual and political status: a younger man with *ozo* status will become the leader. In the past, before 1931, one was not allowed to take the *ozo* title during one's father's lifetime, but this has changed. It remains ideal for a father to take the title before his son, full or half elder brother before full or half younger brother, but the present trend is for some successful full or half younger brothers to take the title before their full or half elder brothers. In the traditional setting, such an act would generate conflict but the present changed content of leadership has minimized such conflicts. The *okpala* remains custodian of the founding lineage temple *obu* and he or his representative holds the *ofo* staff of political and ritual authority. This authority is however, limited and superseded by that of *ozo*

titled men. The *okpala* is accorded special respect, and rights as custodian, even when an *ozo* leads the lineage. However, if a man is both *okpala* and *ozo*, his political and ritual authority is all the greater. An *ozo* man and an *okpala* are potentially great and small ancestors respectively, depending on how they live and die. Nri leadership rests on a delicate balance between the Eze Nri and the *ozo* titled men, and between the *ozo* titled men and the elders and *okpala* (Onwuejeogwu, 1974; Chapter 5).

The Eze Nri is regarded as a spirit, *Mmuo*. He rules Nri town through his state councils, (*Nzemabua* and *Ndi Nze*), an association of women (*Ilimmadunato*) and an elaborate age-grade system organized at the lineage, ward and town levels. There were fourteen kings from the 10th century A.D. to 1936. The present king, Tabansi the fifteenth, was crowned in 1937. (See Appendix 3). Kingship circulates among three maximal lineages and within two or three minimal lineages, with an interregnum of from seven to thirty years. During this period, the king's eldest son or the *Nzemabua* council headed by the Isi Nze manages the affairs of the state until a new king is crowned.

In the past, the Eze Nri had ritual authority and some political control and/or influence over many Igbo settlements. External affairs were administered by state officials and other men who had taken the *ichi* title. Control was based not on military force, for Nri never had a military or police organization, but on the propagation of the ritual ideology that the Eze Nri had mystical powers and that Nri men and Nri town were sacred. Titled Nri men were found in most of the older Northern, Western and some Southern Igbo settlements over 4,500 square miles (Map 4), rendering ritual, political services as agents of the Eze Nri: controlling the *alusi*, markets and the yam rituals; appealing to the ancestors; cleansing abominations and removing pollutions from the community; making, explaining and dissolving Igbo taboos; arbitrating and making peace between settlements; ordaining, consecrating and nullifying the authority of ritual-political title-holders and chiefs. In some settlements they became the chiefs

MAP 4:- THE APPROXIMATE EXTENT OF NRI HEGEMONY

Map 4
Extent of
Nri Hegemony

Legend:
- At about the 16th Century
- At about the end of the 19th Century
- → Direction of Nri Cultural Influence
- Igbo Culture area

0   10   20   30   40 Miles
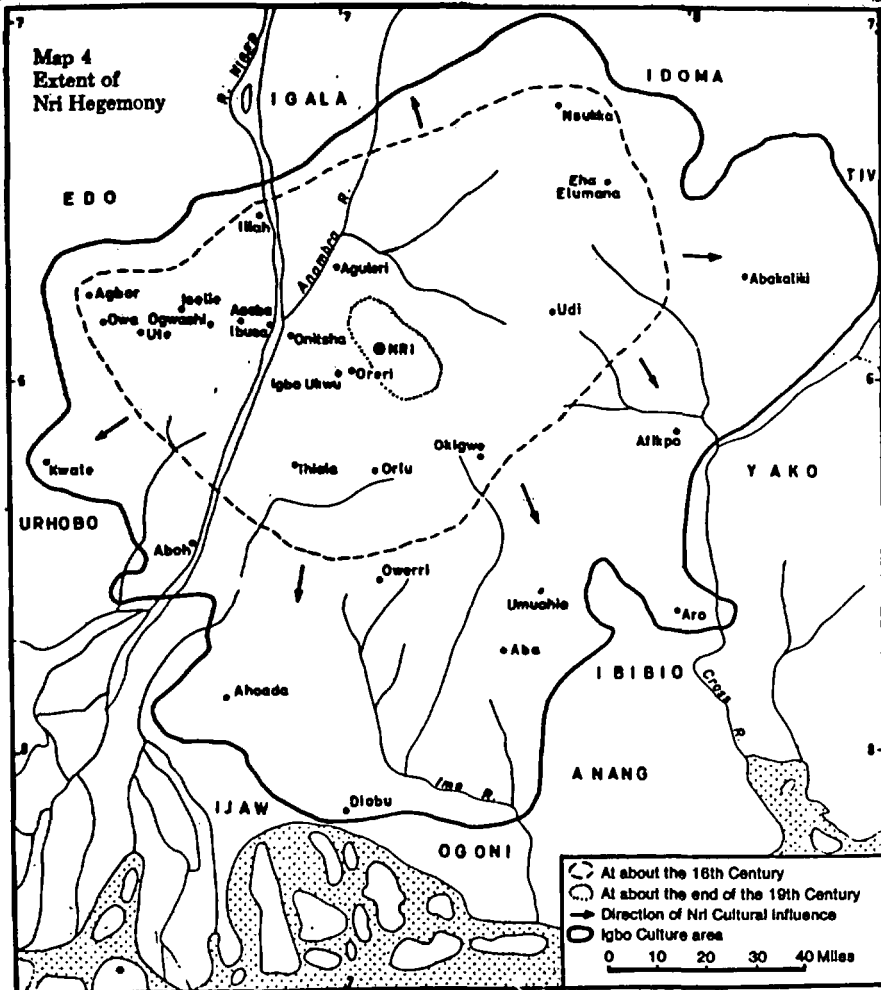
and priests. (Onwuejeogwu, 1974).

If we now consider the position of *afa* practitioners in relation to this system of equality and inequality, we find first that the role of symbolism as interpreted by the practitioners is relevant and secondly, that they fail to carry conviction unless they so interpret *afa* that their assertions 'make sense' in terms of this system. So in this system, the role of symbolism in maintaining the moral and social order is strong. The decoding of these symbols at all levels of human activities is the function of *dibia afa*. The structural relationship of lineages are matters of great interest not only to the lineage heads but also to the *dibiu afa*. Land disputes, problems arising from oath taking, *ozo title disputes which leaders of lineages put before the afa* for clarification are interpreted in terms of the status of the lineage of the individuals and groups. *Afa* interpretations, clarifications or verifications gain credibility if they re-echo the social structure and demonstrate certain aspects of a person's biography which are real to the community. In this way, certain unknown factors of social actions like illness, misfortune, fortunes, like the ones listed in Appendix 1 of this work, are related to some known factors connected with the social structure. Thus the unknown is mediated and illuminated through the known. Nri elders will cast serious doubts on any *afa* that interprets any social action to contradict all existing known facts about the social structure. Knowledge of the social structure is therefore important in understanding the relationship between *afa* and social reality. This is clearly expressed in Nri proverb that says: "the *afa* cannot say that a stream flows uphill, for streams are known to flow downhill."

5. Production, Consumption and Distribution:

The Nri economic system was diversified and geared towards the maximization of profit, by both administration and individuals, based on the production of goods and especially services for both internal and external markets. It was part of a bigger system of production, distribution and consumption that flourished in the whole of the Igbo culture area and it was closely related to the goals and values expressed in the Nri religion.

The excavation at Igbo-ukwu, a town twenty-five miles Southeast of Onitsha provides the earliest indication of Nri economic life (Shaw, 1970). The objects archaeologically named Igbo-ukwu are associated with Oreri which was an Nri settlement established during the reign of Eze Nri Namoke A.D. 11th century. (Onwuejeogwu, 1974, 1975). The finds suggest a pre-industrial economy based on a domestic technology supported by trade, agriculture and religion. Here follows a brief description of how trade, industry and services were organized and related to the state system.

There are eight categories of wealth in traditional Nri society; (a) Wealth obtained from land such as yam, kolanut, salt, palm oil, iroko trees; (b) Wealth based on livestock such as goats, cattle and horses; (c) Wealth based on ownership of metal objects such as copper, lead, iron rods, and old iron scraps; (d) Wealth based on control of man power; wives, children, friends and in the past some slaves who were sold but never kept as labour force; (e) *Ofo* staff which are used as share certificates. Thus an *ozo* man could buy up to seven or more *ofo* staff. Whenever a person takes the *ozo* title within his *ozo* group he would be entitled to eight shares (Onwuejeogwu, 1974). (f) Skill in craft and knowledge in ritual: a skilled artisan such as an ivory carver or one skilled in performing ritual services such as the cleansing of abomination is paid for his services. (g) Ownership of ivory tusks, beads and cowries. (h) Ownership of large compounds.

It has to be noted that wealth based on landed property is limited in an ecology of dense population, of scarce and generally infertile land. Consequently, the Nri have always relied only indirectly on agriculture, and have attempted to supplement this through ritual control over subsistence crops in other Igbo settlements where farming is the principal occupation.

Many Nri people remain farmers, traders and ritualists, but some are now government workers, teachers and businessmen. Most of the farmers live outside Nri; those at home have plots which may best be called gardens.

Several simple and compound families live in a huge walled compound. A compound, or group of compounds mostly of the same patrilineage, constitute the productive unit organized into farming, trading, ritual and craft groups. A compound has two or more of these groups, of which one is always a farming group. A person can belong to two of these functional groups. Composite groups can be formed when two or

more of such groups from related compounds combine to pursue a specific activity. The ritual groups acted as agents of the Eze Nri, spreading over most of Igboland, to perform political-ritual functions as his representatives. Leadership in each group is based on knowledge and experience: a father may be the head of a ritual group while his eldest son who is skilled may be the head of a craft group. All forms of production are believed to have been introduced and authorized by the Eze Nri. Production was sanctioned in the religious 'mythology' which Nri disseminated in most Igbo settlements. By this means, they sought to control the religious and political aspects of production. Distribution is based on reciprocity, redistribution, market principles and the capital markets. Gifts of various types are exchanged between inlaws, friends, associates and age-grades. However, certain institutionalized gifts are transferred during festivals, mortuary rites and marriage arrangements.

Another aspect is the various tributes and payments made to the Eze, which are redistributed among certain lineages. Eze Nri depends on his subjects for his wealth. Nri says 'The Eze Nri has everything and yet has nothing". The Eze does no work or trade or engage in any craft. There is still no royal territory or property: the Eze has only his personal land acquired before coronation. Yet he regulates all parts of Nri, owned by the maximal lineages. He cannot take land from them but he can authorize it for public use after consulting them. In the past, his palace and temple were built and maintained by communal labour; tribute was divided amongst his palace personnel and the three villages. All payment for *ozo* titles were made to him. Fines in the palace court were shared between the Eze and his councillor.

Marketing and ritual services for profit dominated the economic system. The principal currency was the cowry, *ego ayo*. A sophisticated system using cowries as a medium of exchange and of valuation developed in the Igbo culture area was spread among others by Nri political agents and traders who travelled widely. At the beginning of the century, the British introduced

their pounds, shillings and pence. A dual currency system developed. As more Europeans goods penetrated the hinterland and old cowries degenerated without replacement, the pound, backed by law, became acceptable. By 1925, cowries were used only in rural markets and for "ritual marketing." A rudimentary local banking and credit system developed.

Credit was based on the sharing of payments for the *ozo* title, and the buying and selling of *ofo* ritual staff by *ozo* titled men within a restricted 'market'. (Onwuejeogwu, 1974). Thus *ofo*, a staff of ritual political authority, was converted into a type of shares or security certificate. This is how ritual, politics and economics are interwoven, one reinforcing the other.

Nri distinguish between domestic and social consumption of accumulated wealth. Consumption used to maintain oneself and one's household is domestic; that used to obtain status symbols is social. In Nri, the accumulation of wealth is paramount because one has to take titles for one's children and for oneself. Title-taking moves one up the social ladder, towards lineage and state leadership, and each step requires the distribution of wealth. In 1975 it was calculated that to take all titles except the Eze Nri costs N4,000 (this figure does not take inflation into account). The religious concept of a 'good' and 'successful' man is the Nri motivation for work and wealth. All 'success' and 'goodness' culminate in leadership, in the form of *okpala* or the *ozo* and *Eze Nri* titles. *Ozo* can be taken by any successful man who has wealth and persons of upright character to back him, while *Eze Nri* can be taken only by the spiritually inspired man from the appropriate royal lineages, with the economic means to perform the long rituals of coronation (see Onwuejeogwu, 1974 or 1981).

This analysis shows how ritual values pervade the kinship, economic, social and political systems of Nri. The greater an individaul's ritual, political and craft skill, the more wealth he accumulates. The more wealth channelled into title-taking, the higher status he acquires and the more taboos he observes as a member of a group, and the greater his influence and responsibilities in moral, ritual,

social, political and economic life. The whole system therefore stresses individual achievement within a communal context. Since ritual values pervade the economic, social and political systems, major social actions related to these systems involve the consultation of *afa*, because the concept of 'success' and 'good' are conceived of as connected with the actions of dead ancestors and living elders on the one hand and that of individuals on the other. The ancestors represent the 'past,' the living elders and others the 'present', and the actions of both determine the course of the 'future'. Economic pursuits are conceptualized in this type of frame-work which the *dibia afa* manipulates in his task to reconstruct and interpret social reality and stimulate social action.

6. Wealth, Prestige and Power:

The concept 'big man' assumes a correlation between power and accumulated wealth. As expounded by Homans (1958 and 1961), Blau (1964), Bailey (1969) and Kapferer (1969, 1973) this concept depends on a theory of economic exchange. Henderson (1972) has used the concept to analyze the evolution of political relationship in Onitsha Igbo. Given a number of groups and persons interacting economically and a specific mode of resource distribution, a certain pattern of inequality is expected, convertible into power dominance at the political level.

There are major weaknesses to this approach. Its adherents stress differential access to scarce resources, but they fail to clarify or specify the degree and nature of scarcity, and to discuss adequately the character and pattern of distribution of the resources. They ignore the channels through which resources flow into and out of the community, the volume of resources and the control system that directs the flow at various check points. They further assume wealth to be accumulated and expanded by the successful individual in a rational effort to protect and strengthen his political and economic position. They ignore the irrational and symbolic forces in operation, by emphasizing the explicit relationship between macro-political events. I hold on the

contrary that the latter are crucial and essential to the system. I shall show that in Nri the same economic 'big man' at the strong focal point of power conflict can also be the religious and symbolic figure at its vital weak point. In the Nri political system, 'big men' do exploit their position, but small men also exploit 'big men' thus preventing the development of a class system of oppressed.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Odenigbo Alike Ifem, Asiegbo Enweliana, Okpoko, Onyeso, Enweliana and Ewuocha Ogboo were among the 'big men' of Nri. Between 1960 and 1976 there were several successful merchants considered to be 'big men': M.O. Mbolu, R.N. Tabansi, D.C. Nwosu (Njikoka), D. O. Ifezue, and outstanding personalities such as Cannon J.E. Ikejiani, (note that not one *afa* man has been mentioned as a 'big man'). These men did co-operate and compete as members of the same or different groups; their actions accelerated, retarded or frustrated decisions and they attempted to dominate their own group, they generated different types of political action between and among groups to further their interests. But not one of these men, (according to Nri oral tradition or as far as I have observed) gained a position in the system to challenge the power or authority of the Eze Nri or of other political groups. Why is this so? The reason can be found in the checks and balances built into Nri social structure and in the ideology of leadership. One of these checks and balances accounts for the absence of any account of abuse of power by an *Eze:* once crowned, any misconduct is attributed to the misconduct of his *Nzemabua*, he cannot be deposed no matter the nature of his misconduct. The operation of these checks is discussed under four broad headings.

(i) Genealogical Check: A segmentary lineage is defined with reference to an ancestor. Lineages are highly differentiated horizontally and vertically in the genealogical structure, in ritual and political roles, demography and distribution of power and authority. Hence different persons hold the *ofo* and *alo* staff at different genealogical

points. Even though segmentary opposition is operatively minimal, a 'big man' of maximal lineage X, cannot use the *ofo* and *alo* of X to control maximal lineages Y and Z. And accumulated wealth cannot help a man to hold the combined *ofo* and *alo* of X, Y, Z: he has to live long enough to be the eldest or the first *ozo* of the three maximal lineages which of course must be related genealogically in the first instance. Only the holder of the Nri title, the Eze, has the paramount *ofo* and *alo;* he alone can challenge the power and authority of other maximal lineages, whether or not related to his; a 'big man' may of course attempt such a challenge, but he is almost certain to fail hopelessly in the long run.

(ii) **Territorial Checks:** The dual and tripartite division of Nri is another effective check against the over-all influence of a 'big man'. The territorial divisions of Agukwu, Diodo and Akamkpisi symbolize the autonomy of the component parts of the Nri federal system formed during the reign of Eze Nribuife of Agukwu and Diodo (Onwuejeogwu, 1974). If a 'big man' attempts to control this system, the people of the other sections simply ignore him. If he is a member of the *Nzemabua* of Agukwu and oversteps the boundaries of constitutionality and respectability, the members from Diodo and Akamkpisi simply boycott *Nzemabua* meetings. Then, the Eze does not tolerate such a situation. The 'big man' either swallows his pride or faces very unpleasant and unpopular ritual and secular sanctions directed against him by the Eze.

(iii) **Religious Checks:** There are four major religious checks against the influence of a 'big man'. The Eze can pronounce anathema on any man. In the past, an anathema of banishment forced a person to leave and settle elsewhere; some lineages outside Nri claim that their founders were banished there. An anathema or taboo forced a person to concede and repent by preventing his lineages trom communicating with him.

In traditional times, the ritual consequences of such a curse were very grave, for it negated the concept of the good man, central to Nri ethics.

The second religious check is the annual confession held at *Onu Ebo* by all *ozo* and all 'big men' are *ozo.* In this ritual, each man confesses his anti-social acts. In a small community like Nri, it is impossible to hide one's anti-social acts; the sanction for hiding them was believed to be immediate illness followed by a disgraceful death. In the past, only an *ozo* who attended this confession attended the council of the Eze to discuss public affairs with truth and integrity before his *ofo* and *alo.* And only an *ozo* who attended council could stand up before their minimal or maximal lineages as respectable leaders. Though such a confession need not prevent behind-the-scene exercise of influence yet it limits its occurrence.

The third religious check is provided by the *mmanwu* cult. During the *Onwa Agwu* month, the *mmanwu* sing and chant the anti-social acts of anyone. Persons ordinarily feared are exposed to critical public opinion. The fourth religious check is generated by the *dibia afa* who interpret the fortune and misfortune of Nri society in terms of the nature of the relation between individuals, between individuals and groups and between groups. If the growing power of a 'big man' endangers the freedom of others, the *dibia afa* arouse the public to curb his excesses and ambition. Thus the *dibia afa* who are at the periphery of the power system direct the course of action without controlling any material resources. This was the case during the time of Anidumaka, 1930 - 1969. He was a famous and respectable *dibia afa* who was unable to take the *ozo* title. As the head of the *dibia* association he was able to manipulate the *Nzemabua*, a group of senior *ozo* men, who always consulted his association, *afa*, before taking important state decisions.

(iv) **Political and Economic Checks:** The source of wealth lies outside Nri and was controlled in the past by the Eze, who is still ritually tabooed from participating in wealth accumulation. He could ban an individual from acting as an Nri agent, thus removing a major means of wealth; or alter the operational areas in Igboland allocated to the various maximal lineages.[5] He with his *Nzemabua*, could divest a man of his *ozo* title. He can still call on the *okolobia* group to take decisions over and above the *ozo* men. His palace is the major channel and check-point of redistribution, to which other maximal lineages are subordinate and are partially controlled by various *ozo* or by an elder, *okpala.* The elaborate title system which culminates in the purchase of *ofo* staves together with the moral obligation to take titles for one's children and collateral relations, limit the wealth a 'big man' can accumulate to maintain followings within and outside his maximal lineage. One cannot even maintain a following within his maximal lineages because the component major and minimal lineages of the maximal lineages belong to different *ozo* groupings called *ogwe mmuo.* And one can only buy a limited number of *ofo* staves (only seven) within one's *ogwe mmuo.* By the time a man has purchased the seventh *ofo* staff and final title *Ntufuazu*, and taken titles for his children and collateral relations, most of his wealth has been liquidated. After his death, the elaborate mortuary rites of an *ozo* are paid from his estate. His debts are paid and what remains, both movable and immovable, is shared in given proportions among all his children and many wives. Thus the title system encourages the dispersal of a man's wealth not only during his lifetime but also in the next generation after his death. This, together with the ambivalent Nri attitude towards slave trade, made it very unlikely that an individual with the ambition to dominate those outside his maximal lineages would have sufficient wealth to achieve it.

Even if he had, the other controlling factors discussed earlier on would militate against him. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw economic and political decline in Nri but the system was such that at the turn of the twentieth century, the rising 'class' of new men becoming wealthy through commerce was still unable to challenge effectively the power and authority of established office-holders. The State Government edict on chieftaincy affairs in 1976 in Anambra State seems to add more strength to the position and role of Eze Nri and his traditional chiefs.

7. Conclusion: An Outline of Nri Political Organization.

The basic Nri political system consists of patrilineal segmentary lineages, but segmentary opposition is minimal. Political relationship of lineages are mainly governed by territoriality, lineage equality and inequality, marriage among lineages and temples, title-taking, age-grades, diverse interest groups and functional relationships among religious and economic lineage roles.

On these lineages and groupings is superimposed a sacred king, the Eze Nri, regarded as a spirit and supernatural being. The Eze is not a chief priest, and does not perform the priestly function ascribed to him by casual observers. He does not offer sacrifices, nor use charms and medicine. On the contrary, sacrifices are offered to the *Eze,* as the living member of *nrimenri* 'the kings of Nri taken collectively' by the chief palace priest. The *eze Nri* is on the threshold between the human and supernatural worlds, with the complementary roles of spirit and supernatural being *(mmuo and alusi)* and of king. He is hemmed in by taboos against the defilement of the human world. Through his palace officials, *odibo eze,* he communicates with men, and through his state councils, *ndi ichie nzemabua* and *ndi nze,* he conducts internal and external affairs.

Society is 'stratified' hierarchically and pyramidally, into five taboo - observing groups the *eze, ozo,* non-*ozo*, married women, children. Communication and control among these groups

is by the symbolic code of tabooed actions: abomination and purification, which emanate from the palace and decoded by the *dibia afa* through the *afa* system to determine individual and group action. Since this system pervades Nri politics. religion, economics and culture, it is misleading to consider any aspect in isolation.

With this system, the *eze* also managed Nri external affairs, involving some ascendance over one hundred or more Igbo settlements, across 4,500 square miles. This hegemony reached apogee between the thirteenth and late seventeenth centuries, then gradually declined until abolished by the British in 1911. It derived existence and cohesion, not from militarism but from complex integrating ritual beliefs, values and norms and actions generally directed by *afa*.

Nri stands out among West African forest kingdoms as a typological extreme of sacred kingship, which brings to its politics distinctive conception and allocation of power and authority. The sources of power and of authority. are separate. Power, *ike ichi*, the ability to make decisions and act on persons or groups is derived from *Chukwu* and symbolized in the *alo nrimenri*, collective *alo* staff of dead and living *eze*. The *eze* derives this political-religious power through Eri the founder of the Eri clans in the Anambra valley. Eze Nri established the *ozo* title to allocate this power which is re-enacted in the *ozo* title ceremony by giving the *alo*. *Ozo* are legitimized as lineage leaders by the *eze* in this way. The state power of the *alo* nrimenri is stronger than the power of lineage leaders singly or collectively, but the former is not absolute because it is defined by group conformation to taboo; this check is inherent.

Authority is conceived of as *ike iji ofo* 'the right to use the *ofo* staff', and is delegated downwards from the *eze* who holds the *ofo nrimenri* 'collective *ofo* staff of living and dead *eze* Nri to the *ozo* who holds *ofo ozo* and the *dibia* who holds *ofo dibia*. But lineage authority derives from its own collective ancestors, *ozo* and non-*ozo*, symbolized in the *ofo ozo* kept in the collective temple; these are in some sense also called *ofo okpala* since they are inherited by first sons as they become lineage temple custodians.

Lineages are segmentary, but segmentary opposition is minimal and unimportant in political action. Lineages are arranged hierarchically from the minimal to the maximal, and authority is regarded as hierarchical, legitimized by the lineage *ofo* and vested in its leaders, who are *ozo* or *okpala*. Since lineages have founding *ofo* but no founding *alo*, they have no political power of their own, but only the authority to use power derived from the *eze*. Lineage elders who are not *ozo* have no *alo* and hence no power; they use the authority derived from the lineage ancestors to manage its affairs. The lineage leader who is *ozo* has both *ofo* and *alo*, both authority and power, thereby superseding *okpala* in that function. Hence all aspire to *ozo*. Taking the *ozo* title involves institutionalized distribution of wealth in payment and feasting. The conversion of accumulated wealth into social prestige is symbolized in the transmission of *alo* and *ofo* by the king.

Nri shows a different kind of complexity from other states neighbouring it in time and space. The diversification and specialization at its state level falls short of that achieved under militarization. Nri lacked an elaborate hierarchy of officials associated with specific duties, having instead titled officials with general duties and a few specialized functions. But however, greater complexity is attested to at the lineage level, with striking diversification.

Two levels of political organization: the state and the lineage are distinct, but they are articulated by the political concept of a theocratic monarchy whose instrument of power and authority is derived from Nri history, social structure and religious philosophy which are based on the relationships between past, present and future. Social reality in Nri is constructed and interpreted in terms of this tripartite relationship and major forms of social action and social order are also arranged and transformed in terms of these relationships. The symbolism of *afa* is one of the main systems used to achieve such transformations. How this is done shall be fully discussed and analyzed in Part Two of this work.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 2

1.   Maps 3 and 4 are relevant in this case. Nri lineages have been located in over 60 Igbo towns spreading between Agbor in the extreme West of the Igbo culture area and Abakaliki in the East, and between Enugu Ezike in the North and Owerri in the South. The oral tradition of most of these towns have been collected and cross-checked, and genealogies studied. There is evidence that the founders of the Nri lineages of these towns left Nri at various periods in Nri history. For example, the A.D. 9th century migration from Nri to Oreri is testified to by the carbon - 14 dates obtained by Shaw in the Igbo-Ukwu excavation, which is an Nri site. (See Shaw, 1970, Onwuejeogwu, 1977a and b).

2.   It should be noted that Nri leaders probably followed *afa* only to the point where predictors appeared to be suggesting courses the leaders thought wise and reasonable.

3.   The important point in this section is not whether the geneologies in the 9th century A.D. are accurately remembered as those of the 19th century A.D. are. The point made is how the belief rightly or wrongly, in the validity of the genealogical structure, influence the political, religious and economic relationships of Nri lineages and how the knowledge of this belief influences the interpretation of the *dibia afa*

4.   For fuller explanation of how this 'Credit' system operates see M.A. Onwuejeogwu M. Phil. thesis, on Political organization of Nri, University of London, 1974 and Onwuejeogwu 1981.

5.   This fact is supported by Oral tradition collected from Nri. The Iru Nnebo case was a typical example: They were banned from operating in the Anambra area and re-allocated to Abakaliki area during the reign of Nri Ewenetem.

PART 2

AFA AS A STRUCTURED INTEGRATED SYSTEM

1. An *Afa* Session:

In Chapter One I described *agwu* as a supernatural force and being and mentioned that the *dibia afa*, the predictor who establishes communication with *agwu* has all its images, shrine, *ofo* and *oji* as part of his paraphernalia.[1] But the major instrument used in communication with *agwu* is a pair of chaplets. Each chaplet is a continuous string of four broad beads separated by four beads of cylindrical bones from the spines of fish (see Plate 2). Before an *afa* session holds the *afa man* will place on the ground before him, the image of *agwu*, all or some of its household and associated animals, and a small water pebble with which to threaten *agwu* if it begins to play pranks by lying *(itu ntu)*. Other items are local white chalk used for making marks on the ground but specially prepared for use during an *afa* session, the right or left horn of an animal called *enemmili* used by the *afa man* to blow off 'bad talk' or signs from *agwu* and *dibia's ofo* which is a symbol of his authority as *afa man*. The *ofo* was handed to him as a consecrated staff, obtained from the *ofo* tree, on the day he completed his training as a *dibia afa*. All these items, apart from the images, are packed in an empty tortoise shell.

The tortoise is an animal which, in Igbo folktales and myths, is associated with trickery. The *dibia afa* takes the *afa* chaplets one in each hand and throws them on the ground forward, so that they lie parallel to each other. The four broad seeds on each chaplet have both a concave and a convex side and when thrown on the ground, the concave side of each broad seed may face either upwards or downwards. The position of the four seeds is associated with an *afa* word. The *afa man* builds the *afa* words into sentences by reading it from right to left. An example will suffice to illustrate the method of throwing:

KEY

( ) = Concave side up,

PLATE 2: AGWU AND AFA CHAPLET:
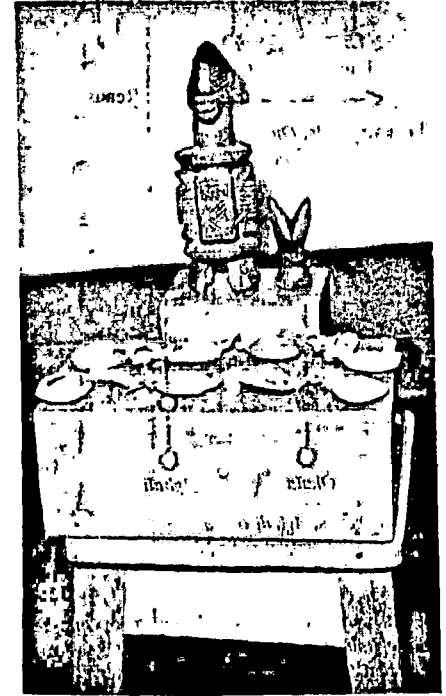
1. *Ikenga Agwu*
2. *Agwu*
3. A pair of *afa* chaplets

convex side down. This shall be referred as OPEN

● = Convex side up concave side down. Referred to as CLOSED

1st throw:
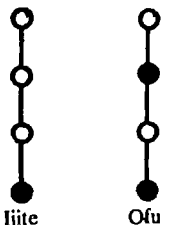
This pair reads: *Ofu Ijite:*
worthless talk

2nd throw
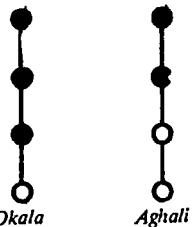
This pair reads: *Aghali okala:*
ozo titled man

The first and second pairs of throws read: *Ofu ijite nke aghali Okala.* The worthless talk of *ozo* titled man.

It will be interesting to describe what an *afa* session looks like before embarking on the analysis of the principles involved in the system.

On August 10th, 1976 an elder of a lineage X, in the company of five of his relations, came to an *afa* man who reccived them in his temple *(obu)*. The *afa* man offered kolanut which was shared by the *dibia*, he obliquely referred to the reason why his clients had come to see him and called on *Chukwu* to send his blessing. A light conversation followed, until the elder interrupted the talk and began to disclose the purpose of their visit. The client paid a little token fee. I hereby reproduce the conversation and the *afa* session that followed as it happened:

(CONVERSATION)[2]

Elder: We have come to find out the condition of our family. There has been a lot of troubles: frequent quarrels, illness and mishaps.
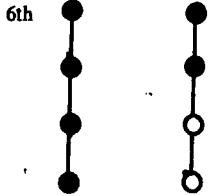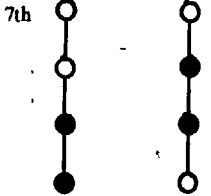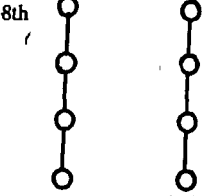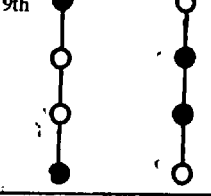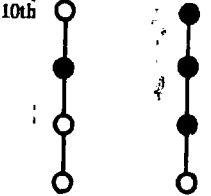
Dibia: Oh! you describe a very bad world. Umu - x are known for their progressiveness; few illness and quarrels are things that can be remedied.
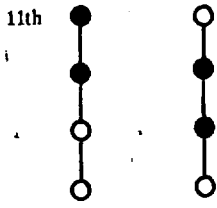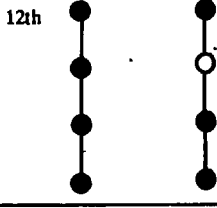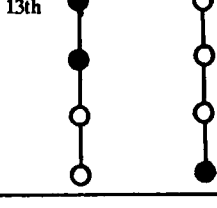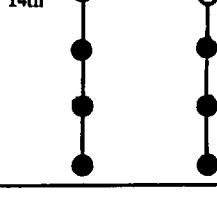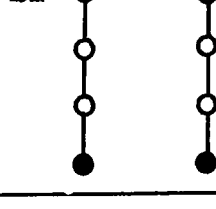
Elder: Oh! yes, that's why I have come. A proverb says: it is better to drive the black goats into their sleeping huts before it is dark.[3] Here is 30k for kolanut. (Places the 30k on the floor before the *dibia*).
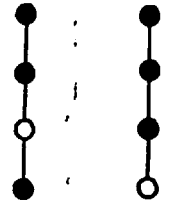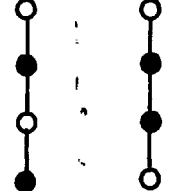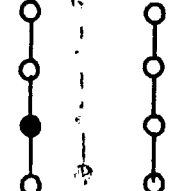
Dibia: (Blows his horn).
Agwu! here is white chalk for you. (Makes four vertical parallel marks with the chalk on the ground. He takes the *afa* chaplets and begins to throw them as follows):-

QUESTIONS ASKED AND STATEMENT MADE BY DIBIA	THROWS OF PAIRS OF *AFA* CHAPLETS		INTERPRETATION *AFA* WORD/ENGLISH
X has come to find out about his family. How is it?	1st		*Ora Nabo* Mischievious
What mischief?	2nd		*Oru Akwu* A taboo
Against whom? (Follows up with Igbo proverb)	3rd		*Odi Ogoli* Supernatural Being called *Ogugu*
Which *Ogugu?* (Recites a praise song to *Ogugu* - Poetry)	4th		*Otule Odi* Gun shot (joys)? (crisis)?
What type of gun shot?	5th		*Ijite Obala* Happiness

(AFA BEGINS)

Question	Order	Symbol (left / right)	Meaning
Which *Ogugu?* (praise song to *Ogugu*)	6th	● ● ● ○ / ● ● ● ○	*Aghali Akwu* medicine
What medicine? (Stops divining, follows up with folk tale on effectiveness of medicine)	7th	○ ○ ● ○ / ○ ● ● ○	*Odi Ululu* mother's lineage
Do what there?	8th	○ ○ ● ○ / ○ ○ ● ○	*Obi Nabo* go twice
	9th	● ○ ○ ○ / ○ ● ● ○	*Odi Ogoli* supernatural that is *Ogugu*
Hm! Hm! (Follows up with an Igbo proverb)	10th	○ ● ○ ○ / ● ● ● ○	*Okala Otule* Good talk (truth)
What next?	11th	● ● ○ ○ / ○ ● ● ○	*Odi Otunukpa* mother's lineage
You have said this before, what will be given to *ogugu?*	12th	● ● ● ● / ● ○ ● ●	*Aka Akwu* Ancestors
Do what or give What?	13th	● ● ○ ○ / ○ ○ ○ ●	*Ijite Aghali* make a blood sacrifice
Yes!	14th	● ● ● ● / ○ ● ● ●	*Obala Akwu* coming with trouble
Why trouble? Why trouble? (Igbo proverb)	15th	● ○ ○ ● / ○ ○ ○ ●	*Ijite Ogoli* worthless talk to be put aside (*dibia* getting uneasy with *afa*)

Who puts trouble aside! Why trouble?	16th	(afa symbol)	*Okala Otunukpa* Blackmail
Blackmail? Okey! But what do you want? (Igbo proverb)	17th	(afa symbol)	*Odi Ose* very angry
Okay! It will be made right, but tell me what you want.	18th, 19th 20th, 21st, 22nd All repetition of 17th throw		*Odi Osa* (five times) very angry
Agwu' Say something! (Praise song to *Agwu* - Poetry)	23rd	(afa symbol)	*Obi Ete* Fowl
Afa is ended, *Agwu* is angry because your people have been erring for long. They turned deaf ears to all warnings.	(Stop)	(Stop)	

Since the English interpretation of the *afa* words seem incoherent and meaningless, I shall attempt to transcribe it into standard English keeping closely to the original form and the meaning as interpreted by the *dibia*.

A mischievous act has occurred and it is a taboo against the supernatural being, *Ogugu*. But gun shots of happiness will occur, if the 'medicine' in the mother's lineage is visited twice. The 'medicine' is that of *ogugu*.
Make a bloody sacrifice to *ana* that is coming with trouble.
This is worthless talk to be thrown aside.
This is blackmail!
I am very angry! very angry!
very angry! very angry! very angry! very angry!
Give me a fowl.

(CONVERSATION BEGINS)

Dibia: There is indeed trouble *agwu* requires a fowl because you have long neglected all warnings given to you. Terrible things are happening in your lineage. Taboos are broken and *ogugu* cannot take it anymore.
     Peace can only be restored by offering a sacrifice of a she-goat to the *ogugu* of your mother's lineage, and a cock, to the ancestors of your mother's lineage. And then a he-goat sacrificed to *ana* to cleanse all the abominations committed by members of the lineage.
Elder: I see, I have long suspected this.
Dibia: Go quickly and act. Give me N2 for the *afa* and a fowl for *agwu*.

(FINIS)

An *afa* session ends. The *dibia afa* has constructed a new social reality and generated a new set of social relationships both mundane and mystical. The type of questions the *dibia* asks before each throw, the interpretation he gives, are based on the knowledge of the biography of the individual and the social structure of Nri. It has to be noted that the interpretation he gives to the *afa* words is only one way of looking at social reality. It is probable that if the clients had come for other

reasons the same set of *afa* words would have been interpreted to reflect the needs and expectations of the clients. This is difficult to prove but it seems so. When this question was put to the *dibia* he argued that the *afa* seeds would have fallen differently to produce different *afa* words and meaning. I will now proceed to analyze the principles involved in decoding *afa*.

2. The Principles of *Afa*:

Throwing the *afa* chaplets is like tossing simultaneously eight kobo (penny) coins, four of which are tied together to a string to make a pair of chaplets. On landing, each kobo may be either head or tail. In the case of the *afa* chaplets, the disposition of the seeds are described as open or closed. In both cases, the law of probability is involved. The difference is however clear: the coins are equal in weight and similar in shape and so symetrical but the seeds are slightly different in weight and shape and therefore non-symetrical. The rule of probability will be more applicable to the coins than to the *afa* seeds. Though other factors such as the structure of chaplets, and skill of the *dibia afa* in throwing the chaplets may tend to vary the probability. In this regard, Polanyi dealing with probability argues that "even the most strictly mechanized procedure leaves something to personal skill in the exercise of which individual bias may enter" (Polanyi, 1958, p. 20). In this analysis I will consider probability as a constant factor operating either exactly or inexactly depending on several variables.

When two *afa* seeds are tossed into the air and allowed to fall to the ground, the two basic dispositions which will probably occur are as follows:

(a) both closed   ● ● similarity
(b) both opened   O O similarity
(c) one open/one closed   O ● opposition
(d) one closed/one opened   ● O opposition

In this elementary binary system above (a) and (b) are in relationship of similarity while (c) and (d)

are in a relationship of opposition or contradiction. So there are two cases of binary opposition and two cases of binary similarity. The matter assumes a more complex dimension when four of these seeds are tied together and a pair of these chaplets thrown simultaneously. There are sixteen possible dispositions of the seeds of each chaplet after each throw (Fig. 8b). The disposition of the seeds of each chaplet is a sign associated with a given and specific *afa* word which is meaningless such as *okala, ijite.* In Table 4 for purposes of easy reference, a single *afa* word associated with an *afa* sign is given an alphabetic code e.g., *okala* is coded (a), *ogoli* (b). The sixteen single *afa* words are coded (a) to (p). Since two *afa* chaplets, one held in the right hand and the other in the left, are thrown simultaneously, a pair of sixteen *afa* words are possible. Table 4 shows these pairs:

Table 4: Sixteen *afa* words coded:

LEFT CHAPLET	CODE	RIGHT CHAPLET	CODE
Okala	a	Okala	a
Ogoli	b	Ogoli	b
Akwu	c	Akwu	c
Aka	d	Aka	d
Ululu	e	Ululu	e
Ose	f	Ose	f
Obala	g	Obala	g
Ete	h	Ete	h
Ijite or Ogute	i	Ijite or Ogute	i
Udi or odi	j	Udi or Odi	j
Obi	k	Obi	k
Otule	l	Otule	l
Aghali or Agali	m	Aghali or Agali	m
Ofu	n	Ofu	n
Ora	o	Ora	o
Atunuka or Tunukpa	p	Atunuka or Tunukpa	p

Each word in the left column can be combined with each word in the right column to produce a pair of, or double *afa* words which have a specific meaning. An example of how double *afa* words with meaning are formed can be demonstrated here in Table 5 using *okala*. By combining *okala* first with itself and then with any of the other fifteen single words the following are obtained.

Table 5:   Double *Afa* words with meaning: *Okala* Combinations

Double Afa Words	Code
Okala Okala, called, Okala Nabo	aa
Okala Ogoli	ab
Okala Akwu	ac
Okala Aka	ad
Okala Ululu	ae
Okala Ose	af
Okala Obala	ag
Okala Ete	ah
Okala Ijite or Ogute	ai
Okala Udi or Odi	aj
Okala Obi	ak
Okala Otulu	al
Okala Aghali or Agali	am
Okala Ofu	an
Okala Ora	ao
Okala Otunukpa or Tunukpa	ap

NOTE: *Nabo* is substituted in every case where otherwise there would be a repetition. Thus in Appendix 4, each combination starts with *Nabo* e.g., *Aka nabo, Akwu nabo,* etc.

Since one combination produces sixteen double *afa* words with meaning, sixteen combinations will produce 256 double *afa* words with meaning. Appendix 4 is a dictionary of double *afa* words arranged in alphabetical order obtained by pairing single *afa* words as described above. The meaning of each has been obtained from Nri predictors. All *Dibia afa* are able to associate the disposition of *afa* seeds with the appropriate single *afa* word, and read the throws from right to left to build double *afa* words.

FIG. 9 STRUCTURE AND RELATIONSHIP OF AFA SIGNS

• Ululu   e' Ululu   m Aghali or Agali   m' Aghali or Agali

'f Ose   f Ose   n Ofu   n' Otu

g Obala   g' Obala   o Ora   o' Ora

Ete   h' Ete   P Atunukpa or Tunukpa   p Atunukpa or Tunukpa
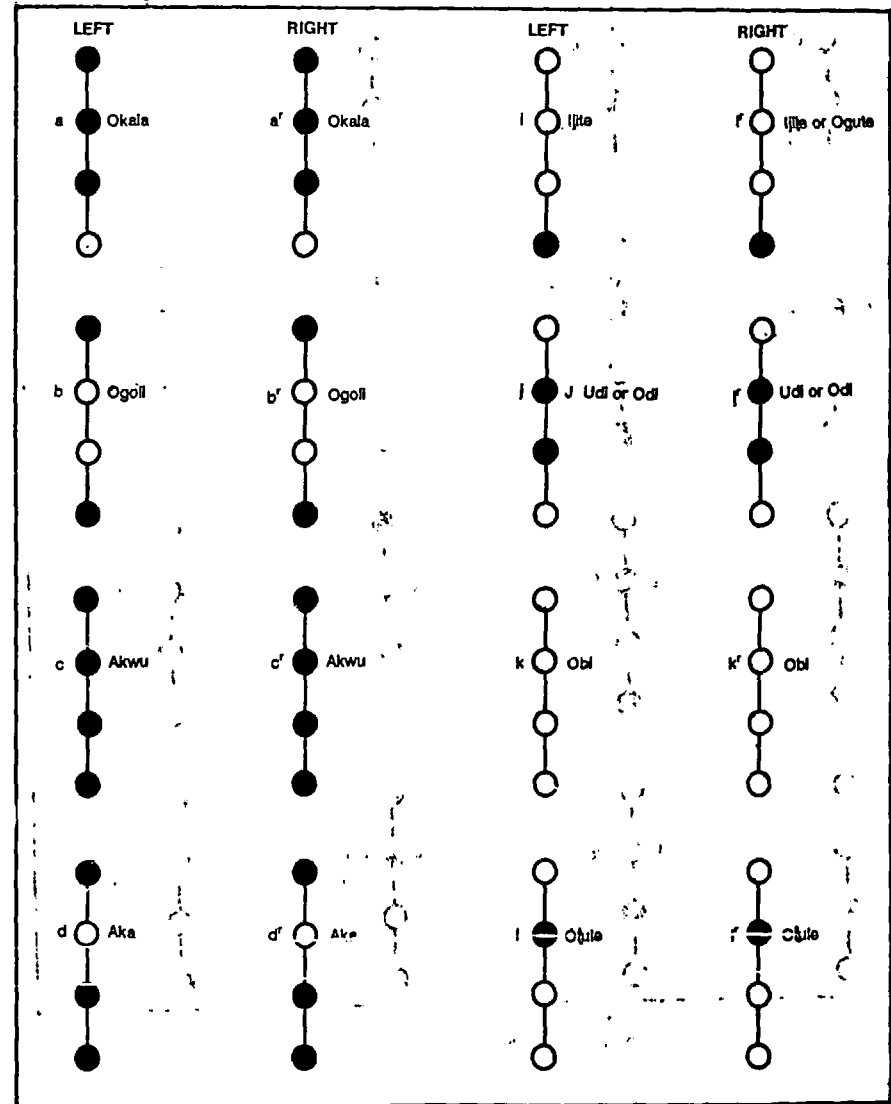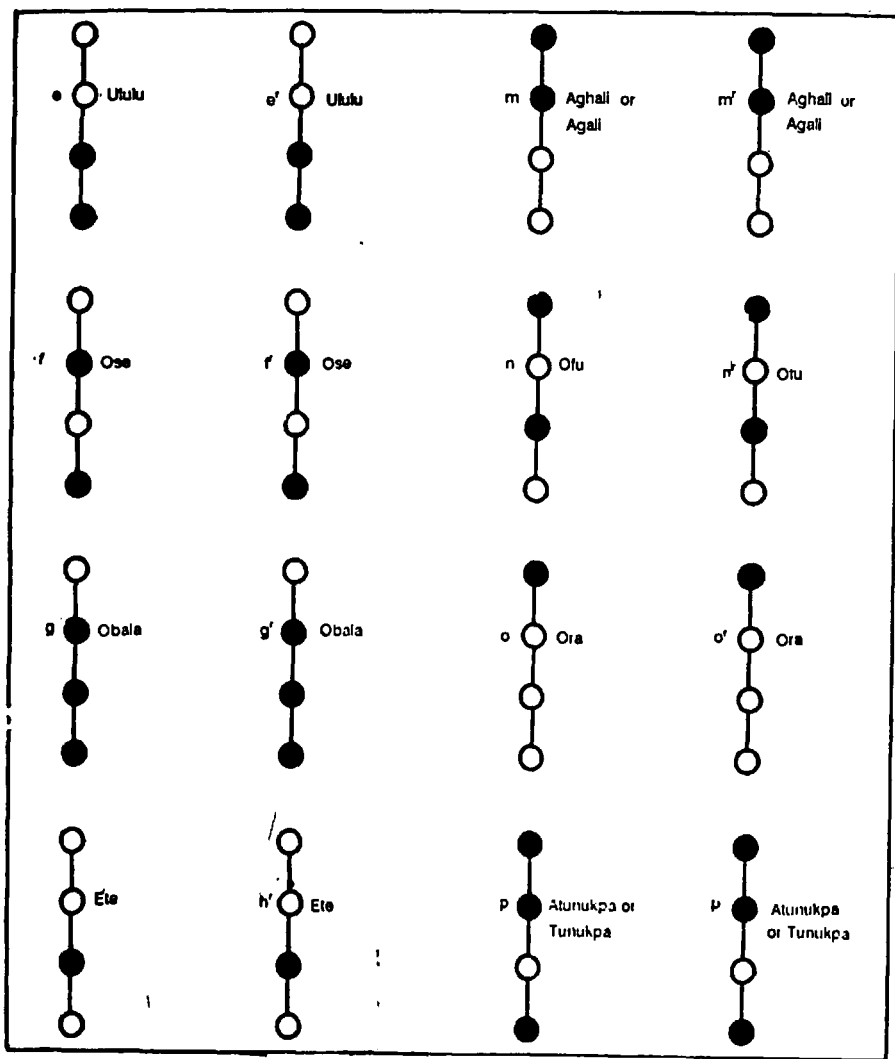
● Close; concave side facing down
○ Open, concave side facing up

TABLE 6: BINARY RELATIONSHIP OF *AFA* SIGNS.

CODE	a^r	b^r	c^r	d^r	e^r	f^r	g^r	h^r	i^r	j^r	k^r	l^r	m^r	n^r	o^r	p^r
a	S	D	D	D	D	D	I	D	O	D	D	D	D	D	I-O	D
b	D	S	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	O	D	D	D	D	D	D
c	D	D	S	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	O	D	D	D	D	D
d	D	D	D	S	D	D	D	I-O	D	D	D	O	D	D	D	D
e	D	D	D	D	S	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	O	D	D	D
f	D	D	D	D	D	S	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	O	D	D
g	I	D	D	D	D	D	S	D	I-O	D	D	D	D	D	O	D
h	D	D	D	I-O	D	D	D	S	D	D	D	I	D	D	D	O
i	O	D	D	D	D	D	I-O	D	S	D	D	D	D	D	I	D
j	D	O	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	S	D	D	D	D	D	D
k	D	D	O	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	S	D	D	D	D	D
l	D	D	D	O	D	D	D	I	D	D	D	S	D	D	D	D
m	D	D	D	D	O	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	S	D	D	D
n	D	D	D	D	D	O	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	S	D	D
o	I-O	D	D	D	D	D	O	D	I	D	D	D	D	D	S	D
p	D	D	D	I	D	D	D	O	D	D	D	I-O	D	D	D	S

KEY

1. Horizontal code, a'...p', represents disposition of <u>Right</u> hand chaplets as indicated in figure 8b e.g. a' = Okala.
2. Vertical code, a...p, represents disposition of <u>Left</u> hand chaplet as indicated in figure 8b. e.g. a = Okala.
3. Combinations of a'...p' with a...p produce 256 binary relationships, described as follows: Binary Similarity (S), Binary Dissimilarity (D), Binary Opposition (0), Binary Inversion (I), Binary-Inversion-Opposition (I-0). For example relationship of a' and a is S; of i' and g is (I-0). Reading is obtained at the point of intersection of horizontal and vertical codes.
4. Of the 256 binary relationships S = 6.2%, D = 81.3%, 0 = 6.2%, I = 3.6% and I-0 = 2.7%.

Afa scholars are able to remember quickly the meaning of each of the double *afa* words. As he makes each throw, he connects double *afa* words with subsequent double *afa* words and thus produces coherent *afa* sentences which are used to interpret the *afa*. Good memory, skill and knowledge are all essential in the performance.[4]

3. Binary Structure of *Afa*

In Chapter 4 Levi-Strauss' central argument is the study of symbolism, based on the assumption that the common denominator of human mind is the ability to construct paired oppositions and patterned homology, is fully discussed. *Afa* system shows that thinking in paired system takes various complex forms of which paired opposition is but one form. Table 6 illustrates the type of binary relationship that emerges by combining each of the sixteen *afa* signs with the other sixteen signs to obtain 256 double signs. Table 7 illustrates the frequency of binary relationship that occurs in *afa*:

TABLE 7: FREQUENCY OF BINARY RELATIONSHIP IN AFA

(i)	Binary Dissimilarity	81.3%
(ii)	Binary Similarity	6.2%
(iii)	Binary Opposition	6.2%
(iv)	Binary Inversion	3.6%
(v)	Binary Inversion - Opposition	2.7%

(i)   **Binary Dissimilarity**, occurs whenever the seeds of the two *afa* chaplets are closed or opened in such a way that the one on the right side is, in many respects unlike the one on the left side e.g.,

Ogoli Okala (Meaning: Worthless person)

(ii)   **Binary Similarity**, occurs whenever the seeds of the two *afa* chaplets are closed or opened, in such a way that the one on the right side is, in all respects like the one on the left side, e.g.,

Okala   *Okala*

Okala nabo   (Meaning; Something obtained by struggling)

(iii)   **Binary Opposition**, occurs whenever the seeds of two chaplets are closed or opened in such a way that the one on the right is in all respects, opposed to the one on the left, e.g.,
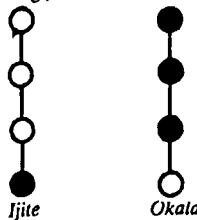
Ijite   *Okala*
(Meaning: Ozo title man)

(iv)   **Binary Inversion**, occurs whenever the seeds of two chaplets are closed or opened in such a way that if either the one on the right or the left is inverted, they assume a relationship of similarity e.g.,
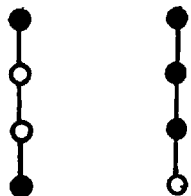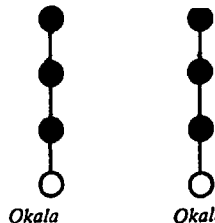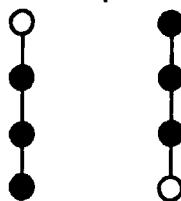

Obala Okala   (Meaning: Blackmail, tricks).

(v)   **Binary Inversion - Opposition**, occurs whenever the seeds of the two chaplets are closed or opened in such a way that some of the ones on the right are similar and some are dissimilar to some of the ones on the left, but if either the ones on the right or left are inverted, they assume a relationship of opposition e.g,
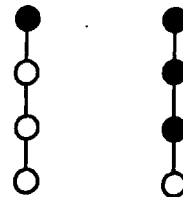
Ora Okala   (Meaning: Refuse, disagree)

In the *afa* scheme, binary dissimilarity has highest frequency. *Afa* system shows that other types of binary relationships occur in various forms and each is as important and significant as the other. The logic of *afa* is based on the final results obtained from the various arrangements of all types of combinations obtained from five types of binary relationships. When these relationships are combined and recombined, the content of a communication emerges. Social reality is thus constructed and this generates a new type of social action.

4. Transformational Relationships in Afa

The terms syntagmatic and paradigmatic is discussed in Chapter 4. Aware of the fact that their usage has generated controversies, the terms are adequate in a modified sense for describing and understanding the relationship between, a pair of an *afa*-throw on the one hand and other pairs of throws on the other.[5]

One single throw of the right or left hand is an *afa* event and stands for a single *afa* word which on its own has no meaning. Two throws of the right and left hand done simultaneously produce double *afa* words that have meaning. The synchronism of the two events transforms it into

a unity of meaningful thought. The relationship between the two simultaneous events contain two orders of syntagmatic chains and successive pair of throws are related to one another by paradigmatic associations. Each pair of *afa* word has its meaning relevant only in terms of the social structure (see *Afa* dictionary in Appendix 4). The content of an *afa* communication is built out of connected *afa* words transformed at all levels syntagmatically by *afa* words relating to one another and paradigmatically by *afa* words relating to natural, social, cultural, religious, historical, mythical phenomena and to the social structure and biography of the clients.

An attempt will be made to demonstrate this point by analyzing the content of each *afa* combinations as compiled in the dictionary of *afa* in Appendix 4. A close study of these double *afa* words suggests that they can be classified under four broad headings:

1. Words referring to religious phenomenon such as *alusi*, supernatural forces.
2. Words referring to natural phenomenon such as forest, kolanut.
3. Words referring to socio-cultural phenomenon such as *ozo* title man, patrilineages.
4.   Words which are verbs or verbal phrases.

Table 8a, is a classification of each of the *afa* words which occur in each of the sixteen combinations according to the criteria set above. For example *aka* combinations have sixteen *afa* words listed in the *afa* dictionary in Appendix 4. Each *afa* word is numbered 1 to 16 and the meaning of each is given in Igbo and English. In Table 8a, a classification of *aka* combinations into four sets shows that *afa* words, under *aka* combinations in Appendix 4 numbered 2,3,4,5,6,8,9,13,15, and 16, refer to religious phenomenon: ancestors, blood sacrifice, supernatural beings that control a river, earth as supernatural force of compounds, earth as supernatural force of town, procreative force (*chi*), evil persons and spirits, *ofo* staff, earth force (*ana*) and ancestors (*ndi ichie*) respectively. Words numbered 10, 11, 14 refer to natural phenomenon: illness, life and iroko tree respectively.

TABLE 8a: CLASSIFICATION OF AFA WORDS INTO PHENOMENAL THEMES (SEE APPENDIX 4)

Afa Combinations	1 Religious Phenomenon	2 Natural Phenomenon	Social/ Cultural Phenomenon	Verb/Verbal Phrase (Actions)
1. Aka Combination	2,3,4,5,6, 8,9,13,15 16.	10,11,14	12.	1,7.
2. Akwu -do-	3,8,15,16	6,7.	1,2,4,5,10 11,14.	9,12,13
3. Aghali "	1,3.	2,9.	4,6,8,10 11,12,13, 14,15,16.	5,7.
4. Ete "	Nil	3,10,13, 14,16.	1,2,4,5,6, 7,8,9.	11,12,15.
5. Ijite "	4,5,8,11, 12	Nil	2,3,6,7,9, 10,13,14, 15,16.	1
6. Obala "	5,6,12,13	Nil	1,2,3,4,8, 10.	7,9,11,14,15 16.
7. Obi "	Nil	5,	3,7,8,11,12	1,2,4,6,9,10 13,14,15,16.
8. Ofu "	4.	10,11.	3,5,6,7,8, 9,13,14,15	1,2,12,16
9. Ogoli "	6.	5,7,8,10, 12,14.	1,4,6,9,15 16.	2,3,11,13
10. Okala "	Nil	5.	1,3,4,6,7,9, 10,12,13,14, 15	2,8,11,16.
11. Ora "	3,6,7.	10,11,12.	1,4,5,8,9,13, 14,15,16.	2
12. Ose "	Nil	Nil	7,9,10,11,13 14,15.	1,2,3,4,5,6,8, 12,16.
13. Otule "	2,16.	Nil	6,7,10,13,15	1,3,4,5,8,9, 11,12,14
14. Otunukpa "	Nil	7.	3,5,6,8,9,10 12,13,14.	1,2,4,11,15,16
15. Odi (Udi) "	6,10.	Nil	2,3,4,5,7,8 9,14,15,16	1,11,12,13
16. Ululu "	Nil	Nil	2,3,4,5,6,7, 8,9,10,11,12 13,14,15,16.	1.

TABLE 8b   FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE TABLE

THE CLASSIFICATION OF AFA WORDS INTO PHENOMENAL THEMES
SEE TABLE 8a

Afa Combinations	Religious Phenomenon		Natural Phenomenon		Socio- Cultural Phenomenon		Verbs & Verb Phrases		Total	
	Raw SCs	%	Raw SCS	%	Raw SCS	%	Raw SCS	%	Raw SCE	%
1. Aka Combinations	10	62.50	3	18.75	1	6.25	2	12.5	16	100
2. Akwu -do-	4	25.00	2	12.5	7	43.75	3	18.75	16	100
3. Aghali "	2	12.5	2	12.5	10	62.5	2	12.5	16	100
4. Ete "	-	-	5	31.25	8	50.00	3	18.75	16	100
5. Ijite "	5	31.25	-	-	10	62.5	1	6.25	16	100
6. Ibala "	4	25.00	1	6.25	5	31.25	6	37.5	16	100
7. Obi "	-	-	1	6.25	5	31.25	10	62.5	16	100
8. Ofu "	1	6.25	2	12.5	8	50.00	5	31.25	16	100
9. Ogoli "	1	6.25	6	37.5	5	31.25	4	25.00	16	100
10 Okala "	-	-	1	6.25	11	68.75	4	25.00	16	100
11 Ora "	3	18.75	3	18.75	9	56.25	1	6.25	16	100
12 Ose	-	-	-	-	7	43.75	9	56.25	16	100
13 Otule "	2	12.5	-	-	5	31.25	9	56.25	16	100
14 Otunukpa "	-	-	1	6.25	9	56.25	6	37.5	16	100
15 Odi (Udi) "	2	12.5	-	-	10	62.5	4	25.00	16	100
16 Ululu "	-	-	-	-	15	93.75	1	6.25	16	100
Total	34	-	27	-	125	-	70	-	256	-
%	13.28	-	10.55	-	48.83	-	27.34	-	-	100

The *afa* word which is numbered 12 refers to socio-cultural phenomenon: peace. Words that are verbs are numbered 1, 7,: to escape and to say, respectively. By this process, Table 8a is built and from this a frequency Table 8b is compiled. Let us examine each set of combinations closely. (See Appendix 4 and Tables 8a and 8b).

1. *Aka* Combinations: (The *Afa* of supernaturals)
   In the combinations 62.50% of the double *afa* words refer to religious phenomenon, 18.75% to natural phenomenon, 6.25% to socoi-cultural phenomenon and 12.5% are verbs. The religious words refer dominantly to supernaturals. It is the only *afa* combinations which have the highest number of words referring to supernaturals. Hence it is called the *afa* of supernaturals.

2. *Akwu* Combinations: (The *Afa* of domestic relationships). In this case 25% refer to religious phenomenon, 12.5% to natural, 43.75% to socio-cultural and 18.75% are verbs. One transformation occurs in these combinations, number 14 which is *Akwu Otunukpa*, a socio-cultural phenomenon is obtained by transforming a natural object into a cultural object. The process of such a transformation will be discussed later on. An interesting aspect of these combinations is that the things and animals (nature) mentioned therein are associated with residential domestic unit, compound (socio-cultural). Nature and culture are brought together in these combinations. It is called the *afa of domestic relationships.*

3. *Aghali* Combinations: (The *afa* of Conflicts)
   These combinations have 12.5% words referring to religious phenomenon, 12.5% natural phenomenon, 62.5% to socio-cultural and 12.5% verbs. A good percentage of the words refer to the socio-cultural. Words in these combina-

tions refer to conflict situations and emotions e.g., shameful, worthless talk, someone light in colour (wicked person), revengeful person). It is called the *afa of conflicts.*

4. *Ete* Combinations: (The *afa* of human beings and animals).
   There are no words referring to religious phenomenon but 31.25% refer to natural phenomenon, 50% to socio-cultural and 18.75% to verbs. The natural and socio-cultural phenomena refer mainly to females, animal and past events. 'Light' is transformed to 'alright,' 'adultery' to 'female sexual organ' and 'closing door' to 'night'.

5. *Ijite* Combinations: (The *afa* of emotions)
   These combinations have 31.25% words referring to religious phenomenon, none to natural phenomenon, 6.25% to socio-cultural phenomenon 6.25% to verbs. The socio-cultural words refer mainly to emotions: happiness, firmness, secret, sorrow. It is called the *afa* of emotions.

6. *Obala* Combinations: (*Afa* of the seat of commonsense and knowledge).
   These combinations are distributed as follows: · 25% refer to religious phenomenon, 6.25% to natural phenomenon, 31.25% to socio-cultural and 37.5% *agwu dibia*, 'medicine' and alcholic drink. The verbs refer mostly to thinking, listening and commonsense. It is called the *dfa of the seat of commonsense and knowledge.*

7. *Obi* Combinations: (The *afa* of action and motion)
   There are no words referring to religious phenomenon, 6.25% refer to natural phenomenon, 31.25% refer to cultural and 62.5% to verbs. It is the *afa* that has the highest number of verbs and they are all verbs of motion: coming, crying, walking, repenting. It is

called the *afa* of action.

8. *Ofu* Combinations: (The *afa* of problems)
   Here 6.25% refer to religious phenomenon, 12.5% to the natural, 50.0% to socio-cultural phenomenon and 31.25% to verbs. The socio-cultural and natural phenomena and the verbs refer to sufferings, escapes, abominations etc. It is called *the afa of problems.*

9. *Ogoli* Combinations: (The *afa* of death and misfortune).
   These combinations have 6.25% words referring to religious phenomenon, 37.5% to natural phenomenon; 31.25% to socio-cultural and 25% are verbs. Of all the *afa* combinations, it has the highest reference to nature, especially females. It is also the *afa* that refers specifically to destruction, illness, death, corpse, mourning. It is the *afa of death and misfortune.*

10. *Okala* Combinations: (The *afa* of events).
    These combinations have no words referring to religious phenomenon. 6.25% refer to nature, 68.75% to socio-cultural and 25% are verbs. The socio-cultural are mixed.

11. *Ura* Combinations: (The *afa* of kinship). In this case 18.75% refer to religious phenomenon, 18.75% to nature, 56% to the socio-cultural and 6.25% are verbs. All these refer to kinship relationships: first son, first daughter, child, patrilineages - mother's relations, inlaws, dual organization, taboo. It is the *afa* of kinship.

12. *Ose* Combinations: (The *afa* of sacrifice and happiness).
    These combinations have no words referring specifically to religious phenomenon and natural phenomenon. 43.75% refer to the socio-cultural, 56.25% are verbs. Most of the verbs refer to ritual sacrifices and the socio-cultural refers to emotions of happiness.

13. *Otule* Combinations: (The *afa* of peace)
    In these combinations 12.5% refer to religious phenomenon, none to nature, 31.25% to socio-cultural and 56.25% are verbs. The verbs refer to talking, pleading, shouting. accepting, regrets, swearing. The socio-cultural words refer to peace, talk, ('cock' refers to peace and 'foolish' refers to action). How some of these are transformed shall be discussed later. . The verbs also refer to peace. *Afo* is a day for peace-talks and sacrifices. 'To shout abomination' is the first step towards restoring social order. This *afa* is called the afa of peace.

14. *Otunukpa* Combinations: (The *afa* of nobility and freedom).
    There are no specific words referring to religious phenomenon but 6.25% refer to nature, 56.25% refer to socio-cultural phenomenon and 37.5% refer to verbs. The socio-cultural phenomenon refers to *ozo* titled men, clothes associated with social status, and social troubles which *ozo* titled men deal with. The verbs are also associated with trouble, firmness and liberation. The only word referring to nature is a tree called *udala* which is associated with the concept of the liberty of an individual. It is a tree from which anyone can pick its sweet fruits without seeking permission. These combinations are called the *afa* of nobility and freedom.

15. *Odi (Udi)* Combinations: (The *afa* of lineages and human relationships).
    In these combinations 12.5% of the words refer to religious phenomenon, none to natural phenomenon, 62.5% refer to socio-cultural phenomenon and 25% are verbs. The religious phenomenon refers to two supernatural forces associated with lineages *(ana and ogugu).* The socio-cultural phenomena are mainly lineage,

kinsmen; women, fortunes and misfortunes that befall them such as regnancy, difficulties and troubles.

Similarly the verbs refer to existence, (breathing), miscalculations and difficulties. It is called the *afa* of lineages and human relationships.

16. *Ululu* Combinations: (The *afa* of the king of food).

These combinations have no words referring to either religious or natural phenomenon. Cocoyam and yam are natural objects but transformed to female (cry) and male (strong minded). The nature of these transformations shall be discussed later on. 93.75% of the socio-cultural words refer to good and bad food. It has the highest socio-cultural words and all refer to food. The verbs 6.25% refer to payment of debt and fulfilment of obligation. It is called the *afa of the 'king' of food.*

It will be necessary to sum up what has been analyzed above. It has been demonstrated that each *afa* combinations can be grouped into four themes and each combination has a dominant theme as follows:

Aka   combinations, are the *afa* of the supernaturals.

Akwu   combinations, are the *afa* of Domestic relationships.

Aghali combinations, are the *afa* of Conflicts.

Ete   combinations, are the *afa* of Human-beings and animals.

Ijite   combinations, are the *afa* of Emotions.

Obala   combinations, are the *afa* of Commonsense and knowledge.

Obi   combinations, are the *afa* of Action and Motion.

Ofu   combinations, are the *afa* of Problems.

Ogoli   combinations, are the *afa* of Death and Misfortune.

Okala   combinations, are the *afa* of Events.

Ora   combinations, are the *afa* of Kinship.

Ose   combinations, are the *afa* of Sacrifices and Happiness.

Otule combinations, are the *afa* of Peace.

Otunukpe combinations, are the *afa* of Nobility and Freedom.

Odi (Udi) combinations, are the *afa* of Lineages and human Relationships.

Ululu combinations, are the *afa* of Food.

The *afa* scholar knows the major theme of each *afa* combinations. When an *afa* session begins, the first few throws generally determine the course of the *afa*. The *afa man* will then decide whether *agwu* is serious or not. For example, if a client comes to enquire about his lineage the *afa* man will expect *Odi* and *Ora* combinations to occur more frequently than any other combinations. Suppose *Aka* and *Otunukpa* combinations feature more frequently, the diviner will blow his horn and sing praises to *agwu* for lying and employ it to stop lying. The major theme of the client's enquiry should reflect the major theme of the *afa* combinations obtained from the *afa* throws. When the predictor has implored *agwu* to desist from lying and the *afa* throws continue to be out of tune with the client's main theme of enquiry, the predictor generally starts all over again or abandons, his efforts and pleads with his client to come back another day, because *agwu* is angry or has travelled and its dependants are playing some pranks with the *afa* chaplets.

From the analysis given above, it is obvious that *afa* deals with different aspects of human life: man as a religious being, as a biological (natural) being, as a social, cultural, political and economic being, and finally as a psychological and historical being. It deals with all facets of human behaviour, briefly by highlighting and emphasizing the major themes of human life. The frequency Table 8b shows that all aspects are given almost equal emphasis. It is now clear why Chapters One and Two are devoted to analyzing *afa* in ethnographic context. It is mainly because *afa* though associated with *agwu*, is a symbolic system used for determining social action, social reality, communication and control at various levels of human organization -religious, political, economic,

technological, cultural and social.

It has been argued that syntagmatic chain and paradigmatic association are important in transforming the *afa* words used in constructing and interpreting social reality. Here I will examine in greater detail the structure of some examples of transformation that occurs in some of the *afa* combinations.

Aka Combinations: One transformation is obvious and conspicuous and that is as follows:

Aka Aghali = Meat ⟶ blood sacrifice.

This reads: Aka Aghali means Meat transformed to Blood sacrifice. To produce meat for food, the act of killing and letting of blood must occur. (This includes strangulation). All blood sacrifices involved killing, letting of blood and eating of the meat of animal sacrificed. Transformation in this case is an 'associational' act whereby an animal, (a natural being), is converted into a cultural object of religious significance by killing and letting of its blood and sharing its meat. Meat is a sign for sacrifice which symbolizes relationship with the supernaturals.

2. **Akwu Combinations:**

Six transformations are obvious in these combinations:

(a) **Akwu Aghali** = Meat ⟶ blood sacrifice.

(b) **Akwu Ete**   = Bigman ⟶ important person

(c) **Akwu Ose**   = Ambush ⟶ readiness to harm.

(d) **Akwu otunukpa** = Iroko tree ⟶ big temple big man

(e) **Akwu Odi**   = Big hole ⟶ grave ⟶ earth-force (ana).

Akwu Aghali has the same meaning as *Aka Aghali* (see above). The transformational process that makes meat associated with sacrifice has been demonstrated.

Akwu Ete = 'Big man' ⟶ important person. The concept of a 'big man' has been discussed in chapter 2. In Nri a, 'bigman' is an important political figure. He is an *ozo* titled man. A 'big man' is associated with *ozo* title which is also an important political office

Akwu Ose = ambush ⟶ readiness. To explain this does not offer any problem, because the transformation is by direct association. One who is ambushing one's enemy must always be at the alert to pounce on him by surprise. So the action of ambushing is associated with readiness.

Akwu Otunukpa = Iroko tree ⟶ big temples ⟶ 'big man'. In Chapters 1 and 2, I discussed the significance of a big temple *(obu)* in Nri. Only big men can own big temples. Iroko trees are one of the tallest and biggest trees in equatorial forest. In the past, only 'big men' could mobilize labour to hew an iroko tree into planks which were used for (a) making carved doors placed at the entrances of the compounds of 'big men' (b) making coffins for burying *ozo* men. It was a taboo and abomination to bury non-*ozo* men with wooden coffins; (c) making carved panels which are the paraphernelia for *ntufuazu* title, a title higher than the *ozo* title; (d) building big temple *(obu)*. By associating a giant natural object *(oji tree)* with a giant cultural object (temple) with a human being (man) who is transformed into a social and political being *(ozo* titled man); an Iroko tree is transformed into 'big man'.

```
  (1)                        (2)
Iroko tree ⟶ big temple ⟶ 'big men'
    |            |            |
    ↓            ↓            ↓
 Nature      Culture       Social
    ↑            ↑            ↑
    |_____|_____|
               (3)
```
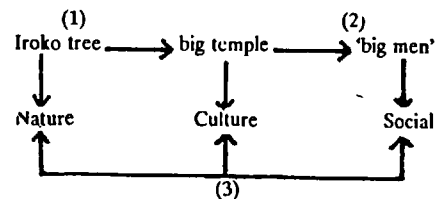
Three transformations are present in these cases marked (1), (2) and (3).

Akwu Odi = Big hole ⟶ Grave ⟶ Earth force *(Ana)*. In discussing religion in Chapter 1, I mentioned the importance of *alusi*. *Ana* is one of the most powerful *alusi* in Nri. It is the earth supernatural associated with life and death. On it everything grows, lives and dies. *Ana* is the killer of anyone who commits abomination. It is on *ana* that plants grow and men depend on plants for food. *Chukwu* gave *Eri* the power to manipulate Earth force. All Eze Nri inherit this power and so

they are called Eze Atusi.

> God sent *Eri* from the sky.
> He came down the River Anambra to Aguleri.
> He stood on an anthill.
> For the land was swampy.
> *Eri* implored *Chukwu* who sent him down.
> *Chukwu* sent blacksmiths, with bellows, charcoal and fire.
> They dried the land.
> Eri's son Nri inherited his power.
> Since then Eze Nri controls the earth *(ana)*.
> Eze Nri is Eze Atusi.
>
> (From Nri Religious Myth: collected from Anidumaka and Nwokoye).

The River Anambra floods its bank annually. One of the powers of Eri was his ritual ability to control the flood and the growth of yam on the flood plains. This ritual power was inherited by his son Nri, the founder of Nri clans (Onwuejeogwu, 1974).
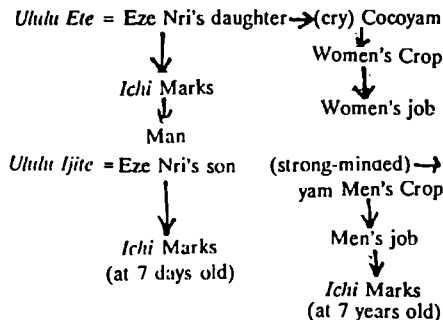
The earth force kills abominable beings by sending them to their grave which is in the bowl of the earth. Eze Nri controls the earth-force *ana* he also has power to enact new rules of abomination, interpret or abrogate the existing ones. He ritually controls life and death. The *afa* sign *akwu odi* meaning Big hole→grave→earth-force, refers to the power of Eze Nri and the symbolic meaning can be reached through the myth. The transformational process cannot be understood without reference to the myth, to Nri religion, to Nri political system based on sacred kingship, and to Nri economic organization based on the control of fertility by Eze Nri.

There are many examples of transformational forms that occur in the other fourteen combinations. It is not possible to discuss each one here. However, one important transformation has to be mentioned because of its distinctive features. This occurs in Ululu combinations (see Appendix 4). These combinations are called the *afa* of the 'king' of food.
Ululu Ete = cocoyam → cry
Ululu Ijite = yam → strong-minded
The full form of this *afa* is:

Ululu Ete = Eze Nri's daughter→(cry) Cocoyam
→ Women's Crop
→ *Ichi* Marks
→ Women's job
→ Man
Ululu Ijite = Eze Nri's son   (strong-minded) →
yam Men's Crop
Ichi Marks   Men's job
(at 7 days old)   *Ichi* Marks
(at 7 years old)

The various stages of the transformation of these combinations cannot be understood without reference to the myth on which they are based.

> "When the land was made dry by the black smith, Eze Nri lived with his people.
> Chukwu fed them with *azuigwe*, fragments of sky. Those who eat it never slept.
> Then Eri passed away.
> And succeeded by Nri.
> The food supply stopped.
> Nri prayed: "Chukwu give us food."
> Chukwu replied "Do what I say and you will get food."
> "What will I do?", asked Nri.
> *Chukwu* said, "kill and bury your first son, kill and bury your first daughter."
> Nri replied "This is hard, this is abomination."
> *Chukwu* said, "I shall send you the *dioka* to put *ichi* marks on them before you kill and bury them. *ichi* will stop abomination."
> *Chukwu* sent the *Dioka*.
> He did *ichi* marks on the first son.
> He was a man and he braved it.
> He did on the first daughter,
> She was a woman and she cried.
> They were killed and buried separately ...
> On the grave of the son grew yam.
> On the grave of the daughter grew cocoyam.
> Nri dug it, ate it and slept.
> He woke up and gave it to his people.
> *Chukwu* said "Give yam and cocoyam to all Igbo.
> Mark *ichi* on the face of all males and first daughter of Nri.
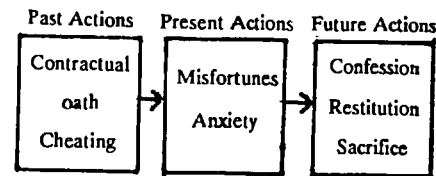
(Nri religious Myth: collected from Nwokoye and Okeke)

The first son and first daughter of Eze Nri born immediately after Eze's coronation are marked with *ichi*, seven days after their birth, while other male children of Nri are marked with *ichi*, seven years after their birth. One of the powers of Eze Nri is the control of the yam medicine which ritually generates the fertility of the yam and cocoyam. Yam and cocoyam were the most important food crops in Igboland. In the past, Eze Nri controlled their fertility and growth through ritual manipulation. (Onwuejeogwu, 1974). The short and full transformational forms of *Ululu Ete* and *Ululu Ijite* illustrated aboved diagrammatically are clearly indicated in the above myth and needs no further explanation. Transformation is not a simple process though it can be conveniently summarized in the jargon of Levi-Strauss and Leach: "this summation process amounts to the conversion of a paradigmatic association into a 'syntagmatic chain'; metaphor is transformated into metonymy" (Leach 1976 p. 26). It is necessary to add that 'meaning' does not depend only "upon transformations from one mode into the other and back again" as held by Leach (p. 25). I think it depends heavily on the knowledge of the individual and the social world. For example, I would not have been able to explain transformation in *afa* system without the knowledge of Nri social world and 'life-world'.

Meaning, Interpretation and Validity of Afa:

Afa is like a form of 'symbolic logic'. Its meaning, social validity and credibility are based on adequate formulation of *afa* statements which are like propositions about the social structure framed in terms of the past, present and future. At every stage, the *afa* man puts his question to reflect the answers obtained in preceding throws. Thus he plays an active role in the transformation that takes place. He uses plenty of commonsense and imagination, which enables him, using Mills' words to "grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society" (Mills, 1959). The validity of his interpretation of social

reality also depends upon his possessing what Mills calls the sociological imagination: the capacity to shift from one social perspective to another, for example, from the domestic life of individuals to the economic, political, psychological and religious; the ability to correlate the social and historical meaning of the individual in society as an on-going process that involves past, present and future actions. Here it will be relevant to demonstrate this point with one example from the first case-study reported in Appendix 1 of this work. The *Afa man* stated that P, who was bound by oath with a trade-partner not to cheat, had cheated his partner. P should confess and refund the sum and things involved in the fraud and also make sacrifices to the supernatural associated with the oath. In-depth study of this case reveals that the business deal between P, and his partner was an open 'secret'. Many people knew about it including the *afa man* who said that he knew about it three years ago. Many people who knew P and his partner suspected that P was cheating his partner. The rumour had spread and the *afa man* knew about it too. P thought he could get away with it, since he was a Christian and had been told that traditional supernaturals had no influence on Christians. Unfortunately series of misfortunes that befell him had shaken his faith and increased his fears. His relatives who were still traditional said that they were aware of the oath and the rumours about the cheating but they had to go to the *afa* to confirm their fears. "After all *afa* knows about these things and their complications", said, one of the elders.

It is obvious from the interpretation given by the *afa* that he was establishing the relationship between P's past, present and possible future actions. This can be illustrated as follows, for simplification:

Past Actions	Present Actions	Future Actions
Contractual oath Cheating	Misfortunes Anxiety	Confession Restitution Sacrifice

Contractual oath is a ritual act associated with the supernaturals and cheating is an act associated with economic action. Contractual oath is a ritual social action which makes it possible for persons to pool their resources together in order to undertake business ventures with confidence. Cheating breaks the spirit of partnership, the basis of confidence and threatens business activity. It also breaks the relationship between men and the supernatural since the oath is associated with a supernatural that is regarded as a witness to the deed. Since P's wrong doings break the rules of the game at two levels: the social and the ritual, the chain of misfortunes which cause anxiety in the social world is regarded as warnings from the supernatural. All future actions are therefore directed to re-establishing relationships in the visible world of social reality and in the invisible world. Hence to reduce anxiety, sacrifice is directed to the supernatural while confession and restitution is directed to the human beings involved. Furthermore, those involved are members of a group. The major task of the *afa* is to employ the signs and symbolism of *afa* to articulate and co-ordinate past, present and future actions of his clients in the context of the social group. By doing this, he reconstructs, by a transformational process, a disjointed social reality into an integrated, meaningful and dynamic social reality based on the history and structure of the society, and biography of individuals.

Nri (Igbo) Language in Afa:

I have argued that transformational processes in *afa* can be understood through the history of the society, its social structure and biography of clients and I have demonstrated that afa signs are decoded into *afa* verbal expressions which are interpreted into Nri-Igbo language. The general procedure is as follows:

Afa signs → *afa* words → Igbo words (means, decoded into). But since one can start from any point and still achieve the same result the above procedure may be reformulated as follows:

Afa signs ↔ afa words ↔ Igbo words ↔ *afa* signs (means, reversible).

I have discussed *afa* signs and *afa* words and their

symbolic significance. Here I wish to discuss the use of Igbo language (Nri dialect) in *afa*, because the interpretation and construction of social reality done with *afa* signs and words are finally conveyed to the client in the ordinary Nri dialect of Igbo language.[6] It is obvious that the process of transformation cannot satisfactorily occur without the use of ordinary Igbo language. To do this, the *dibia afa* rely heavily on the use of figures of speech such as sarcasm, irony; and rhethoric devices such as myths, folktales, proverbs, anecdotes and poetry.

It will only be possible to discuss in brief the significance of myths, folktales, anecdotes, proverbs and poetry in *afa*. In the *afa* session described in Section 1 of this Chapter, I omitted the folktale, poems and proverbs used by the *afa men* though I indicated at what points they were used. The aim is to simplify my analysis. Here I will deal with these aspects of ordinary non-*afa* language in *afa* in construction of social reality and in mobilization of social action and communication.

(a)   Myths:

I have used some Nri myths to illustrate some points in this chapter. In Nri, Myths are told in the council meetings of elders to demonstrate a religious or a historical point. Myths are therefore of two types: mythico-religious and mythico-historical. The former has a religious nexus, it is quoted as Christians quote the chapters and verses of the Bible to prove or disprove a religious action, while the latter has a historical nexus which refers to the divinity of Eri, the founder of the Eri clan, and the sacred kingship of all Eze Nri that lived after Eri. These distinctions are not made by Nri elders for both types are regarded as a corpus of religious oral tradition. When the *afa* man uses myth, he uses it as a form of symbolic statement about the social structure and it is expressed in a short-hand form as demonstrated in section 4 above, where it is shown that myths are used to explain the transformation that occurs in *afa* words. This is the major function of myth in *afa*.

(b) Folktales.[7]

In Chapter 1, I gave an example of a folktale to illustrate how certain modes of thoughts which are empirically unverifiable are made acceptable as social reality. Folktales are one of the means of socialization through entertainment for children in traditional Igbo society. (Onwuejeogwu, 1975 (b), p. 273-278). Folktales are usually told in the evening after the day's chores. In the evening, the children generally congregate in the village square when there is moonlight or in the houses of favoured women or men having a rich store of interesting and varied folktales and able to narrate them in the most dramatic and spectacular manner. Some experts tell stories with musical accompaniment of the traditional guitar. Elders and older children stay around to organize the little children and occasionally correct an erring narrator.

Let us examine the structural features of folktales which make them useful linguistic tools in interpreting and constructing social reality and generating social action. Nri elders say: "Folktale happened before the leopard got its spots and the bat became a classless animal: *n'ofu oge*, once upon a time; *oge enu ka bu ana osa,* when the world was populated by squirrels which went about unhunted; *ofu ubosi*, one day; *n'oge gboo a,* long time ago; *na oge gala aga,* at a time that is past; *na oge uwa ka di ofu,* when the world was still young; *na oge Eze ana na chi,* when Eze Nri was ruling".

Set at a vague time in the distant past (to establish antiquity as well as anonymity) the action takes place in a vague spatial location: *n'ofu obodo* (nta) in one (small) town; *n'ana eze,* in the country of *eze* Nri or in a certain distant kingdom; *n'obodo ndi mmuo,* in the land of spirits. Places, streams and markets are usually referred to in vague terms, sometimes ideophonic or onomatopoeic; a stream (river) is *vomvom* suggestive of its rapid movement while another is *biambiam*. At times there is reference to recognizable towns like Nri whose king is Eze ana; like Arochukwu (to which the king in Omalinze tale went to find out why he had no male issue); Iduu whose king is *Oba* in Benin.

But no matter the time or place where the folktale is set, or the characters involved - animals, spirits and men - all follow the rules of human beings in the world of men. It is true that characters in the spirit world are depicted as frightful beings with broken heads, half noses, atrophied mouths, with two, five or seven heads, or with heads bigger than houses, legs like broom or drum sticks and limbs as big as the smallest insects. All these spirits, like animals and even the elements, have human attributes, especially as they speak like humans, some spirits have a distinct nasal twang. Animals and spirits maintain the four-day market week. They have kings, husbands, wives, children and lovers; human appetites and passions as well as human weaknesses, like jealousy, hatred and suspicion. Like humans they participate in wrestling competitions which they lose or win and carry off their trophies. Like humans (and animals) spirits die. The story of *Ifili* takes place 'a long time ago' when there was not much difference between our world and the spirit world. The world of animals and spirits is a replica of the human world, everything we see in one is in the other (Onwuejeogwu, 1975 (b) pp. 273-275). Most importantly the moral code of reciprocity operates here as elsewhere.

The Igbo folktale is introduced or concluded with a conventional formula which vary from place to place. In parts of Igboland the narrator says twice one of the following words whose sound is more important than its sense: *Chaakpii, Chaakpu, Taakwii, Cottii, ufe tu, eduu/elue* ... The audience then responds twice with one of the following: *yoo, Haa, Woo, Oyoo, Iyaa.*

When there is complementary repartee between the narrator and the audience instead of two formulae cancelling each other out, the narrator gives one part of something like a riddle, which the audience completes. Three to five pairs of these can be used for one story.

Narrator:	Nkita nyala akpa	Dog hangs on a bag ...
Audience:	Nsi agwu n'ofia	The faeces in the forest will finish.
N:	Agu baa n'ofia	Lion enters a

	forest ...
A: Mgbada achiri ume n'aka	Antelope becomes worried.
N: Ofia Ogwu ma okuko	A forest with thorns which pierce hen's feet...
A: A ma epio ya epio	Is impassable .
N: Mmili rili ugbana	The river that drowns a gull ...
A: A ma egwu ya egwu	Cannot be swum
N: Oke baa na mkpo	Rat enters a basket for keeping fish ...
A: Azu agwu na mkpo	The fish in the basket will finish.

In some parts of Igboland the conventional opening may not be so elaborate as illustrated above. Among the Ogboli Ibusa people, after a narrator has been selected, he respectfully requests *nzu* (chalk) from his audience:

N: Nyenu m nzu.   Give me a white chalk.
A: I gwoa, o lea.   You medicate, it takes effect.

The tale begins:

Inu m enupuunoo faa gidigwom, nukwasi ... (My tale takes off with the sound of speed and alights on with the sound of weight ...). The Ogboli Ibusa people liken a folktale to a journey, for which the narrator requires *nzu*, to symbolize his protection on the way. At the end of the tale the narrator says: 'From here my tale eludes or runs away from me, and from here I return', and the audience tells him: *Nnoa* (welcome) from the world of make-believe. The world where men, animals and spirits interact; the world in which events happen in such quick succession or with such unpredictable rapidity that time and place mean something symbolic - the "fantasy world" of several finite provinces of meaning (Schutz, 1974 p. 32). In addition to the animal and spirit characters there are humans of two, often complementary types:

(i)   Unnamed types: usually referred to in vague terms: a certain/one man, woman, child, ruler etc. This unnamed character may be given some recognizable name at a stage of the narration, thus transforming into (ii), or remain unnamed.

(ii)   Stock types: all characters in folktales, animal, spirit or human, are stock characters, each representing a particular and significant viewpoint or motif in the framework of the tale. They are not judged in terms of 'paramount reality'.[8] In some cases, characters learn some bitter lesson resulting in some drastic resolutions.

All the animals symbolize one thing or the other. *Mbekwu, (Mbe)* the ubiquitous tortoise a trickster *awuwo* in the widest sense. Selfish as he might be, and occasionally caught in his own trap, *mbe* always exploited the folly of his fellows to wriggle out of the tightest corners. *Mbe* is rarely killed, but he is thrown out of the company of the other animals, the fall permanently toughened his skeleton. *Agu* (tiger) stands for strength and agility; *Atu* 'bush cow' for monstrosity; *Enyi* 'elephant' for hugeness and strength; *Egbe* 'hawk' agility and ruthlessness; *Ugo* 'eagle' beauty and excellence; while *ebunu* 'ram' strength and endurance (Onwuejeogwu, 1975 (b).

Characters always depict distinct attributes in the overall narration. At times, this allegorical didacticism is reinforced in antithetical ideas, behaviour and characterization. Wise one is pitted against Fool; Loved Wife against the Despised Wife, the Competent (and professional) Wrestler against the amateur; neglected, despised and exiled but hardworking son against the loved, over-indulged and effeminate children; the first, barren wife *(unasi, nwaanyi isi)* against the last, young highly productive wife *(odu nwaanyi).*

This use of contrasts at the end of the tale is striking in articulating 'finite and paramount realities' by deducing a moral from the tale; thus the despised woman in the tale becomes the king's darling; in the polygamous household, the despised wife turns out to bewail and mourn the apparent death of their husband, while the two favourite wives show they are indifferent to whether he is dead or alive; the neglected orphan girl who could not afford clothes to go to the festival, turned out the best dressed. Four numbers feature regularly with symbolic significance in Igbo folklore in general: 2,3 (and multiples), 4 and 7 (and their multiples). 2, *(abua)* of anything implies contrasts or similarities in character, ideas or behaviour: Small/Big, Good/Bad, Loved/Despised, or Small/Small, Good/Good, Loved/Loved. A man who has two brothers *Akidioma* and *Inineoma*, loves the later more. Two wives are nke ntakiri (the small/young one) and *nke nnekwu* (the big/first married one); to the point of expelling her from the family house to fend for herself and her only son. Twins are similar, the two hands co-operate one to wash the other, two dogs playing, one yielding to the other alternatively to avoid a fight. The *afa* chaplets are two.

3, *(ato)*, is symbolic in Igbo thought and rituals: *Ife lue n'ato, o to* something reaches its third time of occurrence stops or ceases or sticks. 3, although a small number is the mystical ultimate in any physical or metaphysical undertaking. Dogs pass through three hills and three streams to get to their master. It takes three solid weeks to roast three yams. When three characters are mentioned in any tale, two of them generally form an alliance against the third.

4, *(ano)* is symbolic in ritual, representing the week days *Eke, Oye, Afo* and *Nkwo*, which are *alusi* 'supernatural force' (see Chapter 1). Hunter has four dogs. The fourth monkey goes to report the king's death. Of the king's wives *Oriokuko, Orinkita, Oriewu* and *Orianu*, it is the fourth who welcomes the dwarf to roast his raw meat in the hearth, and is rewarded with pregnancy. For this she is thrown out of the royal household. When the real facts become known, she and her child are recalled home with feasting.

7, *(isa)* is highly significant in rituals and ceremonials. Sacrifices for the *ozo* title are arranged in heaps of seven. Two hunters had seven dogs that traversed seven streams and seven hills to reach their master. A young man came from a distant country having traversed seven seas and seven forests, *nnukwu mmili asaa na agu asua*. The powerful *Okuboku* successfully wrestles with six spirits and is felled by the seventh; when he is revived with a magic concoction by the dove, he sneezes seven times. When 3 and 7 describe distance or time, the reference is to a long and hazardous journey. When 7 is used for spirits, it suggests a hideous monster that is terrible to see or imagine.

I have spent time and space explaining Nri folktales because of their centrality in the processes of socialization in Igbo society and Nri in particular. They are also one of those factors, that make Igbo dialects and Igbo culture mutually intelligible and rational to persons from different Igbo sub-cultures, though many of them are not confined to Igbo areas (Onwuejeogwu, 1975 (a) and (c). Folktales cut across sub-cultual boundaries because they are the main vehicle by which diffusion of values, morals, techniques and linguistic items are conveyed to different parts of Igbo culture area. What is distinctive about Igbo proverbs, poems, anecdotes and riddles are that they are either shorthand forms of Igbo folktales or derive their basic inspiration and theme from the folktales. For example, the proverb *Igwe bu ike*, 'meaning number is strength' is a shortened version of a folktale that illustrates how and why number is strength. The major themes of Igbo poetry, especially that of Nri, are based on folktales. Nri folktales mirror Igbo social, cultural, economic, religious and political life while the myths refer to narrow themes that deal with the 'sacred' or mysterious genesis and development of institutions and beliefs. Thus while myths have very restricted usage, folktales have a very wide application. The *afa scholar* very often uses folktales to drive a moral home or illustrate a point. In the beginning or middle or end of an *afa* session, the *dibia afa* may stop and briefly narrate a relevant folktale, thus putting side by side for evaluation the action of his clients and the accepted values and norms of the society. To do this in a more dramatic and sophisticated way, the

dibia afa often use poetry, proverbs and anecdotes.

(c) Poetry, Proverbs and Anecdotes:

I will start analysing the importance of poetry, proverbs and anecdotes in *afa* by examining Egudu's work on Igbo poetry, proverbs and anecdotes, because of all the scholars interested in this aspect of Igbo language, he raises major issues not only in the province of classifications and definitions but also in establishing the relationship between folktales, poetry, proverbs and anecdotes. This last aspect of Egudu's work is very relevant in understanding the significance of the use of these rhetorics in *afa*.

> "Folktales are told and retold for aesthetic and practical reasons;
>
> Proverbs are employed for embellishment and for reinforcing arguments; and anecdotes ... discharge both functions" (Egudu, 1976).

In this Egudu aims at establishing relationship between Igbo foktales, proverbs and anecdotes. Already I have demonstrated in section (b) above that there is more to Igbo folktale than mere aesthetic and practicality. I shall not stress that anymore but here I shall argue that Igbo folktales are long forms, in content if not in structure, of proverbs and anecdotes, also many Igbo poems derive their major themes and imagery from folktales. In other words, folktales explain the deeper meaning and significance of proverbs, anecdotes and poems. One cannot fully understand the meaning, significance and nature of imagery and symbolisms of the main Nri proverbs, anecdotes and poetry without reference to Nri folktales and in some cases their myths.

Let us examine more closely Egudu's work on Igbo proverbs, anecdotes and poetry (Egudu, 1972, pp. 63-82). He is more interested in classifying these rhetoric devices into types. For example Egudu classifies Igbo proverbs according to the "nature and structure of" what he called "Igbo traditional thought" expressed in proverbs. These he says are as follows: the principle of dichotomy, social syncretism and pragmatism. To Egudu the principle of dichotomy means "oppositional relationships among ideas, qualities

and values" (p. 63), this is similar to what Levi-Strauss calls binary opposition, a universal mode of thought; Social syncretism means the significance of partnership or unity in traditional life of the Igbo (p. 64) similar to what I call communalism in Igbo society (Onwuejeogwu, 1972) and Pragmatism means "the belief that action and practical consequences are preferable to mere words, concepts, or theories" (p. 66). These three aspects have been demonstrated to have their roots in Igbo religion, the personality cults (Onwuejeogwu, 1972, 1974, 1975b). The problem with Egudu's classification is that these same criteria used in classifying Igbo proverbs can also be used successfully to produce the same classification when applied to English or Chinese proverbs, yet he claims that the criteria used are basic in Igbo traditional thought. These criteria seem common to all proverbs irrespective of the ethnic or racial origin of proverbs. What is basic in Igbo proverbs is to be found in a different province of analysis other than classification. The basic eludes Egudu's analysis and is reflected in his misleading translation of the Igbo proverbs. For example, *Nwa mmuo emegbuna nwa mmadu nwa muadu emegbuna nwa mmuo*, is wrongly translated by Egudu as: "let the son of spirit not maltreat the son of a man, and let the son of man not maltreat the son of spirit.' This proverb refers to the folktale that demonstrates how an orphan grew strong and tough and out-did the woman's son who was over pampered by her wicked mother. In the story the orphan is called *nwa mmuo* while the spoilt child is called *nwa mmadu*. *Nwa mmuo* means a person whose parents are dead, that is an orphan. Such a person is regarded as the son of his dead parent's spirits. *Nwa mmadu* refers to a child who has his both parents alive and so has someone to advise and direct him. The tale of the orphan and the step-mother runs to about a thousand words including a ballad and it ends with a resume and a moral lesson expressed in the above proverb. It is obvious that Igbo proverbs cannot be studied out of context, because they are either the major themes of tales or the moral lessons deduced from the tales.

In another work, Egudu classified Igbo praise-poems into: praise-poem of strength, generosity and kindness, marital fidelity, physical beauty, satire. (Egudu 1972, p. 71-82). Here again, there is nothing unique about the classification. But one thing striking about them is that they are also the central themes of some Igbo folktales. Igbo poems derive their central themes from the popular folktales which contain elaborations of these themes.

In a more recent work, Egudu 'defines an anecdote as:

> A brief story which embodies witticism or a ludicrous situation, used to embellish speech, reinforce an argument, or convey a moral lesson. Like the folktales are its narrative form and animal characters, but different in its limited content and structure, there is no embedded song such as a rhetoritical tool of adornment and persuasion; and in being witty and imagistic, but lacks the proverbs epigrammatic symmetry, pitiness and poetic rhythm. (1977).

Egudu argues that three broad types of anecdotes emerge: "those that vindicate the speaker, those that exhort others and those that satirize foolishness." In these analyses, Egudu comes nearer to the point I have been making. He attempts to establish relationships between folktales, proverbs, poetry and anecdotes by arguing that they have functional resemblance. I will go further than that and argue that the functional resemblance emerges because anecdotes are transformed excerpts from folktales. An example will demonstrate that the relationships between folktales on the one hand and proverbs, anecdotes and poetry on the other hand are not merely functional resemblances but that the later ones are derived from the former in terms of content, imagery and symbolism they generate. To demonstrate this, I will use the examples of anecdote and proverb given by Egudu.

Folktale: "The story of tortoise's visit to his parents-inlaw with his wife" (This is a long Igbo folktale of over 2,000 words with a song. It is not necessary to reproduce it here).

Anecdote: Tortoise once visited his parents-in-law and as he was warming himself at the fire he dozed off, and his loin cloth got burnt up. He suddenly woke up, saw himself naked, and said: "I will not ask my parents-in-law to pay for my loin cloth, but I cannot go home." (Anecdote as recorded by Egudu, 1977).

Proverb: A man does not carry war to his inlaw's home; it is through prostration one secures a wife. (Proverb as translated by Egudu, 1977).

Poem: An inlaw is ones *Chi*, One's *Chi* is one's share A foot path leading to a stream. (A short Igbo (Nri) praise-poem recorded by Onwuejeogwu).

In the above arrangement, I have brought together a folktale, an anecdote, a proverb and a poem all having the same theme. The proverb is the moral and social lesson intended to be drawn from the folktale or anecdote. The anecdote is an excerpt of an incident in the folktale about tortoise's visit to his parents-in-law. The proverb is about a key concept in Igbo kinship: the relationship between son-in-law (*ogo*), generally expressed in a three-line praise-poem based on the folktale. I have argued that in Igbo society, folktale is an entertaining oral literary instrument for teaching children norms and values of the society. Igbo folktales reflect in detail the economic, religious, cultural and political 'life-world' of the Igbo. Anecdotes, proverbs and poetry are more sophisticated literary instruments reinforcing the same norms and values elaborated in folktales. In folktales, symbolism and meaning are explicit; in poetry, proverbs and anecdotes, meaning and symbolism are implicit and taken for granted. They are two levels of conceptualizing the same reality. The movement from folktale to any of the other forms may be conceived of as a transformational process that occurs at both linguistic and symbolic levels. It is the transformational potentiality of these speech-patterns that make them important tools for

construction and interpretation of social reality by *afa* men. Since *afa* deals with social life, linguistic devices which foster communication at all levels between individuals and groups are indispensable.

Interpretations of social reality cannot be rigid and framed in exact language. It is generally framed in a language that gives room for varied interpretations thus making alternatives logical and reasonable. All *afa* men are adept in the application of what linguists call intensifiers. When interpreting, they know that they are on slippery grounds and use words which have lowering effect on the force of verbs. e.g.;

> *Oka eme*
> It <u>almost</u> happened.
> *Ofia aru ikwe*
> It is <u>hardly</u> believed.
> *Anyi mali nwa ntinti*
> We know <u>slightly</u>.

When prescribing sacrifices and suggesting remedies and future actions, they employ amplifiers which either maximize or boost statements.

> e.g. *I wepurosi anya gi ni meya*
> You did not ignore it <u>completely</u>
> *Odika emebisi fancha*
> It is not <u>altogether</u> bad

But when talking of past events that are fully understood and determined, they use emphasizers e.g.,

> *O nwalili, Onwulanwu*
> He died <u>certainly</u>, he died.
> *Ogugu gbulia, a di eloelo*
> Ogugu killed him, it is <u>beyond doubt</u>.

By this type of word management *afa men* are able to strengthen a client that has been shattered by misfortune or shatter a client that is unmindful of his social actions.
The ability to lead the client to explore, perceive and accept social reality and transform it into social action forms the bedrock upon which the logic, the validity and credibility of *afa* rests. The client is made to face and accept the reality of his society and since this reality seems valid, *afa* is valid.

So far, I have examined the significance of *afa* in Nri religious, political, economic and social systems and have also analyzed the structure of *afa*. In the past chapters and especially in this, I have constantly analyzed *afa* with concepts such as symbol, social action, social reality and communication without fully, justifying the use of these concepts. I shall now proceed to justify the use of these concepts and furthermore demonstrate that *afa* is an integrated system of symbols, social reality, communication and control and social action mainly directed towards the construction or transformation of social reality conceived in terms of the past, present and future actions of actors in the context of Nri-Igbo social structure.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 3

1. *Ofo* tree is a tree that grows in the forest. When its twig is cut and consecrated it is called *ofo* which is a political and ritual staff. (see chapters 1 & 2). Oji is an iron staff, about five feet long with elongated bells attached to it at intervals.

2. All translation in this work is direct, to retain the originality and order of thought.

3. The full proverb is: It is better to drive black goats into their sleeping huts before it is dark otherwise the black goats and darkness will become one. It is almost equivalent to the English proverb "Make hay while the sun shines." In the present context it seems more like "a stitch in time saves nine". It suggests that quarrels be stopped while there was time.

4a. There are many systems of divination in Africa. The chapter system of 16 x 16 described here is common among West African peoples (See references, for works done on Yoruba *Ifa* by Bascom and Bimbola). The sixteen *afa* words in Igbo system are similar disposition of the seeds. In future a comparative analysis of the systems may be attempted.

b. One may argue that these patterns are mnemonic devices for the diviners. It is important to know how the devices are structured and related. The patterns are sign-complexes associated with meanings. Their interpretations depend on many variables to be discussed in chapters 4 to 7.

5. The terms syntagmatic and paradigmatic are discussed in chapter 4. The reader is therefore referred to the discussion on Levi-Strauss for how it is used in this passage.

6. See M. Onwuejeogwu's work on Some fundamental problems in the application of lexicostatistics in the study of African Languages'. This paper refutes Kay Williamson's idea of splitting Igbo into many languages. (Onwuejeogwu, 1975 b).

7. E.E. Evans-Pritchard emphasizes the significance of folktales in the understanding of a people's thought. See the works of Madan, Beidelman and Paulme mentioned in the references.

8. Finite provinces of meaning and paramount reality are used in the Schutzian sense (see Chapter 7).

CHAPTER 4

AFA AS SYSTEM OF SYMBOLS:[1]

1. Anthropological Study of Symbols - a Theoretical Critique:

The study of symbols has occupied the minds of writers belonging to different disciplines for over two centuries. The study may therefore be regarded as one of those inter-disciplinary themes, which has been spontaneously pursued by scholars from various disciplines. The definition of symbols has taken many turns and twists. Symbols have been considered as:

(a) Relationship between symbol and object symbolized.
(b) Concrete indication of abstract values.
(c) Explanation of the concrete by reference to the invisible.
(d) Explanation of the visible by reference to the invisible.
(e) Extraction from the concrete its hidden meaning for an understanding of the abstract.
(f) Means of communicating information.
(g) Cultural category.
(h) A natural category - 'natural' meaning different things: to some it means physical features, to others it means things derived from the human body.
(i) Having intuitional function.
(j) Having conceptual function.
(k) Sign consciously designed to stand for something.
(l) Representation of one thing 'standing for' another.
(m) A popular word meaning "to represent" or "to demonstrate" or words with similar connotation.

The divergent approaches in the study of symbolism in a discipline like anthropology are striking. They reflect different levels of analysis each complementing the other rather than opposing or contradicting. I shall examine very briefly the work on symbolism of five anthropologists: Levi-Strauss, Edmund Leach, Raymond Firth, Adner Cohen and Dan Sperber and see how relevant they are to my analysis of *afa* symbols. [2]
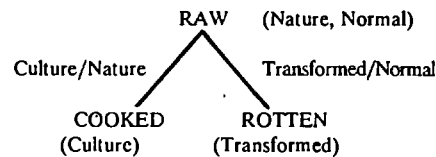
Levi-Strauss' work on symbolism is difficult to summarize or even interpret in a few paragraphs. Some scholars who have attempted to interpret some of Levi-Strauss' works have been accused of not understanding him by two leaders of the British new-structuralist school, Leach and Needham. However, it is also interesting to note that Levi-Strauss had in his Huxley Memorial Lecture in London in 1965, repudiated the interpretations of Leach and Needham in marriage exchange. Levi-Strauss did not write in mystical language and I believe that the average interested reader can understand him, if his work is properly translated into English. There is no doubt that Levi-Strauss introduces a new dimension which may be described as both a method and a philosophy into anthropological trail since the sixties.

In my opinion, Levi-Strauss' work on symbolism hinges on the concept of binary opposition which I think had its roots in Greek philosophy from which Western philosophy, anthropology and sociology derive their conceptual stimuli. Strauss sees cooking as a universal process whereby man transforms Nature to Culture and since food is important to human beings, the categories of cooking are used as symbols of social differentiation (Levi-Strauss, 1965). Strauss argues that the common denominator of the human mind is the ability to:

(a) construct paired oppositions based on the formula: Culture/Nature,
(b) construct patterned homology

He builds up his culinary triangle which he later elaborates and modifies to become the basic model for the study of totemism, kinship and myth. The culinary triangle represents the binary oppositions: transformed/normal and Culture/Nature which he believes are internalized in all human nature. The elementary form of Strauss' culinary triangle is as follows:

```
              RAW      (Nature, Normal)
               /\
              /  \
             /    \
Culture/Nature     Transformed/Normal
           /        \
       COOKED      ROTTEN
      (Culture)   (Transformed)
```

This can be summarized thus:
(a) Raw: Nature:: Cooked: Culture
(b) Raw: Normal:: Rotten: Transformed.

In these formulae: Raw is opposed to Cooked as Nature is Opposed to Culture, and Nature is transformed to Culture as Raw is transformed to Cooked by a Cultural process. Similarly, Normal is to Transformed as Raw is to Rotten by a natural process of decomposition (Transformation). These formulations may look odd but they are meant to demonstrate the great importance Levi-Strauss places on binary oppositions and their relationships.

He makes several explorations into linguistics and music, searching for evidence to buttress the concept of binary opposition as a fundamental phenomenon in human thinking and finds it in de Saussure who makes distinctions between langue and parole, synchronic and diachronic, syntagms and paradigms; (De Saussure, 1959). Applying these concepts in the study of the structure of myth Strauss argues:

"The true constituent units of a myth are not the isolated relations but *bundles of such relations*, and it is only as bundles that these relations can be put to use and combined so as to produce a meaning .... but when we have succeeded in grouping them together we have reorganised our myth according to a time referent of a new nature ... namely a two-dimensional time referent which is simultaneously diachronic and synchronic, and which accordingly integrated the characteristics of *langue* on the one hand, and those of Parole on the other. (Levi-Strauss, 1963 pp. 211-214).

Treating myth as an orchestra score, Levi-Strauss sees the relationship between harmony and melody as that between diachronic and synchronic. He arranges myth syntagmatically and paradigmatically; interpreting it at two levels horizontally and vertically. To explain the linguistic terms from which all these jargons are derived, it is important to state that linguists have long recognized that the linguistic unit by virtue of its occurrence in a certain context enters into relations of two different kinds. For example in the sentence: a *gallon of water,* the word *gallon* is in paradigmatic relations with such other words as glass, bottle, cup, quarter, and syntagmatic relations with *a, of* and *water.* According to de Suassure "in syntagma term acquires its value only because it stands in opposition to everything that preceeds or follows it, or to both" (p. 123) Syntagma is also characterized by horizontality. Levi-Strauss adhered rigidly to these terms so much so that his culinary triangle is structured to correspond to them. Thus the culture/nature side of the triangle corresponds to paradigmatic relation while normal/transformed side is syntagmatic. Many Anthropologists have viewed Levi-Strauss' work with great suspicion and some have welcomed his idea with great enthusiasm though with many modifications.

It is at this point that I wish to introduce Leach's work as summarized in his most recent book; *Culture and Communication: The logic by which symbols are connected* (1977). The logic is indeed that of Levi-Strauss with one or two elaborations here and there. But originality of Leach's contribution is in his brave application of Levi-Strauss's original formulation to all fields of symbolism.

First, Leach announces that he is both an 'empiricist' and 'rationalist'. This is important for his image as an anthropologist whose main concern is to study human societies and cultures as observable realities and attempt an interpretation of these realities, which have taken several forms such as functionalism, structuralism, ecologism and technologism.

Leach sees communication as an essential

aspect of social life which is "a complex continuous process which has many non-verbal as well as verbal components" (Leach;1976 p.9) He distinguishes three aspects of human behaviour that has to be decoded: natural biological activities, technical actions and expressive actions. It is to "expressive actions, which either simply say something about the state of the world as it is, or else purport to alter it by metaphysical means" that Leach turns attention to. He argues that "Human Communication is achieved by means of expressive actions which operate as *Signals, Signs* and *Symbols*" (p. 9). So the study of symbols is the study of expressive actions at the operational level. Leach proceeds to show the distinction between *signal, signs* and *symbols*. He argues: "Sign relationships are contiguous and thus mainly metonymic while symbol relationship are arbitrary assertions of similarity and therefore mainly metaphoric ..." (Leach P. 15).

Using a scheme derived from Mulder and Hervey, Jakobson and Levi-Strauss, Leach formulates a longer equation, derived from Strauss' basic binary equation: symbol/sign = Metaphor/ Metonymy = Paradigmatic association/Syntagmatic chain = Harmony/Melody (p. 15). The other chapters of the book are devoted to demonstrating the application of symbolic transformation. In one example, a binary system is transformed into a ternary scheme thus: This World/Other World is transformed to This World/Liminal Zone/Other World. Leach holds that the liminal zone is the "focus of ritual activity" (Leach 1976, p. 82). The transformation that takes place in the liminal zone is symbolic. Here signs and symbols convey meaning within a cultural context not just as sets of binary signs. At this point Leach breaks away from Levi-Strauss who tends to depend heavily on sets of binary signs, *per se*, conveying meaning outside a cultural context.

Leach impeaches Firth for his atomistic study of symbol. In my thinking, Firth sees symbol from various levels of analysis including the expressive. "A symbol is 'a device for enabling us to make abstractions", argues Firth. (Firth 1977, p. 77). He elaborates by saying that symbols are instruments of expression, communication, knowledge and control of power. (p. 77-91). In my opinion, the difference between Leach and Firth is that Leach's concept of symbol operates at a generalized level of human communication system which to Firth is only one aspect of what he designates as instrumental. Like the study of fossil taxonomy, one is either a 'splitter' or 'lumper.' In the study of symbolism, Leach is a 'lumper' while Firth is a splitter; each has its advantages and disadvantages and none is superior.

This brings us to another scholar who is a 'lumper' of an interesting type, Adner Cohen. He says: "Symbols are objects, acts, concepts, or linguistic formations that stand ambiguously for a multiplicity of disparate meaning, evoke sentiments and emotions, and impel men to action". (1974, p. 1X). This broad definition includes everything one can think of and react to as symbol, furthermore it is instrumental in two ways "for the development of self-hood and for tackling the perennial problems of human existence" (1974, p. X) and "for the development and maintenance of social order". (1974, p. 8).

Cohen proceeds to reduce the four broad institutions studied by anthropologists: economic, political, kinship and ritual into two by arguing that "on a higher level of abstraction these four institutional spheres can be classified into two categories. The political and the economic form one category, their common denominator being power relationships. Kinship and religion form the second category, their common denominator being symbolism" (p. 22). His argument can best be illustrated thus:

Economic and Political   Kinship and Ritual
     ↓   ↓
Power Relationship   Symbolism
     ↓   ↓
Political ← Man → Symbolic
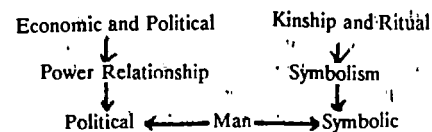
He comes to the conclusion that man is two-dimensional: Political and Symbolic. In reducing economic and political order into power relationship he relies on Marx and there he puts up a convincing argument. His argument however weakens when he argues that both kinship and ritual are "normative" and so "operate by means of symbolic formations and symbolic activities" (p. 23). I think this argument cannot be sustained. Many people worship God and respect their father for "utilitarian considerations" contrary to Cohen's view. In many societies, for example, among the Nri, power relationship is basic for the operation of kinship and ritual and vice-versa (see Onwuejeogwu, 1974). In order to formulate a dialectical political anthropology, Cohen made several sweeping reductions to produce his binary scheme which is reminiscent of Levi-Strauss. It is doubtful if his reductions can stand the scrutiny of ethnography, for example, modern advertisement techniques employ symbols not derived from kinship and ritual in creating different categories of consumers and power-groups in both Western and non-Western societies. Furthermore, it is difficult, even with the examples he gives, to sustain the ground that an informal organization seems to depend mainly on symbolic activities to achieve organizational functions. It may be that some formal organizations depend on symbolism to achieve organizational solidarity and continuity and indeed ethnographic data abundantly support this:

Jarvie subjected Leach's work, especially his paper on "Virgin birth", and the interpretation of symbolism by anthropologists, to an acidic criticism. Of course Jarvie cogently argues that most symbolists never raise the question when an anthropologist should resort to symbolic readings of human acts and words and that most anthropologists take refuge in symbolism when intentional, instrumental or functional explanations are inadequate. He therefore calls for limits to symbolic interpretation (Jarvie 1976). Jarvie makes some important points that need to be taken serious. He is not alone in this, earlier, Dan Sperber, had argued against the idea that symbols have meaning in the same way that words do. On this ground he criticized Victor Turner and Levi-Strauss' interpretation of structuralism as a theory of meaning. Using the Dorze of Ethiopia as example, Dan Sperber demonstrates that at the level of cognition, symbols represent knowledge of the memory of things and words and of conceptual representation (Sperber 1974). One point Sperber makes that is significant is that symbolism is a conceptual process and not a "something" as many anthropologists and even Jarvie who criticizes them holds (Jarvie 1976 p. 687).

2. Concept of Sign and Symbol in Nri:

This section focuses attention on how Nri people conceptualize signs and symbols which are the essential tools employed by them in organizing their theocratic state and hegemony and constructing social reality.

Table 9 summarizes the categories of *arima* in Nri. The word *arima* is the nearest word in Nri language equivalent to sign. Nri say: *okwu bu arima*, meaning speech is sign. They also talk of *ife arima* meaning non-verbal signs. Two main types of signs are generally distinguished verbal and non-verbal. Verbal signs are of three types: the Nri dialect of Igbo language used in ordinary daily speaking such as in dialogue, poetry, music, song and drama; the secret 'language' used in the past for communicating state information (Onwuejeogwu, 1974 and 1975 (b); and the language of *afa* used by *afa* men in decoding *afa* sign forms.

There are three main non-verbal sign forms: mark *(akala)*, object *(ife)* and movements *(mmehube)*. Objects are classified according to the source they are derived from: human beings, plants, animals, earth, water and sky. In Nri classifications human-beings are not grouped as animals and water is regarded as both living and non-living. Hence they say *mmili bu ndu* which means water is life or life-giver, water is important for life.

Other non-verbal sign forms are *akala* (translated marks): hence one can talk of writing as *akala akwukwo* which literally means signs on paper (leaf). Marks are made with any medium on any object. The *ichi* marks cut on the human face are called *akala ichi*. The body and wall paintings are complex forms of *akala* (Onwuejeogwu, 1975) and simple ones are conventional marks, for example, four vertical and parallel lines drawn on

TABLE 9: NRI TYPOLOGY OF SIGN FORMS

- **SIGN (ARIMA)**
  - **Verbal (Okwu)**
    - **Language of Afa**
      - Secret Language of Nri
      - Igbo Language (Nri Dialect)
  - **Non Verbal (Ife Arima)**
    - **Marks (Akala)**
      - Simple marks on objects to indentify owner
      - Complex marks
        - Body painting & marks (Ide uli na aru)
        - Wall painting (Ide uli na aja)
    - **Objects (Ife)**
      - **Movement (Mmerube)**
        - Gestures
        - Dance movement
      - **Living (Ife di ndu)**
        - Human beings (Mmadu)
        - Animal (Anumanu)
        - Plants (Osisi)
      - **Non Living (Ife)**
        - Earth (Ani)
        - Water (mmiii)
        - Sky (Igwe)
          - Cloud
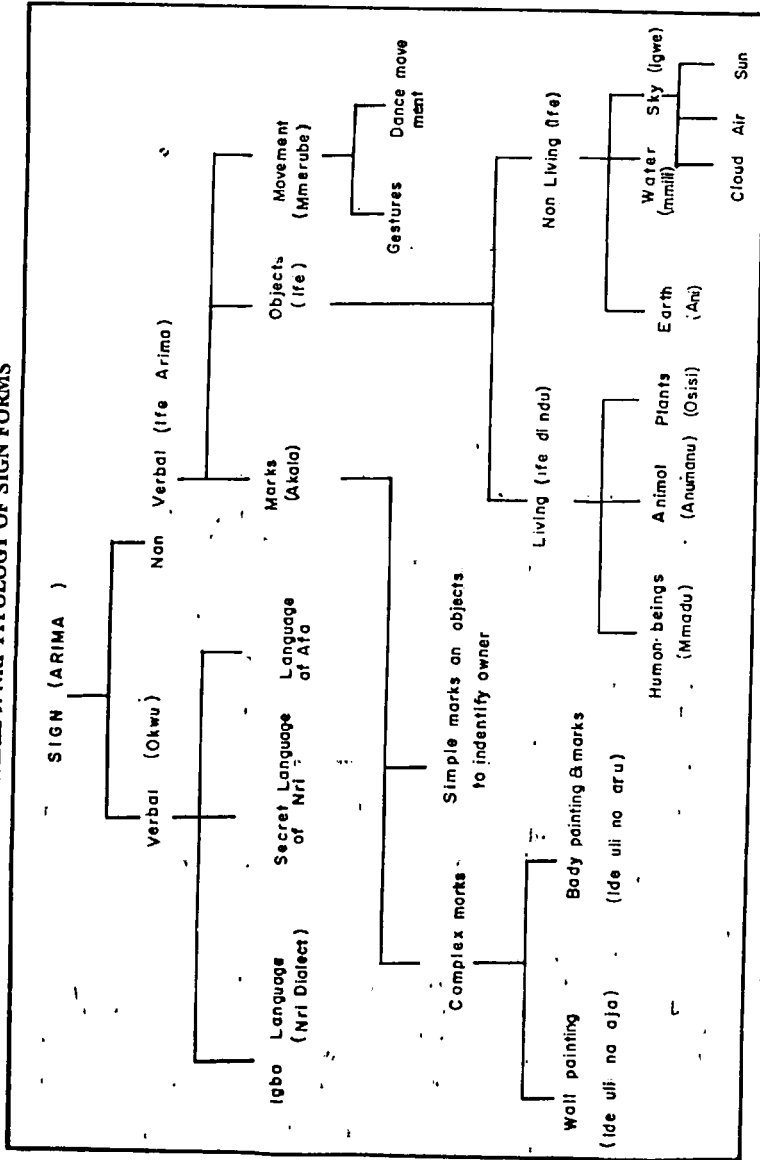   - Air
          - Sun

PLATE 3: ANUMBA TYING THE EGBO

the ground with locally made white chalk *(nzu)* in front of the *dibia afa*, generate from those who understand the sign forms, the knowledge and memory associated with the four supernatural beings, *eke, oye, afo* and *nkwo*.

In Nri, objects that generate symbolism are generally made up of two major components; the non-verbal and the verbal. The mystical combination of any part of these two elements constitutes a sign-complex. Nri people regard words, especially from the mouth of those vested with some power and authority, as endowed with 'force' and efficacy. They say; *okwu bu ike*, meaning, word is force, and also *okwu ikenye na elu mmuo*, the words of elders reach the invisible world of the ancestors. Hence an elder's solemn words cannot be retracted without rites of nullification. In Nri thinking, rites which involve the use of objects and words transform objects into complex sign forms. Objects can be destroyed but words that accompany them are indestructible, because once spoken they enter the ears of men and reach the supernaturals, *okwu lu mmuo*.

Hence words are thought that make an object indestructible. Every sign in Nri has its specific name but there is no one word which has a similar meaning as symbol. In Nri thinking, a symbol is not an object. It has been argued in previous chapters that *afa* sign-complex generates some aspects of the knowledge of the social structures by linking the biography of the group or individual with the past history of the social structure to determine future social action. (Chap. 3).

The *afa* examples show that symbols generate knowledge of social structure and biography and is a process of the mind. To support this thesis, another example will be given from another context. I will reproduce a short discussion between Anumba and me (see Plate 3). Anumba was the senior *ozo* man of Obeagu maximal lineage and the priest of *eke* whose shrine is located in the *eke* market at Nri. The *eke* religious festival is held annually. Few days before the festival, the chief priest ties a horizontal bundle, about six feet long, of assorted cuttings from

different plants. This bundle is placed on the ground across the main entrance to the *eke* market. It is believed that the bundle has the power to stop evil spirits *ajo mmuo* from coming into the market during the festival to cause confusion and accidents. Now let us hear directly from the *eke* priest what he thinks about the bundle called *egbo* which was tied two days before the *eke* festival of 1975.

Onwuejeogwu: Anumba, greetings to you.
Anumba: Thank you my son.
Onwuejeogwu: You are very early today.
Anumba: Oh yes! I was here very early. My men were clearing the site of *eke* when I went into the bush, downstream, to collect things which I will use to tie the *egbo*. I must tie the *egbo*. I have told you about tying the *egbo* sometime in the past.
Onwuejeogwu: Oh yes! I remember all you said but I am still ignorant about the things you use in making it. This is my first time of seeing them together so fresh.
Anumba: Remember some years ago, I showed you these things but I will show you again. The things are: (showing them to me one by one).
    2 *Omu nkwu*, new palm shoots
    2 *Achala*, giant grass
    4 *Ogugu nkwu*, another part of palm tree
    4 *Akwulo*, a creeping herb
    4 Lumps of *aja*, wet earth
    8 *Ogilisi*, a plant
    2 *Asusu Aka*, a plant
    2 *Akwali*, creeping plant
Onwuejeogwu: Please before you start tying I want you to tell me why you use each of these things.
Anumba: I will tell you the ones I know. *Omu nkwu* is the tip of the palm. We get them and plait them into a basket. It is on the basket we

arrange other things. *Omu* makes them clean and protects them from evil. *Achala* is long grass, when it grows in the forest it makes passage difficult; it will stop the passage of evil spirits. I do not know why we use *Ogugu*, it is tradition. *Aja, Ogilisi, asusu* and *akwali* are what our ancestors use, so, we use them. I do not know why. I never asked and I was never told. Maybe some other persons in Nri may know. What one man knows the other may not know. We use *akulu* because it grows in the forest so it has, *uche,* common-sense knowledge. We use it because it will entangle all evil spirits wishing to come into *eke.*
Onwuejeogwu: Why should the numbers of things used be either two, four or eight.
Anumba: Four means the four-day markets: *eke, oye, afo, nkwo* and two represents the senior and the junior of the four. We also represent them by doubling four such as eight and sixteen. Why? I do not know. It is tradition. The four supernatural beings that visited the first Eze Nri, control the four days of Igbo traditional week. They control the activities of people.

As he was explaining these, he was also tying the *egbo*. When he began to tie the last part, he stopped talking to me and prayed:
    Eke! egbo kane efie
    Eke! gbo ogwu
    Egbo ndiichie ukwu
    Egbo ndiichie nta
    Ubosi nano, afia nano
    Egbo ya ka anyi na efie
    Eke ya tiho, seho.
    Ekwene ajo mmuo, bia

    Nanyi me ka ndiichie melu
    Chua ra anyi akologoli mmuo
    Chua ra anyi akologoli mmadu

English translation:

    Eke! I am tying *egbo*
    Eke! mediate between fights
    Egbo of the senior ancestors:
    Egbo of the junior ancestors
    The four days, the four markets,
    Egbo is what we are tying,
    Eke make it possible!
    Do not give entry to bad spirits,
    We are doing what our ancestors did.
    Drive away worthless spirits.
    Drive away worthless people.

He completed tying the bundle and fixed it to the ground with the four lumps of red mud. We continued our conversation.
Anumba: I have finished. *Eke* will stop any evil spirit from coming into the *Eke* square on *Eke* day to cause confusion.
Onwuejeogwu: Do you say that bundle will stop evil?
Anumba: I do not say so. I said *Eke* will do it. The bundle is evidence that I have tied the *egbo*. If anyone who knows Nri tradition sees it, the person will know that it is properly done and it will be safe to play and dance in *eke* on the day of the festival. The bundle is, *arima,* a sign that I have done it. *Eke* will react. I talked to *eke* through the egbo and since I am the priest holding his *ofo,* my work is to talk to *eke.*
Onwuejeogwu: Could you tie the bundle without saying those words?
Anumba: How can I? It will be incomplete. The word and the bundle must be done together. I am not mad. I know what I am doing. Only a

mad priest ties *egbo* without talking. Will he not say something to *eke?* Will people around know what he is doing?
Onwuejeogwu: What if the *Eke* priest is dumb?
Anumba: (Laughs) Do dumb people not move their lips or hand. Then the priest will move his hands and lips. *Eke* 'hears' that type of 'talking'. Has such a person not helpers? His helpers will do the talking. This type of talk is praying.

One important fact has emerged from the conversation with the priest. He insists that *egbo* is a sign: the object is simply evidence (like a footprint I suppose) of the priest communication with *eke,* and also an instrument used to communicate with *eke.* The object and action generate the knowledge and notion of safety to people entering the market. Sign and symbol are linked by object, word and action but both are distinct in Anumba's mind and others I talked to. One can therefore conclude that in Nri thinking a sign is an object; the symbol is the processes of knowing generated by a sign.

The *eke* priest's implicit definition of symbol as a process of the mind opposes that of Firth, Cohen and Jarvie who see symbols as instrumental objects; something used to achieve political, economic, religious and social ends, instead of processes built into system. Similarly, it is opposed to Levi-Strauss' concept of symbol based on the transformation from nature to culture expressed in binary opposition. There is no doubt that Sperber's concept comes closer to that of the *eke* priest. The common denominator for both is that they conceptualize symbols as processes connected with knowing or "knowledge of memory of things" as Sperber prefers to put it. This idea is strongly expressed in the priest's statement: "if any one who knows Nri tradition sees it, (i.e. the sign), the person will know that it is properly done and it will be safe to play and dance in *eke* on the day of the festival". This in effect means that sign generates a mental process of linking, recalling

and experiencing an aspect of knowledge associated with the life-world of Nri people. By life-world I mean "that province of reality which the wide-awake and normal adult simply takes for granted in the attitude of common sense. By this taken-for-grantedness, we designate everything which we experience as unquestionable; every state of affairs · is for us unproblematic until further notice." (Schutz and Luckman 1974, pp. 3-4).

There is no doubt that Anumba's concept of sign, referring to *egbo* as *arima*, is identical to Schutz's definition, he writes:

> A sign is by its very nature something used by a person to express a subjective experience. Since, therefore, the sign always refers back to an act of choice on the part of a rational being - a choice of this particular sign - the sign is also an indication of an event in the mind of the sign-user...
> A sign is, therefore, always either an artifact or a constituted act-object ... Every sign system is true in two different senses. First, it is an *expressive scheme*, in other words, I have at least once used the sign for that which it designates, used it either in spontaneous activity or in imagination. Second, it is an interpretive scheme, in other words, I have already in the past interpreted the sign as the sign of that which it designates . (Schutz 1972 pp. 119-122).

In the definition and explanation of the nature of sign, Schutz links sign and subjective experience. Since subjective experience refers to the experiences of a concrete individual in terms of constructing and interpreting social reality, signs are therefore a means of achieving social reality. Schutz sees symbols as higher 'appresentational forms' that have their foundation on expressive signs. Signs are within the reality of our daily life whereas what they refer to is an idea which transcends our experience of every day life. Schutz sees symbols as "A theme that spans two provinces of reality" (1974 p. 127).[3]

I have demonstrated *afa* as a configuration of signs and symbols linked with the processes of constructing and interpreting social reality that generate social action. It has a higher appresentational form in the sense that it spans two provinces of reality: the "paramount reality".

that is, the reality of everyday life-world, the perceivable physical world and the "finite province of meaning," that is, the world of religious experience (Schutz, 1972 pp. 21-25). *Afa* transforms 'knowledge' from one province to the other by a process connected with knowing and experiencing. This process is symbolic. Hence *afa* may be conceived of as a system of symbols.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 4

1. By a system I mean a model of conceptualizing a complex of elements or components directly or indirectly related in a causal network. It is functionally and structurally related to other systems; hence system boundaries are fluid, a system may be an autonomous part of a bigger system or a sub-system of a system.

2. My decision to select the works of these five anthropologists is based on my consideration that their works represent five main trends in the study of symbolism by anthropologists: the Levi-Strauss, Leach, Firth, Cohen and Sperber. I regard Turner as belonging to the Straussian School though some may disagree with me.

3. Schutz concepts are discussed in Chapter 7

CHAPTER 5

AFA AS A SYSTEM OF SOCIAL REALITY

1. Knowledge and Social Reality - A Survey and Critique of Western Thought In so Far As it Relates to Nri Thought.

Knowledge as product of thought or experience, or both, has been the preoccupation of philosophical discourse for over two thousand years in Europe, China, India and Africa. In Europe by the seventeenth century, two major schools of thought had emerged to become the mainstream of European philosophy: rationalism and empiricism.[1]

Britain was dominated by the empiricism of John Locke, Berkeley and Hume. The major thesis of empiricism is that experience, the source of knowledge, begins from what one observes in the external world and not from what is in one's mind. In the European continent, Descartes and Spinoza championed rationalism. They hold that thought is the source of knowledge. Kant pronouncing his 'copernican revolution' rejected both the empiricists and rationalists theses. He holds that knowledge of the world needs concept and categories to comprehend. These concepts and categories are found within the mind; they are *a priori* and not derived from experience, for they belong to experience and make it possible.

Kant's failure to achieve harmonization of empiricism and rationalism was taken up by Hegel who aimed at reconciling theology and philosophy. He brought them together in what he called the Absolute. Aristotelian logic had taught that one could not at the same time rationally believe two contradictory statements. Hegelian dialectic allows it. He argued that truth (knowledge) was discovered by the process of assertion and negation. This process of competing idea systems he called dialectical process and it refers to the competition of two opposing forces resulting in the emergence of a new force. Thus what he called the thesis is negated by the anti-thesis to produce a new idea called the synthesis. The

synthesis becomes a new thesis that is negated by anti-thesis to produce a new synthesis. This process continues until thought reaches the ultimate universal synthesis which is the *Absolute*. Hegel was the embodiment of German idealism and his system of processing knowledge has come to be known as dialectical idealism. (Plamenatz, 1963 pp. 133 - 137 and Duraut, 1926, pp. 272-9).

However, German idealism did not impress the French man Comte who is often called the Father of sociology. Comte formulated the 'three stages' human knowledge passes through: from the theological to the metaphysical to a final 'positive' stage. The positive stage which is science, is regarded as final in the sense that other stages do not co-exist with it. Thus to Comte, knowledge can only be comprehended through science.

Hegel's influence on Marx was self-evident. Both adopted an identical approach to the study of history except that for Marx it was not idea that gave rise to the developing institutions of society, but rather the material institutions of society. It was economic production, that was responsible for the way in which society lived, functioned, thought and felt. Marx argues that the infrastructure of society consists of the forces and relations of production, while the super-structure consists of the legal, political and other institutions. Production brings men into relations and it is out of these relations the law and goverment arise and to these, social consciousness corresponds. Social consciousness refers to ways of thinking, ideologies and philosophies. It is clear that Marx's concept of knowledge is constructed from social reality but he restricted the processes of knowledge to a class when he argued that social reality could only be comprehended by the proletariat because it was only they who conceive the future beyond the revolution. This makes Marx's concept of knowledge objectionable. (Marx, 1904, pp. 265 - 292, Aron 1965, pp. 111-182).

Marx Scheler in 1920s coined the word "sociology of knowledge". His major critique was on Comte's theory of the "three stages" human knowledge passes through. Scheler argues that science was not only the adequate form of knowledge. Science is superior in a bourgeois capitalistic society directed towards the manipulation and control of things. But in societies directed towards the achievement of other values, such as spiritual one, other forms of knowledge will be cultivated. He argues that Europe and Asia had pursued the tasks of human acquisition of knowledge from different directions; "Europe was going from matter to the soul, Asia from the soul to matter. Therefore, the stages of evolution must be fundamentally different in the two cases - until the point is reached where they meet in a cultural synthesis which is already underway". (Mannheim, 1959, pp. 16-17). Scheler emphasizes that human knowledge is ordered by society but the order is relative to a particular socio-historical condition. This relativism of knowledge ignores the co-existence of different forms of knowledge in a particular socio-historical condition and reduces the 'mind' to a passive role by assigning to socio-historical process the role of determining the ideal forms of knowledge known in society.

Scheler's sociology of knowledge generates extensive debate in Germany and the English - speaking world, but Mannheim's conception of the sociology of knowledge is a lot more penetrating than that of Scheler. Mannheim sees society as determining not only the appearance of human idealism but also its content, with the exception of mathematics and parts of the natural sciences. His concern is the phenomenon of ideology formulated on the understanding that no human thought is immune to the ideologizing influences of its social context. The 'style of thought' can be associated with the emergence of a certain social stratum is best demonstrated by the fact that "modern rationalism ... was linked to the world postulates and intellectual aspirations of the rising bourgeoisie" (Mannheim 1959, p. 185). The Weberian and the Marxian influence are strongly expressed but the line separating them and

Mannheim is clearly stated by him when he writes.

> We can define social strata, in accordance with the Marxian concept of class, in terms of their role in the production process; but it is impossible in our opinion, to establish a historical parallelism between intellectual standpoints and social strata defined in his fashion. Differentiation in the world of mind is much too great to permit the identification of each current, each standpoint, with a given class. Thus we have to introduce an intermediary concept to effect the correlation between the concept of 'class' defined in terms of roles in the productive process, and that of 'intellectual standpoint'. We mean by intellectual stratum a group of people belonging to a certain social unit and sharing a certain 'world postulate' (as parts of which we may mention the economic system, the artistic style 'postulated' by them), who at a given time are 'committed' to a certain style of economic activity and of theoretical thought . (Mannheim 1959 p. 186).

Now I come to Schutz whom I have been quoting so often in this work. Schutz's interest in epistemology is mainly on the study of the knowledge of the Life-World. He defines everyday life-world as:

> Man's fundamental and paramount reality ... that province of reality which the wide-awake and normal adult simply takes for granted in the attitude of common sense (Schutz 1974, p. 3-4).

He sees nature and culture as components of knowledge of the life-world and 'meaning-strata' as an important factor in transforming nature into culture. Hence Schutz argues:

> The everyday reality of the life-world includes, therefore, not only the 'nature' experienced by me but also the social (and therefore the cultural) world in which I find myself; the life-world is not created out of the merely material objects and events which I encounter in my environment. Certainly there are together one component of my surrounding world, nevertheless, there also belong to this all the meaning-strata which transform natural things into cultural objects, human bodies into fellow-man, and the movements of fellow-man into acts, gestures and communications . (Schutz, 1974 p 5).

The study of the knowledge of the Life-World has two main characteristics: (a) it is related to situations of the experiencing subject (b) it is 'built on sedimentations' of present experiences. Any subject has a "stock of knowledge" which is limited in terms of situation, spatial, temporal and social arrangement. He sees social arrangement as

central in every aspect of experience and argues that one can only experience a certain segment of the world, that within his actual reach, which has the temporal character of the present. Around this segment, others exist such as the "world of restorability" which has the temporal character of the past and "world of attainability" which has the temporal character of the future. Schutz discussed other types of knowledge such as skills, useful knowledge, knowledge of recipes, routine knowledge (Schutz, 194, pp. 105-111) and argues that the life-world stock of knowledge serves the purpose of determining and mastering actual situations. Thus the structure of the stock of knowledge involves the constant use of habitual knowledge sedimented from past experiences or the explication and re-explication of past experiences and situations. (Schutz, 1974, p. 238). He holds that "the current stock of knowledge" operates as immediate pattern of conduct or used as "interpretational scheme" and the determination and mastery of actual situation involve an orientation to the future.

He then turns to the problem of prediction and argues that every experience is 'future-oriented'. Hence

> By means of the typifications included in the stock of knowledge and on the basis of the idealization of the "and-so-forth" and the "I-can-always-do-it-again", the stock of knowledge makes possible the orientation of the flux of experience toward the future (Schutz, 1974, pp.243).

Because the stock of knowledge is a routine scheme for conduct and the act is oriented towards the future, typical courses and results of arts are established as possible, probable or as subjectively certain. Though in daily life nothing can be predicted just as it will exactly happen, yet it is useful to make attempts. He therefore argues:

> But since under the dominance of the pragmatic motive, this kind of exact prediction is in general irrelevant, while just the typical and typically repeatable aspects of experience and of action are of interest, prediction of the "future" in the natural attitude is possible and - in spite of its chance character -"successful". (Schutz, 1974 p. 241).

To sum up, Schutz proposed a dynamic approach to knowledge of the life-world. This

knowledge concerns practical matters and consists of recipes for all types of conduct and activity. It ranges from 'expertness' to extreme vagueness and what a person knows, *in toto*, is his stock of knowledge. This stock is inconsistent, fluid and incoherent and lacks clarity. However, it serves its purpose as long as it affords the owner satisfactory results in acting and satisfactory reference encyclopedia in explaining life-world. It is unlike philosophical and scientific knowledge which serves purely intellectual interests and is subject to controls and principles. This knowledge is structured. There is a core of knowledge that is clear, distinct and consistent. This core is surrounded by zones of different gradations of ambiguity and vagueness, followed by zones of blind beliefs. Finally are the zones of complete ignorance. The stock of knowledge at hand is sub-divided into layers of different relevance and the borderlines of various zones are established by the particular problem one is concerned with. Knowledge is socially distributed; hence members of any group do not take the same section of the world for granted and beyond question. Each selects different elements of it. There is therefore a stock of knowledge available to everyone, built up by practical experience, science and technology but this stock is not integrated, it is made up of juxtaposition of coherent and incoherent systems of knowledge which are not even compatible with one another. Stock of knowledge grows by 'sedimentation', of past and present experiences of the subject. The prediction of the future is possible because experiences and actions are 'repeatable' though not exactly as before.

Let us examine some followers of Schutz. Berger and Luckmann depending heavily on Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Mead, Parsons and Schutz come up with a slight different reformulation of knowledge. They dispose with the epistemological and methodological problems that bother Mannheim and others and hold that this focus belongs to the sociology of knowledge. They argue that 'ideas' and 'ideology' constitute only part of the larger problem of the sociology of knowledge and defines it as that which "must concern itself with everything that passes for 'knowledge' in

society and with the social construction of reality". (Berger and Luckmann, '1967, pp. 26-27). In explaining the meaning of social construction of reality, they depend heavily on Schutz's concept of the phenomenology of the social world. The reality of everyday life is a universal phenomenon to "ordinary members of society". They are interested in how knowledge that guides conduct in everyday life emerges and are:

Only tangentially interested in how reality may appear in various theoretical perspectives to intellectuals and how that common sense reality may be influenced by the theoretical constructions of intellectuals and other merchants of ideas is a further question . (Berger and Luckmann, 1967 p. 33).

By this process of argument, they agree with Schutz that common-sense reality is universal and not the monopoly of any section of human society as argued by Marx or Mannheim. Though they concede that common-sense reality may be influenced in a different way by the theoretical constructions of intellectuals. By this they have anchored most knowledge, not all knowledge, in its social context. According to them "common-sense contains innumerable pre-and quasi-scientific interpretations about everyday reality, which it takes for granted" (p. 33). Some of the features of common-sense knowledge which are important in the analysis of *afa*, as discussed by the authors, are as follows:

Common-sense knowledge is the knowledge I share with others in the normal, self-evident routines of everyday life. The reality of everyday life is taken for granted as reality. It does not require additional verification over and beyond its simple presence.

Everyday life is divided into section that are apprehended routinely, and others that present me with problems of one kind or another. The world of everyday life proclaims itself and, when I want to challenge the proclamation, I must engage in a deliberate, by no means easy effort. Compared to the reality of everyday life, other realities appear as finite provinces of meaning ... such realities appear tenous and ephemeral. Aesthetic and religious experience is rich in producing transitions of this kind

All finite provinces of meaning are characterized by a turning away of attention from the reality of everyday life. But the reality of everyday life retains its paramount status because the common language available to me for the objectification of my experience is grounded in everyday life and keeps pointing back to it even as I

employ it to interpret experiences in finite provinces of meaning. I 'distort' the reality of finite province of meaning as soon as I begin to use the common language in interpreting them, that is, I 'translate' the non-everyday experiences back into the paramount reality of everyday life (pp. 34-42)

The success of Berger and Luckmann in their analysis seems to be in their ability to recognize and elaborate Schutz's proposition of the universality of knowledge based on common sense reality. They also recognize the existence of other types of knowledge that transcend common-sense which they have attempted to articulate with common-sense through the medium of 'common language'. What is disturbing is when they argue that the reality of finite province is 'distorted' as soon as 'common language' is employed in interpreting them. I am inclined to argue that the finite province of meaning is a reconstruction at a higher plane of common-sense reality. It is indirectly derived from paramount reality and so can be translated without distortion by a combined use of non-verbal and verbal sign system and symbols. This is what scientists have been doing in the field of natural science and this is also what *dibia afa* and priests are doing in the field of religion, and prediction as shall soon be demonstrated. For example, I described the *afa* predictor as a chief participant in the social construction of reality in Nri society. He is an empiricist as well as an idealist. He sojourns, by means of sign system and symbols of *afa*, between the common-sense world of reality and the reality of finite province (Religion). He is not an exploiter for he does not control any means of production in Nri economy, but he belongs first to the world of everyday life and secondly to a group that turns away from the ' reality of everyday life seeking clues in the finite provinces of meaning to illuminate and enrich the meanings of reality of everyday life. To achieve this, he uses two techniques: the *afa* sign system which seems to transmit meaning from the finite province to the world of everyday life, these signs are decoded into everyday 'common language' to generate symbolic experiences and knowledge which determine social action in the world of everyday

life. *Afa* is not a language but it is a specialized communication sign system which generates symbolically, knowledge related to 'past' and 'present', employed in predicting "future" actions. Let us explore the meaning of knowledge among the Nri and see how "the knowledge of the life-world" is constructed and manipulated.

2.Concepts of Knowledge In Nri:

Anthropologists have come across multifarious patterns of family, kinship, political, religious, economic and technological organization. The variety extends to morals, beliefs, arts and languages and these have challenged the most conservative and ethnocentric assumptions of both the field-worker and the most casual observer. It is now generally accepted that societies have divergent ways of expressing their thoughts about themselves and their world and or organizing their practical activities. The non-industrialized societies with the most primitive technology have in their explanations of natural processes and the supernaturals, organized their lives on these assumptions which may seem outlandish to the industrialized societies who have their own way of conceptualizing reality by separating the natural from the supernatural. This dichotomization is, of course, a recent phenomenon in the history of human thought and the process cannot be assumed completed even in the most industrialized society, for residual and very significant links between the natural and supernatural continue to exist in many forms. This situation has led many social scientists to closer study of the cognitive basis of all societies, some addressing their minds to comparative study of religion, myths and cosmology of different societies. Others have even argued that the western sciences, especially the social sciences, are another way of organizing reality and may not be more or less valid than other ways employed by non-western societies. Some like Levi-Strauss have attempted to analyze the character of the various assumptions about the universal structure of human thought. They have taken great pains to demonstrate the internal logic of conceptual systems, how social reality and the moral order

are constructed and reconstructed and how the natural order is transformed to the social order and vice-versa.

Similar approach has been adopted by many writers on African thoughts such as Abraham, Griaule, Balandier, Kagame, Tempels, Danquah and Mbiti. They demonstrate, using solid ethnographic material, the presence of philosophical ideas in African societies. They push the boundaries of analysis far beyond those of some anthropologists, such as the authors of the *African worlds*, who described African systems of thought with terms like world-view, cosmology, myths, witchcraft, sorcery and magic. This is because the African societies they studied had no advance system of writing or because the writers did not have sufficient knowledge and deep insight of the complex system they undertake to analyze. They were also naive to discuss philosophy though they are not in discussing religious, economic and political systems.

Abraham, a young Ghanaian philosopher, has argued beyond challenge that

The absence of body of writing among the Akans does not in itself, therefore mean the absence of philosophical ideas (1962 p. 103).

He distinguishes two main aspects of philosophy when he argues:

Workers in the field can find all over Africa specimens of what might be called a public philosophy, usually tracing out the theoretical foundations of the traditional society. There is also the private philosophy, however, which is more the thinking of an individual than a laying bare of the communal mind. Without doubt, much of Kageme's work and also Graiaule's is of this latter kind (Abraham 1962 p. 104).

The interesting aspects of Abraham's work which concern us at this stage is contained in his main conclusions on the theory of knowledge:

Some of the problems raised in philosophy elsewhere have answers in African thought. One might take theory of knowledge as an example. Theory of knowledge speaking roughly, concerns the conditions of knowledge in general, an attempt to fix the limits of the human understanding and its avenues to knowledge being in fact constituted a type in virtue of the avenue which the understanding has to it ... (it) also concerns itself with particular items of knowledge especially those the application whose concept-term is also an appraisal situation. (Abraham, 1962 pp. 104-5).

Apart from Abraham, several other African writers such as Mbiti and Abimbola have attempted to elaborate on some themes central to some African philosphy, here, I wish to explore and expose briefly how Nri elders conceptualize knowledge.

The Nri conceptualize wisdom and knowledge as something outside the individual and as external forces that come from external beings. Both are something to be manipulated by an individual inspired or endowed by external forces/beings. In Chapter 1, I discussed the four attributes of *Chukwu* as Creator *(Okike),* wisdom and knowledge *(anyanwu),* fertility *(agbala)* and procreation *(chi).* Nri elders argue that the ultimate genesis of wisdom, *amamife,* is *Chukwu* manifesting itself as *anyanwu.* It is *Chukwu* who bestows on any man, through the person's *chi,* the quality of wisdom. On the other hand, knowledge, *nmuta,* is that aspect of wisdom one acquires by living in this world, *(Uwa).* Thus wisdom encompasses knowledge and is considered as a gift from *Chukwu* and one is born with it, while knowledge is that aspect of knowing acquired through learning of the manifest and 'hidden' things of the world. However, to acquire knowledge, one has to be directed by one's *chi,* to live and mingle with wise men and/or elders, to work hard *(Ikenga),* to travel far and wide *(ukwu na ije),* to develop one's personality *(ihu)* and to be articulate and persuasive *(uho).* It is in the acquisition of everyday knowledge that personality cults mentioned in Chapter 1, become very important among the Nri people. When the sun rises early in the morning, Nri people say *chi efoo,* meaning "the dawn of a day's activity" and when the sun sets they say *chi ejiri,* "the end of a day's activity". During the period of the rising and setting of the sun, its rays radiate to all the corners of the world, *(uwa),* disclosing all things and enhancing fertility. The disappearance of the sun ushers darkness. Light promotes knowledge and darkness limits it. Wisdom is however unlimited by light or darkness, for it exists all the time. Wisdom is eternity because *Chukwu* is eternity.

Wisdom is a very rare gift from *Chukwu;* hence there have been very few wise men. Many generations can pass without one wise man, but men of knowledge occur in all generations. Wise men change the order of society and introduce startling innovations. Giving examples from Nri, the elders argue that Nri Namoke, Nri Ifikuanim, Nribuife and Nrijofo who were Eze Nri many centuries ago, were wise men because they changed the social order of Nri society (Onwuejeogwu, 1974, 1974, 1975 and 1977). Men of knowledge do not change the order of society rather they make people understand the meaning of the world in which they live by interpreting the guidelines laid down by wise men for the benefit of the whole society. Many successful ancestors were men of great knowledge. Some living elders and some inspired persons are men of great knowledge. Knowledge has no boundary determined by sex. Both men and women can be persons of knowledge but because men travel more than women the frequency is higher among men than women. Citing examples outside Nri, the elders argue that wise and foolish men occur in all cultures, thus there are two types of white-men; the wise ones who make cars and good things which society needs and the foolish, abominable ones who use things made by wise men for killing other human beings. Such white-men live in abomination *(alu)* and shall be destroyed by abomination. Similarly, they hold, that amongst blackmen who were not cannibals, many wise men lived and changed their societies for good but those blacks who were cannibals had no wise men because they did not only live in abomination but also "ate abomination" which inhibited their faculty and destroyed them, and will continue to destroy their progeny until their abomination is fully cleansed. Thus in Nri thinking, abominiation and wisdom cannot co-exist, because the former is a self-destructive 'force' while the latter is a self-constructive 'force'.

The elders also distinguish two types of knowledge: the manifest *(iputa ife)* and the hidden *(omimi).* Some elders *(ikenye)* are repositories of manifest and hidden knowledge. A child or young

FIG. 10: AGBALA/NRI: STRUCTURE OF THE FLOW OF KNOWLEDGE.
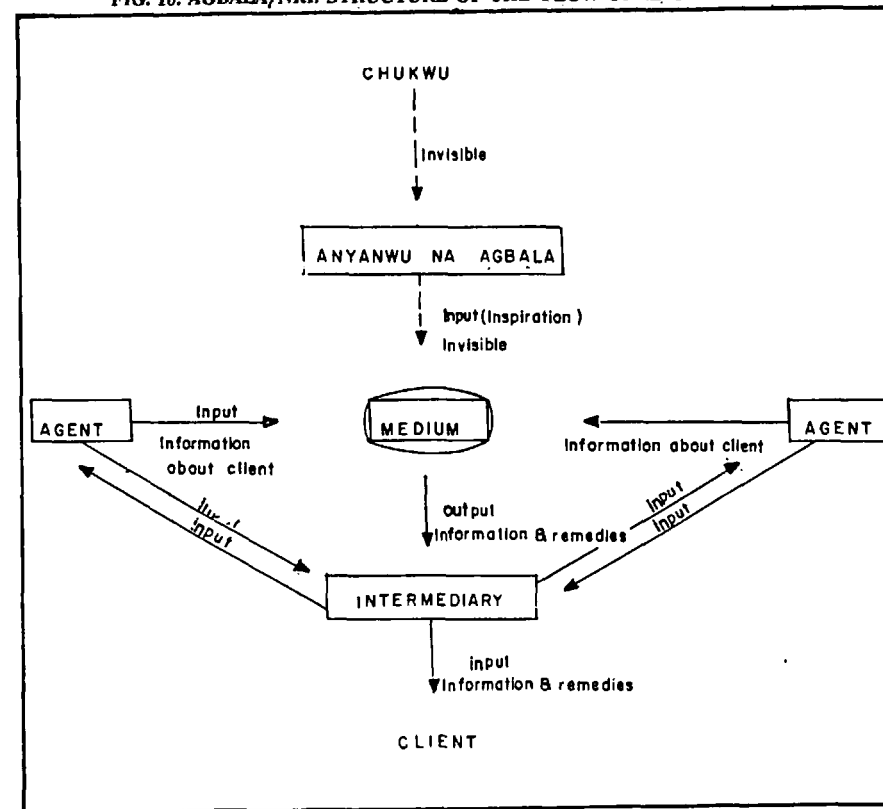
man who associates with these elders for a very long time may be fortunate enough to learn a lot from them if he or she has a sound seat of common-sense and retentive power *(ako na uche).* One can obtain hidden knowledge by becoming a medium of the *agbala* cult or receiving inspiration from *agwu.*

It is through the *agbala* cult that *Chukwu* manifests some aspects of wisdom to man by making knowledge related to prosperity, fertility, health, longevity known to men through selected media and agents. Only those inspired can be the

media of *agbala* cult and only those trained and tested for ability to tap and keep secrets can be agents of the media. Media and agents deal with different levels of knowledge. Agents do not acquire hidden knowledge of persons, place and things by sitting down under a coconut tree waiting for knowledge to drop down. An agent must climb up the tree and harvest its fruits. Hence agents of *agbala* must go about, far and near, collecting information and transmitting them to the media located at Nri using the Nri secret language. It is believed that *agbala* through the

agent's *chi* exposes hidden information to the agent by directing his footsteps *(ukwu na ije)* towards the right path, making him to be enthusiastically received in all homes, in all communities and also making him ask the right type of questions and getting the right type of answers. (Fig. 10).

The agents transmit to the medium the information about the biography of clients wanting to visit the *agbala* for help. Such information is regarded as top secret and it is considered an abomination to reveal any aspect of this information which passes through a set channel. The medium on getting these facts reconstructs them into a body of knowledge which he puts before the client through an intermediary. The medium is like an "encyclopedia" of social information believed to be endowed with the ability to edit these facts and transform them into knowledge about a client's biography through the inspiration of *anyanwu na agbala*. Those who operate the *Agbala* say:

> "The client tells us all we tell him. Except that we tell him what he tells us in a different way revealed to us by *Agbala*."

This statement justifies the fact that the information which reaches the medium through an in-put channel mediated by an agent indicated in Figure 9 is the information of the social world of a client provided by the client directly or indirectly to the agent. The medium reconstructs the information and transmits it through an out-put channel mediated by an intermediary, as knowledge coming from the ultimate. The client's belief conditions him to accept the information as a new form of reality. Thus 'old' social reality are transformed into 'new' social reality. Both are the same reality but at different levels of transformation and acceptability. This can be illustrated symbolically as follows:

$$A \longrightarrow A' \neq A$$

Where A means 'old' social reality

$\longrightarrow$ is "transformed into"

A' means 'new' social reality

$\clubsuit$ means equivalent to.

During the period of consultation, the medium operates from a hidden place and speaks in strange voices. Only the intermediary and the client are in direct interaction. The relationships breakdown is as follows, using Schutz's categories:

(a) Medium and Intermediary are co-associates

(b) Intermediary and client are co-associates.

(c) Medium and client are contemporaries

The medium and client are contemporaries who might never have met even once or might have met briefly in another situation. To this type of relationship Schutz rightly says:

> But of my contemporaries we will say that, while living among them, I do not directly and immediately grasp their subjective experiences but instead infer, on the basis of indirect evidence, the typical subjective experiences they must be having. Inferences of this kind of course can be well founded. (Schutz 1972, pp. 104-143).

The relationship between the intermediary and the client is that of consociates characterized by face-to-face orientation which Schutz described as follows:

> First of all, let us remember that in the face-to-face situation, I literally see my partner in front of me. As I watch his face and his gestures and listen to the tone of his voice ... To this encounter with the other person I bring a whole stock of previously constituted knowledge ...
> And when I am face-to-face with someone, my knowledge of him is increasing from moment to moment ...

As the relationship between other agents of the medium and the client are also consociates, the inferences reached by the medium about his clients depend heavily on how well the agents and the intermediary play their role of collecting and transmitting information about the client to the medium. If properly done, the inferences can be well-founded thereby strengthening the belief that the medium's interpretation of a client's biography has a divine origin when indeed the "new knowledge" is a transformation of an 'old' knowledge". Thus prediction is a transformation of 'old' experiences into 'new' forms.

The *agbala* cult just described is a system of obtaining some specialized type of information

and knowledge. It is knowledge about prosperity, health, wealth and longevity as related to an individual. A client consulting the *agbala* cult wants to gain knowledge about his health, how to have more children, wives and wealth. He does not ask questions about his relationship with his ancestors or persons genealogically related to him. He does not bother to ask about his relationship with the various supernaturals associated with his community. He wants a type of universalistic knowledge about his life: his biography in the context of a wider world-view. In some cases the medium sends his clients to clear certain matters with the *dibia afa*, indicating that the function of the *agbala* is different from that of the *dibia afa*. Both are interested in different levels of knowledge.

The *agwu* is yet another means of obtaining certain types of knowledge about the individual and others in the community, and about the individual and the supernatural forces and beings. It is believed that *agwu* communicates knowledge through inspired agents called *dibia afa* who take many years to train. (Fig. 11). A child or adult is said to be ritually inspired by *agwu* and is manifested in his strange behaviours. The person's parents or kinsmen consult a *dibia afa* to confirm this. Once this is done, the person is given to a famous *dibia afa* for training. People learn at different rates because no two persons have the same *ako na uche*, "seat of interest and commonsense". *Ako na uche* are two important factors in the learning processes. Both must be brought together in harmony before an individual can learn. Learning cannot take place if seat of interest, *ako*, is separated from common-sense, *uche*. Since these are invisible factors in a person, the *dibia afa* can bind the two together mystically. This is symbolically expressed by wrapping two animal and plant ingredients in a miniature leather parcel which is called *ogwu ako na uche*, "medicine for binding the seat of interest and common-sense".

This is a kind of charm which the student keeps during his long period of theoretical and practical learning. The long learning period ends with the person undergoing an initiation ceremony. He is

now a *dibia afa* but his future success and fame depend on his ability to interpret social phenomenon and this grows with age and experience.

A *dibia afa* does not employ special agents to work for him like that of the *agbala* medium. He deals with a smaller community and he travels from one town to the other though based at Nri. He is more or less like an anthropologist who is constantly a participant observer, seeing, hearing and 'analyzing' social facts and interpreting them. The structure of the system he operates, is illustrated in Figure 11.

The relationship between the *dibia afa* and any of his clients is that of consociates, a face-to-face relationship. His in-put channel of information about his client is both direct and indirect. He knows his client and talks to him directly. He knows the history of his client's lineage and knows all the supernatural beings/forces that are associated with his client's lineages or community. He knows all the associations and societies his client belongs to, the taboos and rules his client ought to observe vis-a-vis individuals or groups or supernatural beings. The out-put channel is also direct for he faces his client, talks to him with *afa* signs, decodes the signs to explain his client's biography, wider community and the invisible beings and forces associated with them. This type of relationship has been discussed by Schutz as "we-relationship"and he identifies its main characteristics as follows:

> ... When I am in a face-to-face situation with you, I can point to something in our common environment, uttering the words "this table here" and, by means of the identification of lived experiences in the environmental object, I can assure the adequacy of my interpretive scheme to your expressive scheme ... We have, then, the same undivided and common environment, which we may call "our environment". The world of the 'We' is not private to either of us, but is our world, the one common intersubjective world which is right there in front of us ... I can constantly check my interpretations of what is going on in other people's mind, due to the fact that, in the We-relationship, I share a common environment with them. In principle, it is only in the face-to-face situation that I can address a question to you. But I can ask you not only about the interpretive schemes which you are applying to our common environment. I can also ask you how you are interpreting your lived experiences, and, in the process, I

FIG. 11 AGWU AFA: STRUCTURE OF THE FLOW OF KNOWLEDGE
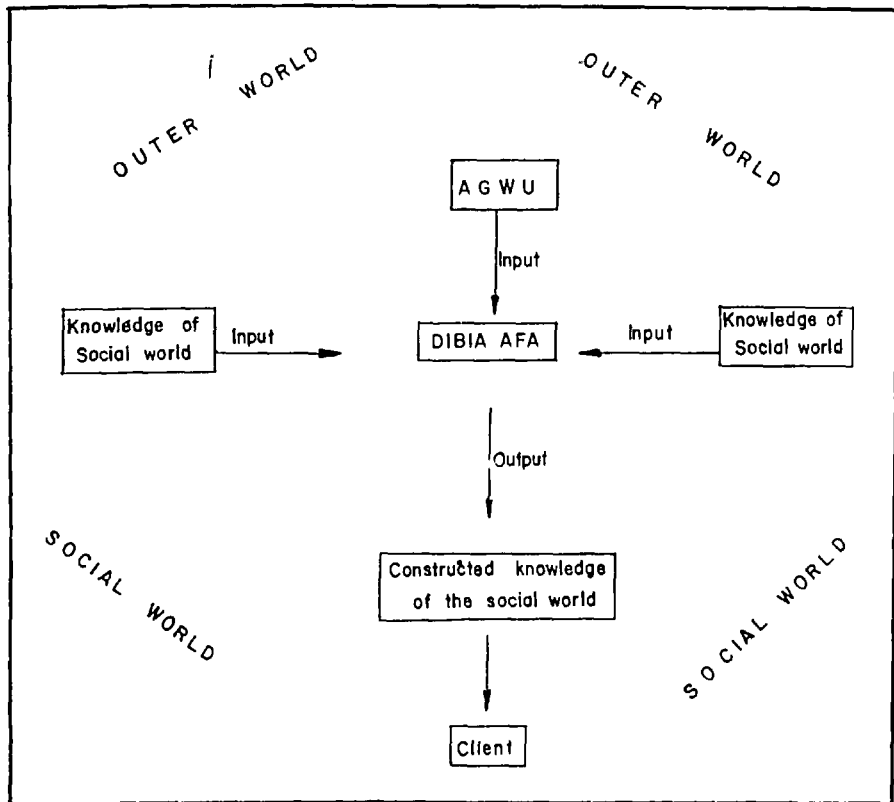
can correct, expand, and enrich my own understanding of you. This becoming-aware of the correctness or incorrectness of my understanding of you, is a higher level of the We-experience. On this level I enrich not only my experience of you but of other people generally (Schutz 1972, pp. 171).

This aspect of Schutz's analysis is important in understanding the relationship between the *dibia afa* and his client. Clients generally visit a *dibia afa* alone in his home. If the clients are a group of people, they are generally kin or persons with a common interest. The We-relationship between the *dibia* and client is such that the *dibia* plays a more active role in the communication scheme than the client. By this practice, the *dibia* is able to control the client and interpret more accurately his lived experiences and thus is able to correct, expand and enrich his understanding of his client. In other words the *dibia* with the aid of his client who plays a less active role during an *afa* session is able to reconstruct 'old' social reality lived and experienced by his client into 'new' social reality which a client is made to accept as a guideline for future actions.

Nri elders also distinguish between particularistic knowledge, *mmuta ndi* and universalistic knowledge, *mmuta ora*. For example, they regard the cultivation of yam as knowledge which *Chukwu* revealed to the first Eze Nri. The Eze Nri made this knowledge universal. All technological knowledge is regarded as universalistic. Certain forms of knowledge are regarded as the exclusive property of a community. This is true of the knowledge of cleansing abomination among the Nri or the control of 'yam medicine' by the Eze Nri. The elders argue that knowledge is power when properly used. Nri people spread the knowledge of the supernatural beings all over Igboland and thus gained some control over the people's economic and political life. It is necessary to transform particularistic knowledge into universalistic one by teaching others in order to gain respect and influence. They end their argument by saying that universalistic knowledge brings communities together, while particularistic knowledge keeps communities apart. This is why the spread of knowledge and the restriction of some play a major role in the development of Nri hegemony. (Onwuejeogwu, 1974).

From the above expositions, it is clear that the building blocks for the construction of social reality in Nri are derived partly from their religious philosophy and from their everyday common-sense world epitomized by their social structure. They conceptualize *Chukwu* 'was', *Chukwu* 'is' and *Chukwu* 'will be'. *Chukwu* is the embodiment of past, present and future and this is manifested in human action through *chi*.

Alusi are supernatural beings that had beginnings in the past, and exist in the present but have indeterminate future. Eze Nri is both human and *alusi*, he dwells in the "liminal zone" and is, subject to many taboos. (Onwuejeogwu, 1974). Next are the ancestors who can reincarnate in their grand-children. The present Nri population are conceptualized of as consisting of living elders who may become ancestors after death and their successors who are living children. The ancestors represent the past, the elders the present and children the future, who are derived from the past

by re-incarnation. Nri social and moral world is conceptualized in terms of three social orders: past, present and future. Signs and symbols are used transformationally to create and harmonize the orders. *Afa* contains the main signs and symbols employed.

Afa considered as knowledge, may be assumed to have two main features. The first is a small core of knowledge that is clear, distinct and consistent as described in Chapter 3. This core, predominantly signs and symbols, has a coherent structure and is subject to controls and principles like any practical scientific knowledge. The second core deals with biographies, history of society and social structure. It is generally ambiguous, but can be transformed into a coherent body of knowledge by applying to it signs and symbols derived from the first core. Polanyi in his work *Personal Knowledge* argues that the sign or the symbol can be conceived of as a tool "in the eye of a person who relies on them to achieve or to signify something" (Polanyi, 1962, p. 61). The first core of signs and symbols may be regarded as a tool, for transforming knowledge which is in a state of flux and derived from the second core, into coherent meaningful patterns of social reality. The patterns that emerge are processed through an elaborate communication system which shall be described in the next chapter.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 5

1   Western sociological theories derive from Western philosophy. Hence in this critique on the nature of knowledge and social reality, a brief excursion into two major trends of Western philosophy is inevitable. I may be accused of over simplication by mapping out only two main trends.

CHAPTER 6

AFA AS A SYSTEM OF COMMUNICATION AND CONTROL

Some Theories of Communication - A Theoretical Critique

The basis of all that is called social in the functioning of the living organism is the communication process, and in man, it is essential not only to the development of the individual but also to the formation and continued existence of groups and to the interrelations among groups. It is generally agreed by most linguists that the most non-industrialized people who use very primitive tools and are organized primarily by kinship relationships, possess fully developed languages that are in every essential respect comparable to such language as English, German, Igbo, Japanese or Hausa. (Hoijer, 1969, p. 58).

There is no complete agreement by social scientists on the definition of communication but all the major definitions imply both interaction and effect. For example, Hartley isolated four factors in any effective communication: the communicator, the communicant, the content and the effect (Hartley and Hartley, 1952). They argue that communication is generally taking place by means of verbal symbols. Further observations reveal that other range of symbols are used by man, such as gestures, signals and facial expressions. Effective communication also involves the process of 'feedback' and its analysis reveals complexity of communication and the situation whereby the communicator is the communicant in one instant and the communicant becomes the communicator in another instant.

Communication theories based on Hartley's formulation so far, deal mainly with everyday verbal symbols called language. Other specialized processes of effective communication, which use combination of verbal and non-verbal symbols are ignored. For example, it has been shown that the *dibia afa* in Nri manipulate verbal and non-verbal codes in effecting communication by reconstructing past events; anchoring them to the present and projecting into the future. In this way, the *dibia afa* constructs social reality; sets into motion what Duncan calls the processes whereby the data of "thinking" and "acting" are reduced to symbols of social relationship in a specialized system of *afa* communication. (Duncan, 1968, p. 28).

The *dibia afa's* task is to decode the signs of non-verbal communication system to verbal ones though the former is assumed to emanate from the invisible world of spirits yet communication occurs within the reality of the outer world. Duncan explains the relationship of society, symbol and communication as follows:

"society arises in, and continues to exist through, the communication of significant symbols" (Duncan, 1958, p. 44). "Man creates the significant symbols he uses in communication" (p.46).
"Symbols are directly observable data of meaning in social relationships" (p. 50).

Most scholars hold that all forms of communication occur within the social world, but they do not agree on the number of audiences involved. In this matter, I follow Duncan who isolated five (Duncan, 1970, p. 81-116).

The five audiences involved in *afa* communication are as follows:

(a) the whole community of Nri,
(b) the conscience of Nri community, as represented by the *dibia afa,*
(c) the significant others such as relations of *ego,*
(d) the self, that is the individuals, hereby referred to as *ego* and
(e) the ultimate sources of social order that is the ancestor, the *afa* supernatural, the *alusi* and *Chukwu*. (See Figure 4).

These communication theories, analyze communication as an interactional and interrelational process, but Roger and Shoemaker also hold that communication is essential for social change defined as "the process by which alteration occurs in the structure and function of a social system". (p. 1-40). They isolate three "sequential stages" in the process of social change: invention, the process whereby new ideas are created and developed; diffusion, the process of communicating new ideas to members of a given social system; and consequences, the changes that occur within the society or social system as a result of the adoption or rejection of the new idea. In their analysis they see diffusion as a special type of communication and distinguish four essential elements in the communication process: the source, message, channels and receivers. Effective communication is determined by the nature of the relationship between source and receiver. Thus if source and receiver are different in certain attributes such as, beliefs, values and social status, a heterophilic relationship which is detrimental to effective communication emerges; while if source and receiver are similar in these attributes, a homophilic relationship which is conducive to effective communication develops. All forms of communication, Roger and Shoemaker argue, have channels which are ways through which messages get from a source to a receiver. They also hold that mass media channels are more effective in spreading knowledge of innovations than interpersonal channels which are more effective in forming and changing attitudes towards the new idea. Spreading knowledge and changing of attitudes are both essential factors of social change.

It shall be demonstrated how in the past *afa* was both mass media channels and interpersonal channels and why at present it is more of interpersonal channels than mass media channels. *Afa* as mass media channels is a direct and effective means of influencing or impeding social change, and as interpersonal channels, is an effective way of changing attitudes towards social relationships.

Another dimension to this study is that of Schutz who is more interested in interpersonal communication probably because he assumes that 'Thou-orientation' and 'We-relationship' are important in inter-subjective understanding. Schutz sees 'Thou-orientation' as the orientation directed upon another person with whom one is in face-to-face contact. It can either be reciprocal or non-reciprocal. It is merely the awareness of another human-being as a person. 'We-relationship' is one which occurs when two persons, dealing with one another in a face-to-face situation consider the action of each other reciprocally in a 'thou-orientation'. It involves the participation in each other's life and this makes inter-subjective understanding possible. In this respect, it is different from 'Thou-orientation'. Inter-subjectivity refers to what is common to various individuals whereby in daily life a person takes the existence of others for granted. He reasons and acts on the assumption that others are basically persons like himself and on this Schutz argues as follows:-

> The essence of his assumption about his fellow men may be put in this short formula; The Thou (or other person) is conscious, and his stream of consciousness is temporal in character, exhibiting the same basic form as mine. But of course his has implications. It means that the thou knows its experiences only through reflective Acts of attention. And it means that the Acts of attention themselves will vary in character from one moment to the next and will undergo change as time goes on. In short, it means that the other person also experiences his own ageing (Schutz p. 98).

According to Schutz, inter-subjective understanding occurs because X can observe his own lived experiences only after they are over and complete and X can observe Y's as they actually take place. This implies that X and Y are in a sense "simultaneous" and that their streams of consciousness intersect. Schutz holds that the simultaneity of X and Y's two streams of consciousness does not imply that the same experience are given to X and Y.

> "My lived experience of you, as well as the environment I ascribe to you, bears the mark of my own subjective Here and Now and not the mark of yours" (1972 p. 105).

Schutz sees the fundamental assumption on which intersubjectivity is based modified "in the different regions of the social world, namely, the world of contemporaries, the world of predecessors, and the world of successors." (1972 p. 105). In spite of

these modifications, if X looks at his whole stock of knowledge of Y's lived experiences and contemplates the structure of this knowledge, it is clear that everything X knows about Y's conscious life is really based on X's knowledge of his own lived experiences.

> My lived experiences of you are constituted in simultaneity or quasi-simultaneity with your lived experiences, to which they are intentionally related. It is only because of this that, which I look the study backward, I am able to synchronize my past experiences (Schutz 1972 p. 106).

Schütz also holds that all genuine understanding of the other person "must start out from acts of explication" done by the observer on his own lived experience. Schutz distinguishes two types of actions: those performed without any communicative intent and those performed with communicative intent. The former is understood by the observer keeping pace with each step of the observed person's action; identifying himself with the latter's experiences within a common "We-relationship". The latter are expressive acts which are genuine communicative acts that have a goal and involve the use of signs. At this point, Schutz turns to examine the problem of the nature of signs. This has been discussed in Chapter 4. Here I wish to stress those aspects which are relevant to the present discussion and understanding of afa as a communicative system. We therefore turn to Schutz's analysis of signs and symbols which he holds as central to communication (see Chapter 4 on Schutz's definition of sign and sign-system). He argues:

> It appears that all possible communication presupposes a mutual turning-in relationship between the communicator and the addressee of the communication. This relationship is established by the reciprocal sharing of the other's flux of experiences in inner time, by living through a vivid present together, by experiencing this togetherness as a 'we'. Only within this experience does the other's conduct become meaningful to partner turned in on him - that is the other's body and its movements can be and are interpreted as a field of expression of events within his inner life. (Schutz, 1970, p. 216).

For brevity, Schutz's work on communication may be summed up as follows: Any established sign is meaningful and is experienced previously; hence it is discoverable somewhere in the past experience of the person making use of the sign. Every sign system is a scheme of experience because it is an "expressive scheme" and "interpretive scheme" the former refers to the fact that the sign has been used at least once for what it designates and the latter means that it has been used in the past to interpret what it designates. At the moment of interpretation, one needs the total context of one's experience in the context of 'we-relationship'.

Afa as a sign system has been fully discussed. Here it is important to stress that it is both an expressive and an interpretive schemes, as defined by Schutz, and so a communicative system characterized by 'we-relationship' which involves the participation of the dibia afa and his clients in each other's life and this makes inter-subjective understanding, as explained above, possible.

Levi-Strauss recognises the importance of communication in human society through his study of structural linguistics, cybernetics and communication theory. To him, social life is possible through interaction between persons at three major levels: kinship structure as reflected in the rules for transferring women, economic structure based on the transfer of goods and services and the structure of language. These three levels of interaction are "three forms of communication and are also forms of exchange which are interrelated". Strauss argues that "It is therefore, legitimate to seek homologies between them, define the formal characteristics of each type considered independently and of the transformations which make the transition possible from one to another" (Strauss 1963, p. 83). This is what he sets out to do in myths by adopting the dialectics of Hegelian-Maxist philosophical methodology and reaches the conclusion that the nature of myth is to mediate contradictions with the implication that myth helps people to accept facts which under empirical verification may be regarded as unacceptable. It has been argued that afa is another form of communication which helps to transform one (old) form of reality into another (new) form. Later, in this chapter, it will be shown

that during the transformational process, along the circuit of afa communication system, 'old' contradictions are also transformed into 'new' ones by processes of articulation and harmonization of past, present and future actions of actors through the use of signs and symbols. Though most of these have been discussed in the previous chapter of this work, here, I will first proceed to describe and analyze the structure of communication system involved in afa.

2. The Structure of Communication System in Afa

The structure of the afa communication system may be described as a communication circuit set in motion by the interaction between a client seeking information from the dibia afa concerning the state of relationship between the client and other living subjects and things on one hand, and the super-naturals on the other. The circuit may be defined as social communication lines linking the dibia afa, the clients, subjects and things and the supernaturals.

An analysis of the 310 case-studies of afa observed and recorded by me between 1975 - 76, of which seven are reproduced in Appendix 1 of this work, reveals that the structure of communication in afa can be classified into five broad types as follows:

Type 'A' (Fig. 12) - This type mainly defines the relatioship between Ego and Alter. 35.48% of the cases studied are of this type. (See Table 10). Case 1, in Appendix 1 of this work is an example.

Type 'B' (Fig. 13) - This type mainly defines the relationship between Ego and Community or Group such as Nri or a minimal lineage, of the 310 cases 25.48% fall into this type, (see Table 10) Case VII, in Appendix 1 is an example.

Type 'C' (Fig. 14) - This type mainly defines the relationship between Ego and Super-

naturals. 26.77% of the cases fall into this category (see Table 10). Cases III, and IV, in Appendix 1 are of this type.

Type 'D' (Fig. 15) - This type mainly defines the relationship between a Group of a Community and the Supernaturals. 8.38% of cases studied fall into this category (See table 10). Case V, in the Appendix 1 is an example.

Type 'E' - (Fig. 16) - This type defines the relationship between Dibia afa, community and Supernaturals. 3.87% of cases studied fall into this type and Case VII in Appendix 1 is an example. (see Table 10).

The types of structure of afa communication system discussed above have one common feature, namely, the presence of two realms of reality: finite province of meaning and paramount reality, defined in the Schutzian sense whereby the former refers, in this work, specifically to the world of religious experience and the latter to the reality of our everyday life by which objects of nature are transformed into socio-cultural objects (Schutz 1974, pp. 3 - 23 and 123). The two realms of reality give rise to two interdependent structures of communication circuits:-

(1) The circuit that involves the flow of communication from dibia afa and back to dibia afa through ego and alter as in Type 'A'; or through ego and community as in Type 'B'; or through ego alone as in Type 'C'; or through community alone as in Type 'D'; or through ego or community as in Type 'E'. Since this circuit is in the 'paramount reality', it is hereby referred to as P-circuit. This circuit is observable, because it defines either a we-relationship or thou-relationship or they-relationship between the actors involved (see Types A, B, C, D, and E).

(2) The second type of circuit involves the flow of communication between the actors and the supernaturals through *agwu*. I refer to this as R-circuit, because it is in the world of religious experience. This circuit cannot be observed but can be ascertained from the actors that experience it.

The main actor that co-ordinates the flow of communication in P-circuit and in R-circuit is the *dibia afa*, because the information that flows through P-circuit is well-known to him and the one that flows through R-circuit is believed to be channelled to him through *agwu*. Indeed, the information that flows through R-circuit is the same type of information that flows through P-circuit, so P-circuit information is equivalent in terms of content to R-circuit information. The information the *dibia afa* gives to his client is information derived from P-circuit believed to be channelled through the supernaturals. R-circuit information which reaches the client through the *dibia afa* is a transformation of P-circuit information. The chief agent who is concerned with the transformation is the *dibia afa* who does that through the use of *afa* symbols. The transformation is the 'mystification' of 'old' information which finally emerges as 'new' information.

This transformation is made possible because the five audiences involved in this system of communication namely; the whole community of Nri; the conscience of Nri community hereby represented as the *dibia afa;* the significant others such as relations of ego; the self, that is the individual that generates the communication, hereby referred to as *ego;* and the ancestors and supernaturals are bound together in two communication circuits which link the visible world of men with the invisible world of supernaturals. The two circuits converge, so to speak, in a central communication station manned by the *dibia afa*.

Transformation takes place through a complex interaction of signs and symbols. Past biography of clients, history and social structure, that is, social realities, are reduced into *afa* signs. A re-arrangement of these signs generates 'new

knowledge' of social realities. This process is symbolic. 'Old knowledge' is transformed into 'new knowledge' and communicated to clients to open up new vista of social action.

3. *Afa* Communication System and Social Change:

It has been argued that *afa's* basic raw materials for reconstructing social reality and mobilizing social action are biographies of individuals, history and social structure. Since *afa* transforms 'old' forms of social reality into 'new' forms, it is an important agent in the process of communicating new ideas in Nri society. *Afa* achieves this at both individual and community levels. At both levels, *afa* helps in the reformulation of moral and social values and provides means of expressing them by generating 'new' social actions out of 'old' ones. Tables 10, 11 and 12, show the type of clients that are directly or indirectly involved in *afa* communication system. Of the 310 cases studied; R.C.M. are about 15%, C.M.S. about 18%, Syncretic 25% and Traditionals about 42%. The R.C.M. and C.M.S. have a high rate of indirect visit to *afa* with 72.34% and 69.09% respectively. The percentage of those who visit *afa* in any given period in Nri may be low (Table 12), because individual clients are representative of a group. So the number of clients does not reflect the number of those who believe in the system. A survey shows that out of every ten Nri seven believe in the validity of *afa* and the other three merely express doubts and these are not only Christians but also Traditional believers. What is clear in this analysis is that an Nri at one time or the other in his lifetime believes in information disseminated by or through *afa*.

Six of the case studies described in Appendix 1 of this work essentially demonstrate how *afa*, at the interpersonal level, changes the attitudes of individuals; for example, in Case 1, P's attitude towards his partner changed when he was finally exposed by *afa;* and in Case VII, the attitude of N towards his failure to be appointed priest was to accept the new situation without rancour. Case V, is marginal, it is a case in which *afa* operates as


Fig. 12: STRUCTURE OF AFA COMMUNICATION SYSTEM
TYPE A: EGO-ALTER RELATIONSHIP
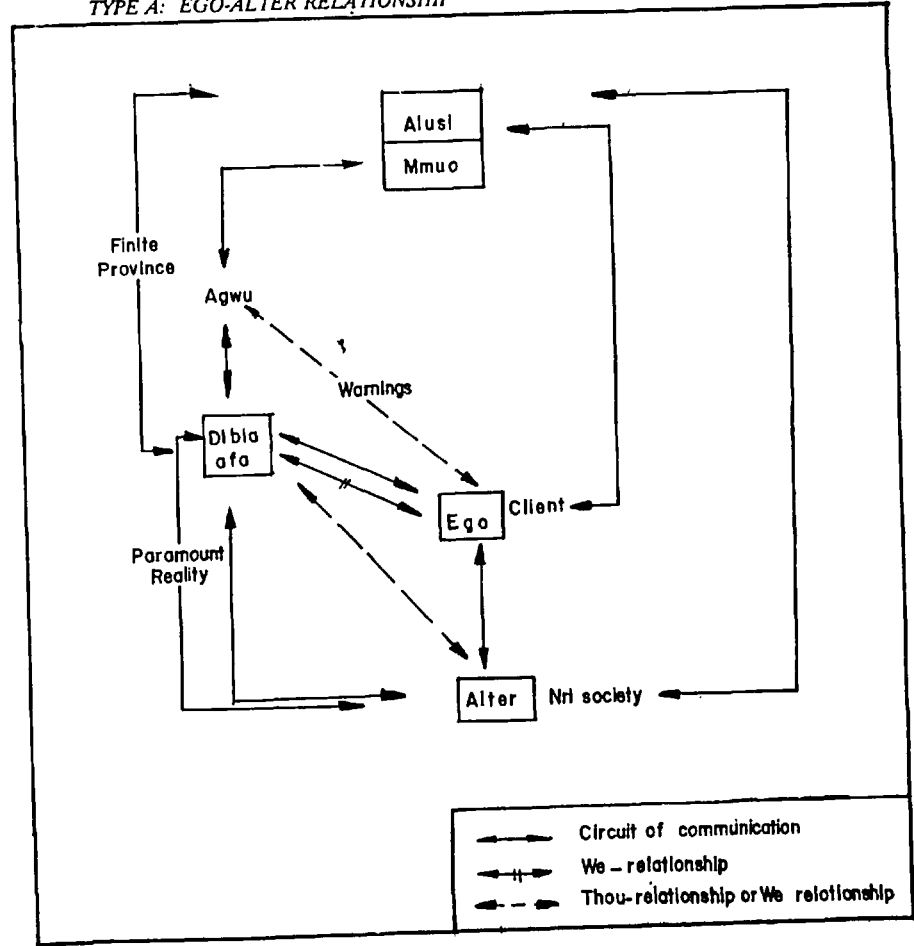
mass media to effect a minor social change: the *nzemabua* went to *afa* and it confirmed that some citizens of Nri were undermining the traditional system. The *nzemabua* advised all Nri citizens to be moderate in matters connected with the town. "Moderation" became the main ideology of the time.

There is historical evidence that supports the view that *afa* was a communication system generating or impeding social change for example, in 1906 when the message of the coming of missionary to Nri was announced, the *afa* was consulted by Eze Nri Obalike's *nzemabua* and *afa* said: "Receive them with kindness and tact." Nri

Fig 13: TYPE-B: EGO-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP

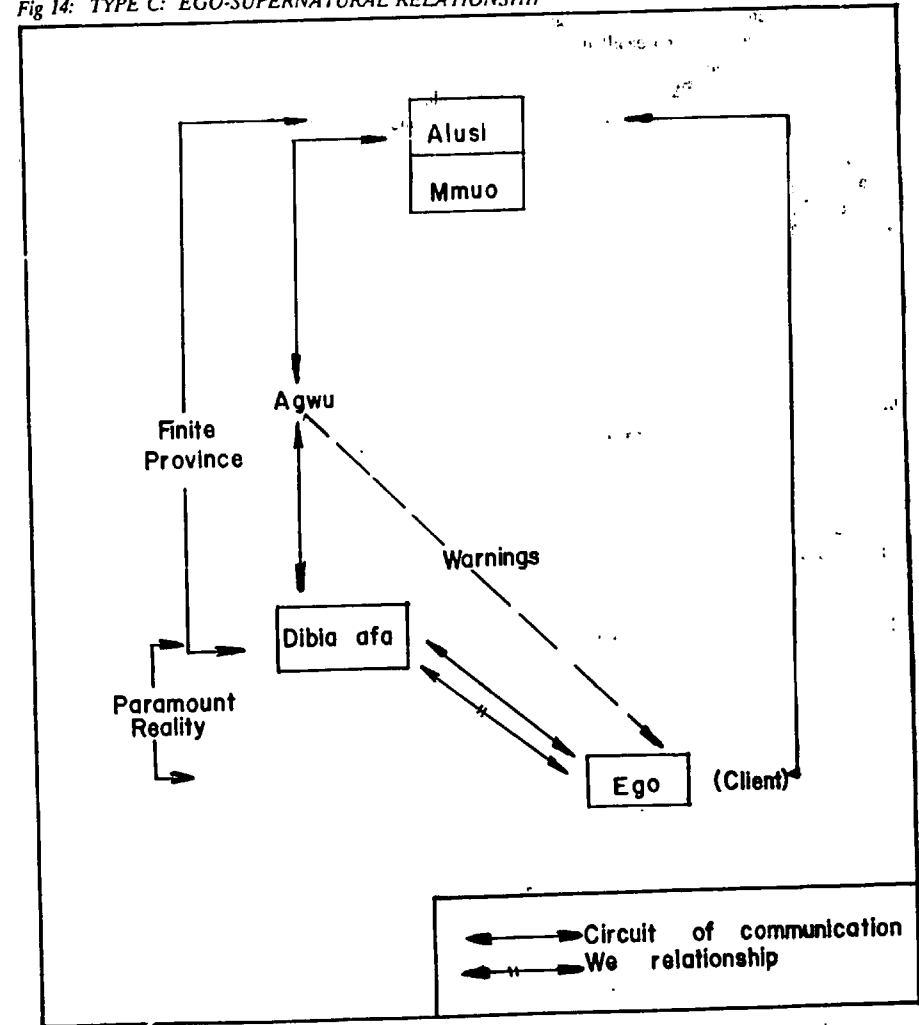**Fig 14: TYPE C: EGO-SUPERNATURAL RELATIONSHIP**
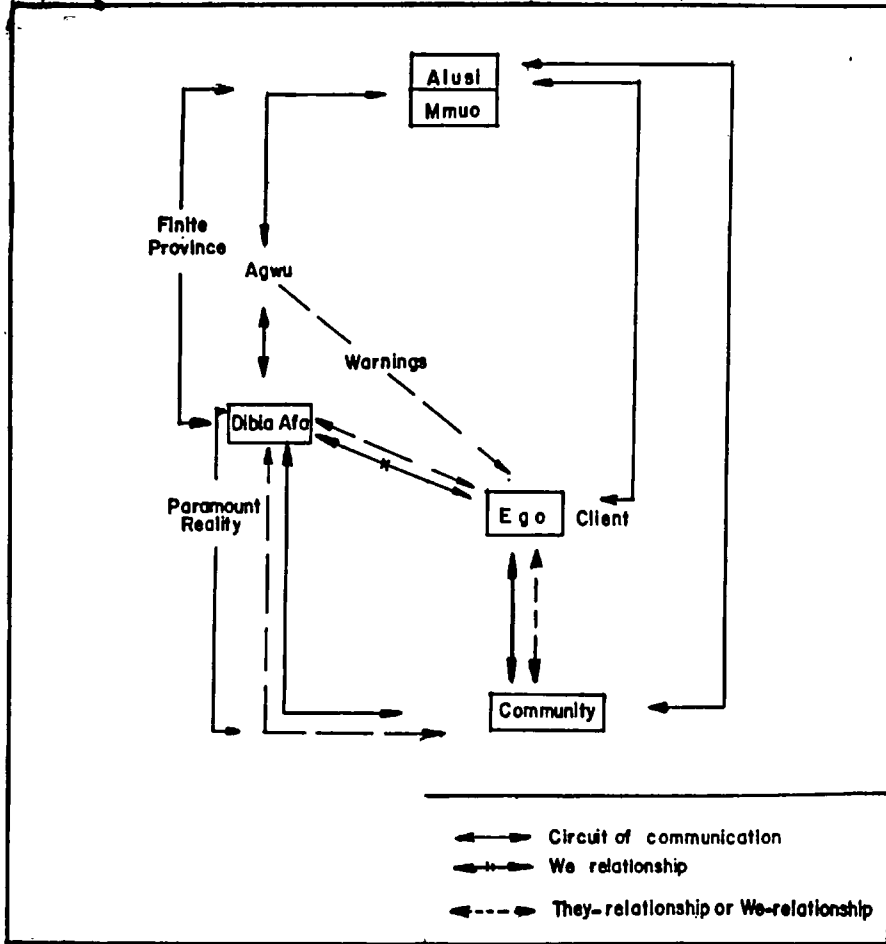
Obalike received the missionaries and they later established a school in Nri though the school did not flourish because the missionaries had their own ideas about what Nri stood for in Igboland. (Onwuejeogwu, 1974). Furthermore, about 1914, when the British offered the Warrant Chief title to Obalike, the then Eze Nri; the *nzemabua* consulted *afa* and it said: "To accept it is like eating on the ground after one has been eating from a wooden plate." Eze Nri Obalike rejected the British offer and refused to co-operate. In the end, the Warrant Chief system collapsed. (Onwuejeogwu, 1974).

I have demonstrated that *afa* is a system of communication. It controls by determining the future actions of individuals and groups that accept the system. It also operates at both individual and group levels. It integrates two realities; 'paramount' and 'finite province' by using both verbal and non-verbal signs to reconstruct 'new' social reality from the biographies of individuals, history, and the social structure. The 'new' reality becomes the basis of new social action and thus social life takes a 'new' form. The new social action generated through *afa* may be minor or major, whichever be the case, it may be

Fig 15: TYPE D: COMMUNITY-SUPERNATURAL RELATIONSHIP

Fig. 16: TYPE E: DIBIA-SUPERNATURAL COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP
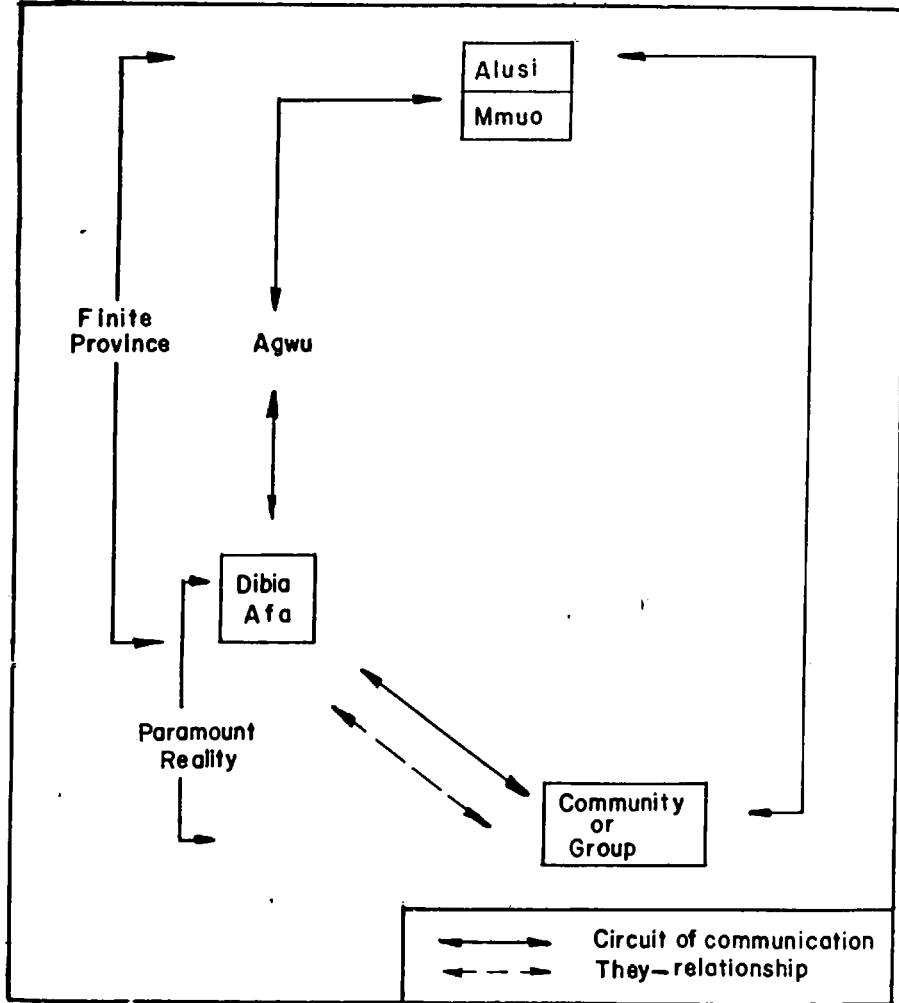
considered as a positive factor of social change. Even when *afa* seems to encourage the continuation of the *status quo*, it does not in fact negate change, rather it checks and controls the rate of change by exposing all factors of change to public discussion. Through this delay process, new attitudes are built, new ideas emerge, and changes occur at various rates and at various levels of the society.

Table 10: Type of Afa According to Client-Subject Relationship and Clients Religion:

TYPE	Client-Subject Relationship	R C M Direct	R C M Indirect	C M S Direct	C M S Indirect	Syncretic Direct	Syncretic Indirect	Traditional Direct	Traditional Indirect	Total	%
A	Ego-Alter	8	11	9	13	15	12	30	12	110	35.48
B	Ego-Community	3	8	5	8	12	16	22	5	79	25.48
C	Ego-Supernatural	3	13	3	14	14	6	23	8	83	26.77
D	Community Super-natural		2		3		3	18		26	8.38
E	Dibia-Supernatural							12		12	3.87
	TOTAL	13	34	17	38	41	37	105	25	310	99.98
		47		55		78		130		310	
	%	15.16		17.74		25.16		41.94			100%

1. Direct = Clients who visited Dibia afa themseles and were physically present during a session.

2. Indirect = Clients who visited Dibia afa through relations and were not physically present.

3. R C M = Roman Catholics   C M S = Anglicans.   Syncretic = No. 3 - 7 in table 17 of Appendix 5.

4. See Appendix 5: Table 15, 16 and 17, for further information on total population of Nri, Non-traditional religions of Nri, and Religious Conversion respectively.

Table 11: Direct and Indirect Visits to Afa According to Religion:

	R C M Direct	R C M Indirect	C M S Direct	C M S Indirect	Syncretic Direct	Syncretic Indirect	Traditional Direct	Traditional Indirect	TOTAL
Raw Scores	13	34	17	38	41	37	105	25	310
TOTAL	47		55		78		130		310
%	27.66	72.34	30.91	69.09	52.56	47.44	80.77	19.23	

Indirect = Clients who visited Dibia afa through relations and were not physically present during a session.

Direct = Clients who visited Dibia afa themselves and were physically present during a session.

R C M = Roman Catholics

C M S = Anglicans (Church Missionary Society)

Syncretic = No. 3 - 7 in Table 17 of Appendix 5.

Table 12: % of *Afa* Clients According to Religion

	Raw Score	%
Total R C M (Adults)	1,639	
Total R C M Visiting *Afa* (Adults)	47	2.87% %
Total C M S (Adults)	700	
Total C M S Visiting *Afa* (Adults)	55	7.86% %
Total Syncretic (Adults)*	390	
Total Syncretic Visiting *Afa* (Adults)	78	20.00% %
Total Traditional (Adults)	1,031	
Total Traditional Visiting *Afa* (Adults)	130	12.61% %

* Does not include Jehovah Witness
1. All figures based on 1971-72 Survey (see Table 17 Appendix 5).
2. Children not included
3. R C M = Roman Catholic Mission
4. C M S = Church Missionary Society (Anglican)

CHAPTER 7

AFA AS A SYSTEM OF SOCIAL ACTION

1. Social Action and Meaning - A Theoretical Critique:

Six writers, in my opinion, have raised most of the fundamental questions about social action, meaning and rationality. They are: Marx, Weber, Pareto, Schutz Parsons and Mead.

Marx's conception of social action was based on the end - means scheme derived from the classical economists. He assumes that men have certain basic goals which compel them to interact with the material worlds. This process creates the need for social relationships determined by the role of production. The logic of economic situations compels a certain logic of political, judicial and other types of institutions. Marx sees one social system being nurtured in the womb of the other; thus capitalism was nurtured in the womb of feudalism; similarly socialism will be born out of capitalism. (Marx, 1904 pp. 265, 292). His application of what may be called instrumental rationality has great merits since it demonstrates the structure of situations and relationship between forms of conduct and nature of situation. Its major weakness lies in its limited application in non-materialistic sociological inquiry.

Weber formulated a clearer theory of social action. He says: "Action is social in so far as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals), it takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course ...." (Weber: 1947).He distinguishes four types of social action according to the range of their rationality as follows:

Zwekrational translated as "instrumental rationality." In this type, the actor assesses the cost of pursuing a certain goal itself. Wertrational translated as "value-oriented rationality." The actor believes in the "absolute value" of the action. The goal is an end and valued in itself, such as performing a ritual to achieve social harmony. The major problem in using means-end scheme is that

of distinguishing the means from the end and in many cases there are several alternatives in the choice of means to attain the goal.

The other two types are: traditional action and effectual action. The former consists of doing what has been done in the past without considering alternatives; the actor accepts both means and ends without question. Weber does not regard this type as rational though it is an everyday action to which people are accustomed and which may be said to be traditionally conditioned.

The "purely effective" action is governed mainly by a need to express some emotion. This type, he argues, approximates to the two types of rational action discussed above. Weber insists that sociology should be concerned with the subjective meaning of social conduct. To Weber, subjective meaning has two connotations: it signifies the meaning which the actor himself ascribes to his conduct and also the meaning the observer (a sociologist) imputes to the conduct of an actor. There are two ways a Sociologist can do this: either he attempts to delimit what would be a typical average meaning different persons give to the same type of action, or he constructs an ideal type showing its characteristics under ideal conditions. An ideal type is based on the assumption that the ideal actor acts rationally. In short, Weber's interest in 'rational action' was not because he believed it was the most ideal type of human conduct but because it was the type that could be analyzed. Weber was also concerned with rational understanding which may arise either from direct observation of an actor giving rise to 'actual understanding', or based on the motive for the observed action, giving rise to 'explanatory understanding.' To Weber, motive is 'context of meaning' which appears as reason for action by the actor and to the observer. Hence in analyzing motives, the sociologist is involved in motivational interpretation of action.

Weber did not see religion as "false conscious-

ness," he sees the ends of the religious and magical actions as predominantly economic. (Weber 1966, 1922). Ideas are generated by 'telelogical' meanings of man's conceptions of himself and his place in the universe. These conceptions not only legitimize man's attitude to the world but also give meaning to his goals.

Weber's concept of rationalization becomes the tool by which cultures define their religious situation, normative control and motivational commitment to the cognitive validity of ideas and objective transformation of ideas. Weber's concept of rationalization in the field of meaning, deals with empirical ideals difficult to invalidate radically but too narrow for explaining the wide range of rationality and irrationality, that manifest itself in human society. For example it is expected that in a rationally organized society, one would expect that the productive capacity of the economy would be used to contribute to human well-being and to the growth of human potentialities. The works of Galbraith and several others, demonstrate that in America (as in South Africa) one can observe numerous examples of productive capacity and individual effort devoted to activities that add nothing to human welfare and often impede the growth of human potentialities. This condition is reached when actions supposed to be rational in terms of means-end give rise to subsequent irrational actions still considered rational. Many so-called rational actions run their full course before their irrationalities are exposed. Thus what is rational now may be irrational in the immediate and near future. A case for rational relativism may be made and defined in terms of the state of human knowledge and understanding which are socially and culturally conditioned.

Pareto had different ideas. His conception is that society exist in a state of equilibrium; a whole made up of interdependent parts in which a change in one affects the others and the whole. The state of the social system is determined by presence of conditions called interests, knowledge, 'residues' and derivations. Of these, residues and interests play a major role in determining the particular features of social life. Residues are defined as modifications of instinct which are formed by experience; they are also sentiments. Interests are types of residue that are motives for the attainment of wealth, prestige and power. They however do not reveal themselves in pure form rather, they manifest as derivations which are intellectual systems of rationalization which individuals employ to justify their actions. Pareto sees man as behaving mainly in non-logical ways but always tries to convince others that they behave logically. He argues that the social forces at work fall between logical and non-logical actions. Logical action is defined as one whereby the means to attain it are based on the most scientific knowledge. Thus an action is logical when the means-end relation in objective reality corresponds to the means-end relation in the mind of the actor. Other actions that do not fall into this pattern are regarded as non-logical (which should not be interpreted as illogical). (Pareto: 1916 and 1966). Non-logical actions predominate social life and are related to residues and derivations. In his view, men do not first formulate theories and then act; they generally act first and then rationalize. Hence in analyzing behaviour, he suggests that one should look at the basic sentiments revealed by it and not at the theoretical justification which marks the action. The residues are therefore the underlying forces in social life and the derivations are merely surface manifestations or explanations or justifications. Two important sets of residues used by Pareto in explaining social change and the circulation of the elite are the 'instincts of combinations' and the 'instincts of aggregate persistence.' The former results in the combination of things in different ways and leads to innovation; and the latter produces the tendency to maintain things in the same relations in which they have existed leading to opposition of innovations. He distinguishes two types of elite: the governing ones that manipulate political power and the non-governing ones consisting of able men not holding power. Change in society is determined by the mode and velocity of exchange of power between the two groups.

Pareto's scheme raises several problems. His insistence that sociology must be based on the logico-experimental method raises false hopes. The dichotomy between logical action and non-logical actions cannot be sustained on the bases of assumptions made by the actors, for such assumptions are common to both types of actions. The supremacy accorded logical action cannot stand for a macro-theory of knowledge for several reasons: many scientific theories have been assumed to be true for centuries and have turned out to be false; many religious assumptions are empirically irrefutable and cannot be tested. However, Pareto stresses the awareness that sentiments determine the course of action and inhibit empirical testability and verification which is the hallmark of science.

Alfred Schutz adopts the phenomenological approach in the study of social action and meaning. Phenomenology is concerned with that cognitive reality which is embodied in the processes of subjective human experiences. Schutz adapts Husserl's concept of meaning to action and Bergson's analysis of the way in which the stream-of-consciousness is modified by the phenomenon of attention and tackles two main problems: the nature of human action and the role of objectivity and subjectivity in the social sciences.

Schutz, modifying Weber, defines social action as one oriented towards the past, present or future behaviour of another person or persons. He defines action as "execution of a projected act" and the meaning of any action as its "corresponding projected act." He says that rational action is an action with known intermediate goals and argues that "meaning is the way in which the Ego regards its experience. The meaning lies in the attitude of the Ego towards that part of its stream of consciousness which has already flowed by, towards its "elapsed duration" (Schutz, 1967 p. 69). "The meaning of my action consists not only in the experiences of consciousness I have while the action is in progress but also in those future experiences which are my intended action and in those past experiences which are my completed action" (Schutz, 1967 p. 39). Thus the goal of action must possess elements of both futurity and pastness. Actions are motivated behaviours and 'motive' means the end which the action is directed to achieve. From the point of view of the actor, two types of motive are possible: 'in-order-to motive' and the "because-motive." The former refers to the actor's 'future' i.e. that which is to be achieved by his present action. The latter refers to the actor's past experiences which have influenced him to act the way he did. Motive may have a subjective and an objective meaning. The subjective aspect of motive refers to what an actor has actually in view as giving meaning upon his on going action and this is the "in-order-to motive". It is revealed to the observer only if he asks the actor what meaning he gives to his action. The objective aspect of motive is the "because-motive" accessible to the observer who has to reconstruct the completed act of the actor to determine the attitude of the actor to his action. The actor may determine his because-motive by turning to his past thus becoming an observer of his own acts. Schutz agrees with Weber that the essential function of social science is to understand the subjective meaning of social action but contends that Weber has failed to state clearly the essential characteristics which make for an understanding of subjective meaning. The problem is, how can social science which aims at objectivity pursue subjective meaning by being objective about that which is by its very nature subjective? Weber's solution is that subjectivity in the social sciences is achieved by using ideal types. Can the ideal type unfold the subjective meaning of individuals? Schutz's answer to this question is that, every action has both a subjective and an objective meaning. The subjective meaning is always the meaning which the acting person ascribes to his own conduct while objective meaning is the meaning imputed to the conduct of another person by an observer. Schutz also argues that the external world has meaning not only for "you and me" but for "everyone living in it." It therefore follows that meaning is an intersubjective phenomenon.

Parsons' General Theory of action contains ingredients from Weber, Schutz, Freud, Durkheim and Tonnies. Here I shall spell out the essential elements. According to Parsons, essential feature

of social action is the response of the actor to the meaning of the people and things around him. Social action must be interpreted from the actor's subjective point of view. Since the most important objects in the actor's enviroment are clearly other actors, social action becomes interaction. Since interaction involves ego and alter; to the subjectivity of ego there is a corresponding subjectivity of alter. Interaction is thus a complex process and the subjectivity involved in it is still more complex.

Parsons also argues that social action involves symbolism because it is through symbols that the actor experiences and manipulates his environment and social reality. Symbolism is important in social interaction, because action and interaction occur within a universe of symbols. He sees rules, norms and values as guiding the orientation of action thus giving meaning to the action of the actor. Parsons argues that four elements constitute social action: a subject, a situation, symbol and rules, norms and values. (Parsons 1937 p. 14-15). Parsons and Schutz agree that social action is oriented towards physical and social objects but Schutz stresses that such orientation is also directed towards the past, present or future actions of person or persons.

The durational aspect of Schutz's definition makes it superior to that of Parsons and Weber in understanding the phenomenon of *afa* among the Nri. The meaning of action, understood in terms of the past, present and future, as formulated by Schutz, seems to me a major and well-defined phenomenon in Nri philosophy of action which pervades other aspects of their social action and are interpreted and reconstructed symbolically in *afa*.

Symbolic interactionism is strongly associated with the name of George Herbet Mead. Symbolic interaction involves finding out the meaning of the actions or remarks of the other person thus indicating how those involved will react to one another. Mead attempts to demonstrate that the human group is the essential condition for the emergence of consciousness, the mind, the world of objects, self, human action and social interaction (Mead, 1934).

In arguing that the human-being has a self, Mead meant that the human-being is an object to himself interacting with himself and making indications to himself. The having of a self equips the human-being with a system of self-interaction which enables him to form and guide his conduct. Mead sees the self as a process and not as a structure as was held by traditional philosophers and sociologists who regard the possession of minds and consciousness as "givens." Similarly, Mead sees action as conduct which is constructed by the actor coping with the outside world instead of being released from an existing psychological structure by factors external to it. He isolates two levels of social interaction: non-symbolic in which human-beings respond directly to one another's actions; and symbolic in which they interpret and define the actions of one another. Mead is concerned with the latter form and argues that human association consists of a process of interpretation and definition through which the actors put their own acts to the acts of one another, build their respective lines of conduct, take account of each other's acts, and adjust their wishes, feelings and attitudes. Another important aspect of Mead's work is the concept of object which is anything that can be referred to. An object has several characteristics: it is constituted by the meaning it has for the person or persons for whom it is an object. This meaning arises from how the person or persons are prepared to act towards it. Thus, objects are social products formed and transformed during the process of social interaction. Human-beings act on the basis of the meaning associated with the objects. They also organize their actions towards it instead of responding immediately to it. Mead's analysis portrays human-beings as living in a world of meaningful objects, not in an environment of stimuli. To him, human world is socially produced in that the meanings are created through the process of social interaction. Different groups develop different worlds because they create different meanings from similar and dissimilar objects and since meaning is constantly transformed in the process of interpretation, group world is also constantly changing.

The next aspect Mead considered was what he called "social act" which means collective form of action. Mead sees collective action or "social act" as the distinguishing characteristic of society. He sees 'social act' as the fitting together of individual acts, not their communality. Individuals, participating in a social act, fit their acts together by identifying the social act, interpreting and defining each other's acts in forming the social act. Thus an individual is able to orient and guide himself.

Mead argues that without action, any structure of relations between people is meaningless. A society must be seen in terms of the action that comprises it , and the actions must be treated in terms of the joint action into which the separate lines of action fit, converge or diverge In introducing the self, Mead demonstrates how human-beings handle and fashion their world, not on the bases of responses to imputed factors. He sees human society as a diversified social process in which people are engaged in forming 'social act' to deal with situations confronting them. It is a broad definition of human action.

Some aspects of Mead's work are relevant to an understanding of *afa* phenomenon. For example, action as conduct constructed by the actor coping with the outside world, seems central in *afa* whereby each actor's action represents his own construction of reality aimed at coping with the outside world. In this regard, the actor gives meaning to objects around him. This interpretation and definition of meanings of action in social interaction which involves him and others, especially the *dibia afa*, enables the actor to define and live in a world of meaningful objects. This leads to the hypothesis that *afa* is the interplay of various elements in constructing social reality Mead however fails to demonstrate the dynamism of action: how past actions influence present action and how present actions determine future ones. It is in this regard that Schutz's formulation of social action looks more attractive in explaining the phenomenon of *afa* as a system of social action.

2.   **Time, Biography, History and Social Structure in Nri**

In previous Chapters, and especially in Chapter 3, I have constantly maintained that the *dibia afa* attempts to interpret social reality in terms of relationship between past, present and future. This assertion will be elaborated in greater detail in this section. To do this, I will draw heavily from the work of Schutz and Mills, because I hold that the *dibia afa* are men endowed with the sociological imagination as defined by Mills. Hence they are still able to perform their role of constructing and interpreting social reality in the face of modernization with all its trappings of technology, scientific explanations and christianity.

Mills criticizes several current schools of American sociology, such as those of the grand theory typified by Parsons and abstracted empiricism examplified by Stuoffer and Dodd. He argues that they have abandoned the classic tradition of Comte, Marx, Spencer and Weber who in their works demonstrate concern for the whole of man's social life and the development towards a theory of history. He holds that "social science deals with problems of biography, of history, and of their intersections within social structures. That these three - biography, history, society - are the co-ordinate points of the proper study of man" (Mills, 1959 p. 159). Mill's main argument is as follows:

> The sociological imagination enables its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals. It enables him to take into account how individuals, in the welter of their daily experience, often become falsely conscious of their social positions. Within that welter the frame work of modern society is sought, and within that frame work the psychologies of a variety of men and women are formulated. By such means the personal uneasiness of individuals is focused upon explicit troubles and the indifference of the public is transformed into involvement with public issues .... We have come to know that every individual lives, from one generation to the next, in some society; that he lives out a biography, and that he lives it out within some historical sequence. By the fact of his living he contributes, however minutely, to the shaping of this society and to the course of its history, even as he is

made by society and by its historical push and shove (Mills, 1959 pp. 11-12).

I will argue that a *dibia afa* possesses the type of the sociological imagination defined by Mills. Hence the *dibia afa* is able to bring his clients closer to social reality. His interpretation is framed in terms of the structure of Nri society, its essential components, the relationships between the components, the biography of the individual and the history of the social structure. As long as his interpretations and explanations are within this scope their validity and rationality are assured and taken for granted. This point was demonstrated in Chapter 3. The social structure, history and biography of individuals in Nri are reducible to genealogical structures and age-grade systems intricately bound up with the concept of time, cosmos and religion. The last two have been dealt with in Chapter 1. Here I will examine structure and time, how they articulate with religious concepts, how they are all manipulated in constructing social reality and mobilizing social action.

Nri people have a precise word for TIME. A short list of how TIME is expressed verbally is as follows:

Oge	- Time
Oge mbu	- First time
Oge Ikpeazu	- The last time
Oge na Oge	- From time to time
Oge a	- This time
Ofu oge	- Once upon a time
Oge nine	- At all time
Oge Obuna	- Every time

These are all indefinite time. Another aspect of indefinite time is the period outside human memories. To the Nri, this period now exist only in human fantasy and imagination. It was time when the world of man and that of other animals were one. When the "tortoise" symbolized animal intelligence *par excellence* and when the world was very young. Another aspect of this period was that the world of humans and that of other animals were separated from that of the spirit world, which was the world of the dead, by rivers, forests and hills. Visits between the "two worlds" were possible and frequent until after a crisis which

ended in the separation of the world of animals from that of spirits. At this point, fantasy gave way to reality. The history of man emerged! (see Chap. 3b).

The Nri have another concept of time. Time within human memories. This is the time which interests historians and it is divided into two: the short periods and the long periods. The short periods are *Ubosi* (a day) and *Aro* (a year). Each is regarded as a short period and both are measured by using natural periodic processes.

Short Periods:

(a)   A day is called *Ubosi*. This refers to a period of time between the morning twilight, generally announced by the first cock crow in the morning and the next morning twilight. A day is divided into two periods which reflect the absence and presence of the sun and the degree of its intensity. Nri day is divided into four major periods:

Ututu	-	The period of rising sun
Efife	-	The period of high sun
Mgbede	-	The period of falling sun
Uchichi	-	The period of darkness

These periods are further subdivided into smaller periods so that on the whole, a day is divided into twelve periods. The four-day week is called *izu*. Each day has a name: *Eke, Oye, Afo, Nkwo*. According to Nri myth:

"Great Creator *Chukwu Okike*, sent four supernatural beings in the form of fish-sellers to the first Eze Nri. These strangers refused to disclose their names. Eze Nri discovered their names by sending a rat into the basket of *Eke*, in the night. *Oye* woke up calling 'Eke! Eke! a rat is in your basket! 'Eke woke up and drove the rat out of his basket. They slept and Eze sent a rat into the basket of *Oye*, and *Afo* woke up calling 'Oye! Oye! a rat is in your basket!' *Oye* woke up and drove out the rat. They slept again and Eze sent a rat into *Afo's* basket and *Nkwo* woke up and called 'Afo! Afo! a rat is in your basket!' *Afo* woke up and drove the rat out of his basket and they slept again. Eze sent a rat into *Nkwo's* basket and *Eke* woke up and cried out! Nkwo! Nkwo! a rat is in your basket! *Nkwo* woke up and drove the rat out of his

basket. In the morning the strangers woke up and Eze Nri called them by their names, one after the other: *Eke! Oye! Afo! Nkwo!* They expressed surprise, praised the wisdom of the Eze and disclosed to him that they were supernatural beings from *Chukwu*. They ordered him to name the four days *Eke, Oye, Afo, Nkwo* and establish a market for each. They disappeared and Eze Nri established the four market days and the *alusi* associated with the days. Each of the supernatural beings controls the daily activities of individuals. (Nri Religious Myth: Nri Oral Tradition: Collected from Akunne, Anidumaka and Nwaokoye).

The social, economic and religious activities of the state or lineages or individuals are performed on either of the four days as shown on Table 13.

Table 13: Activities associated with the Four-day:

No	FOUR-DAY WEEK	ECONOMIC ACTIVITY	SOCIAL	RELIGIOUS
1	Eke	Resting	Dancing Meeting	Ime Ani (Earth cult). *Ilo Umuada* (Sacrifice to dead daughters). *Ikenga* (Right hand cult). *Ndiichie* (Ancestor cult). *Uzo alusi* (Alusi cult). *Igba Agu nwaoke* i.e. *afa* for indicating the ancestor that re-incarnates in a male child. *Ifie Egbo* (tying egbo). *Ilo Agwu* (Sacrifice to Agwu).
2	Oye	Farming	Dancing if associated with a festival or a ritual	*Igba Agu nwa nwanyi* i.e. *Afa* for indicating the ancestor that re-incar- nates in a female child. *Ifejioku* (Yam cult). *Ikwa ozu* (Mortuary rites).
3	Afo	Farming	Dancing if asso- ciated with a festival or ritual	*Igba Agu nwaoke*. (see 1 above). *Ifie Egbo* (Ritual of Egbo). *Onwa Asator* (Ritual of eight month) *Ima chi* (Chi ritual). *Ndiichie* (Ancestor cult). *Ime ani* (Earth cult). *Okike* (Okike cult). *Aro* (Year ritual). *Ikenga* (Ikenga cult).
4	Nkwo	Farming	Dancing if asso- ciated with a fes- tival or ritual	*Igba Agu nwa nwanyi* (see 2 above). *Ndiichie* (Ancestor cult). *Ikwa Ozu* (Mortuary rites).

The reckoning method of the four-day week is as follows:

Ofu izu	- 1st four-day =	4 days
Izu nabo	- 2nd four-day =	8 days
Izu ato	- 3rd four-day =	12 days
Izu ano	- 4th four-day =	16 days
Izu ise	- 5th four-day =	20 days
Izu isi	- 6th four-day =	24 days
Izu asa	- 7th four-day =	28 days

One stops counting at the 7th four-day and begins again from the 1st four-day. The priests hold that seven four-days make one moon (month) and twelve or thirteen (moon) months make one year *(aro)*.

(b) A year is called *aro*. It is also the name of the supernatural being that controls all the activities of the year and all epidemic diseases that occur. In Nri, a fairly precise way of dividing the year is adopted. In the past, the Eze Nri had the sole prerogative of declaring the close of the old year and announcing the opening of the new year in the ceremony called *Igu aro*. During this period, all settlements under Nri hegemony sent their representatives to Nri to pay homage and give their tributes to Eze Nri. The Eze Nri performs the ceremony beginning a new year within the first four-day after the first new moon of *Uzo Alusi*. (see Table 14).

Nri year is divided according to the phase of the new moon. The period between one new moon and the other is regarded as one lunar month. Each lunar month has a name, a ritual associated with it and at least one economic activity. Table 14 clarifies how a year is divided. The Eze Nri controlled the ceremony of "announcing the new year" called *Igu aro*. Nri calendar recorders have a way of adjusting the length of days of the past rainy season to fit into the coming farming seasons. This is done on the day of *Igu aro* as part of the ceremony. The reigns of the Eze Nri are recorded in the number of new years they announced, for example,

Nri Enweleana announced about 60 new years, his successor Obalike who died in 1927 announced 48 new years and Eze Nri Tabansi had announced about 40 new years, by February, 1977.

Long Periods:

Nri people have three important ways of referring to and recording long periods of time. The first is called *ima atu* by which important events are remembered in a relative order of occurrence e.g., the period of cowry currency, the period when cassava was introduced to Nri.

The second method is the 'age-grade time'. This is used when referring to events which are associated with the lives of people in terms of their non-kinship groups. Age-grade time refers to the approximate time within a three-year period when members of the group were born. Age-grades are first formed within the minimal patrilineages. All male children of a minimal lineage perform the ritual of *ekwensu* together in the fifth and sixth months of the Nri traditional calendar. Children of the same minimal lineage, who perform their *ekwensu* ritual within a given three years, belong to one age-grade. They grow up together and do things together. Children of the same age-grade of different minimal lineages know themselves. At about the age of seventeen to twenty, children of the different minimal lineages of a village come together to form the village age-grade.

They perform a communal task and are officially recognized as an age-grade that can participate in the activities of the town. Table 15 lists the extant and extinct age-grades in Nri (remembered in their strict order of formation). Nri age-grade is lineal in structure but conceived as a cyclic movement. As the oldest age-grade dies away and disappears, the youngest one appears and grows. The unborn and uninitiated are called "those that are coming", that is, the future generation; the existing younger age-grades are called "those that are", that is, the present generation and the oldest age-grades and the extinct ones are called "those

Table 14: NRI (IGBO) TRADITIONAL LUNAR CALENDAR

MOON MONTH (O NWA)	RITUAL CEREMONY (E MIME)	ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES	EQUIVALENT IN ROMAN CALENDAR IN 1967
ONWA AGUMAARD THE MOON FOR COUNTING THE YEAR	EZENRI AGU ARO EZE NRI ANNOUCES THE YEAR	TRADING	IGUARO IS FIXED ANY DAY AFTER NEW MOON IN FEBRUARY Eg 1966 13 FEB 1967 11th FEB
ONWA MBU 1st MOON		FARM CLEARING	LATE FEB—MARCH
ONWA ABUO 2nd MOON		CLEARING, RIDGING AND PLANTING OF YAM, MAIZE AND CASSAVA	MARCH — APRIL
ONWA IFE EKE 3rd MOON	EKE RITUAL AND FESTIVAL (Done in Eke Market)	PLANTING CONTINUES (Ogani Abia) HUNGER PERIOD COMES	APRIL — MAY
ONWA ANO 4th MOON		PLANTING SEED YAMS (AWAJI)	MAY — JUNE
ONWA AGWU 5th MOON FOR AGWU	MMANWU APUA ADULT MASQERADERS APPEAR (GOCHI UMUNWOME) OFFERING TO MENS' CHI	WEEDING HARVESTING EARLY MAIZE	JUNE — JULY 1st MASQUERADES APPEARED 9th JUNE 1967
ONWA IFEJIOKU (6th MOON) MOON FOR IFEJIOKU	1 OFFERING TO WOMENS' CHI 2 YAM RITUAL — IFEJIOKU 3. IRU OTITE — YAM HARVEST	WEEDING AND YAM TENDING FIRST YAM HARVEST FOR NRI ONLY	JULY — AUGUST
ONWA ALIMJI (17th MOON) MOON FOR ALL ALUSI	YAM HARVEST RITUAL FOR ALUSI ONLY	SECOND YAM HARVEST FOR ALUSI ONLY	AUGUST — SEPTEMBER
ONWA ILO MMUO (8th MOON) MOON FOR OFFERING TO MMUO	RITUAL OF YAM HARVEST OFFERING TO ALL SPIRITS MMUO	YAM HARVEST FOR MEN (OGANI AMA): HUNGER PERIOD GOES	EARLY SEB — OCTOBER
ONWA ANA (9th MOON) FOR ANA	ANA (EARTH FORCED) RITUAL (ORIKE SCHEDULED)	ROPE MAKING AND VARIOUS ACTIVITIES	EARLY OCT. — NOVEMBER
ONWA ORIKE (10th MOON) MOON FOR ORIKE	CREATION OF UMUNNAS ORIKE RITUAL	TYING OF YAMS IN BARN	EARLY NOV. — DECEMBER
ONWA AJANA NA EDEAJA (11th MOON) FOR AJANA & EDEAJA	AJANA(SENIOR EARTH FORCE) AND EDEAJA HARVEST	COCOYAM HARVEST	EARLY DEC. — JANUARY
ONWA UZO ALUSI (12th MOON) FOR ALUSI	OFFERING TO ALUSI	TRADING	EARLY JAN. — EARLY FEB.

of the past' amongst whom the 'good' ones are believed to re-incarnate in the uninitiated and thus a mystical life-cycle is completed. Age-grade is thus seen as a movement of the future through the present into the past. The future is transformed into the present by various ritual initiation ceremonies; the present transformed into the past by retirement and mortuary rites, and the past transformed into the future by re-incarnation. Each stage in this type of life-cycle of the individual is regarded as an essential aspect of his biography combining, the physical and metaphysical. The task of the *afa* is to determine how these interact and affect one another on the one hand and how individual biographies fit into the larger genealogical structure called *ndudugandu*, which is another way of reckoning longer period of time, on the other.

Ndudugandu means literally "from one life to another life." It implies a movement from the past to the present and to the future, a reverse of the age-grade time. In Chapter 2, I stated that the basic social structure of Nri is the segmentary patrilineages arranged in hierarchy from the minimal to the maximal in which all members of a patrilineage trace their descent genealogically to a common ancestor. Human life to Nri is a never-ending process which had a beginning with a founding ancestor and is supposed to have no ending in the sense that every man, through his *chi*, must have a son to succeed him in order to continue his lineage. There is therefore an obvious effort to keep the genealogy going from generation to generation. An on-going generation system that depends only on sons to perpetuate it, depends heavily on the uncertainty of many

Table 15: NRI AGE-GRADES AND TIME:

CALCULATED PERIODIC DATES		AGE IN 1967		POPULAR NAME OF OGBO
1846 - 48		121 - 119		Oli Okuku
1849 - 51		118 - 116		
1852 - 54		115 - 113		Irunatu
1855 - 57		112 - 110		
1858 - 60		109 - 107		
1861 - 63		106 - 104		Umezuba
1864 - 66		103 - 101		
1867 - 69		100 - 98		Ijele
1870 - 72		97 - 95		
1873 - 75		94 - 92		Atu
1876 - 78		91 - 89		Ugo
1879 - 81		88 - 86		Ochima or Ochokwu
1882 - 84		85 - 83		Olimgba
1885 - 87		82 - 80		Ekueme
1888 - 90		79 - 77		
1891 - 93		76 - 74		Mmanenyi
1894 - 96		73 - 71		
1897 - 99		70 - 68		Irugo
1900 - 02		67 - 65		Iruagu IRUNABO
1903 - 05		64 - 62		Iruatu
1906 - 08		61 - 59		Nribuenyi
1909 - 11		58 - 56		Iruenyi
1912 - 14		55 - 53		Okpatu
1915 - 17		52 - 50		Ifediora
1918 - 20		49 - 47		Amakekwu
1921 - 23		46 - 44		Abakari
1924 - 26		43 - 41		Atigwe
1927 - 29		40 - 38		Akpali
1930 - 32		37 - 35		Akum
1933 - 35		34 - 32		Amuoku
1936 - 38 (39)		31 - 29		Okuana
1939 - 41				Uninitiated

(Left margin vertical labels: EXTINCT for upper group; EXTANT for lower group)

variables such as birth-rate, death-rate, age, fertility-rate and longevity. To sustain this system, many methods of marriages and adoption of children are practised to increase the probability of having sons to succeed and continue the lineage.

The position of the individual in the genealogical structure is interesting. According to Nri concept of reincarnation, after death, successful fathers reincarnate in their grand-children or in collateral relations (see Fig. 17 Nwaokoye's genealogy). Re-incarnation occurs ideally in alternate generations. Thus *ego* named Nwaokoye is a re-incarnation of his paternal grandfather named Alike Ifem who is a re-incarnation of Nweri Nnama who is a re-incarnation of Alike Nweri who is a re-incarnation of Nri. If ego dies and becomes a good ancestor, he will reincarnate in his grand-children. To be a reincarnation of one's grandfather is to inherit some of his physical features and combine these with many of his good social qualities which made him great when he was alive. In this system, the past is constantly projected into the future through the present, thus, past biographies are projected into future biographies through present biographies. (See Appendix 1; Case-study IV). The *afa* determines and regulates the working of this system by defining the relationship of individuals to one another in the structure, and to supernatural beings. In this way, society, social structure and biography of individuals are harmonized and integrated into the interpretation of social reality and generation of social action. The *dibia afa* is able to do this because he has the sociological imagination relevant to the interpretation of social reality in Nri society.

Alfred Schutz sees the social world in the way Nri people see their own social world. Schutz sees the social world as a continuous realm of predecessors, contemporaries and successors. (Schutz 972, pp. 202-41). He says:

> If the world of predecessors is completely fixed and determined, the world of successors is completely indetermined and indeterminate (Schutz, 1972p. 214).

The genealogy of any individual in Nri is made up of the past of the world of his predecessors that is his ancestors. It is completed, fixed and determined. Ego's world with that of his consociates, that is, members of his extended family with whom he has "we-relationships" interacting with them face-to-face and sharing a common social world, is free. Ego's world with that of his contemporaries is probable in the sense that he is not in direct relationship with them, and Ego's successor, that is, the world of his successors is "indetermined and indeterminable" as it has not been established. The past is therefore known, the present mixed with known and unknown and the future unknown. *Afa* is faced with the problem of reconstructing social reality with both known and unknown elements in society, social structure and biography of individuals. (See Chapter 1). Schutz clearly states the problems of knowing the various categories of the social world thus:

> I can know a predecessor only if some one tells me about him or writes about him ... through records and monuments. These have the status of signs, regardless of whether my predecessors intended them as signs for posterity or merely for their own contemporaries .... The schemes we use to interpret the world of our predecessors are necessarily different from the one used to interpret that world. If I wish to interpret the behaviour of contemporary, I can proceed with confidence on the assumption that his experiences will be pretty much like my own. But when it comes to understanding a predecessor, my chances of falling short of the mark are greatly increased. My interpretations cannot be other than vague and tentative (Schutz, 1972, pp. 208-211; 1974 p. 87-92).

A close examination of one Case-study VI made and recorded in Appendix 1 clearly bears out the point made in this chapter. The *dibia afa* knows about the lineage of B and about B. B's father, was R, an extravagant man who mortgaged all his land as security for debts. The money he raised was never properly invested because he used most of the money in marrying wives and feeding lavishly on meat. He did not even take the *ozo* title though his father did.

R, died without redeeming any of his land, unfortunately R's first son, J., died few days after his father's death. J's death was not announced; his wife, W who had four female children,

Fig. 17

NAME OF MAXIMAL LINEAGE (ỌNỊMẠ)—ỤMỤALKENRI (URUỌJI)
NAME OF MINIMAL LINEAGE (ỤMỤNNA)—ỤMỤALIKE ỌGALANYA (NRIỌMALỌ)
EGỌ:—NWAOKOYE
STATUS:—OZO, ISI NZE URUỌJI
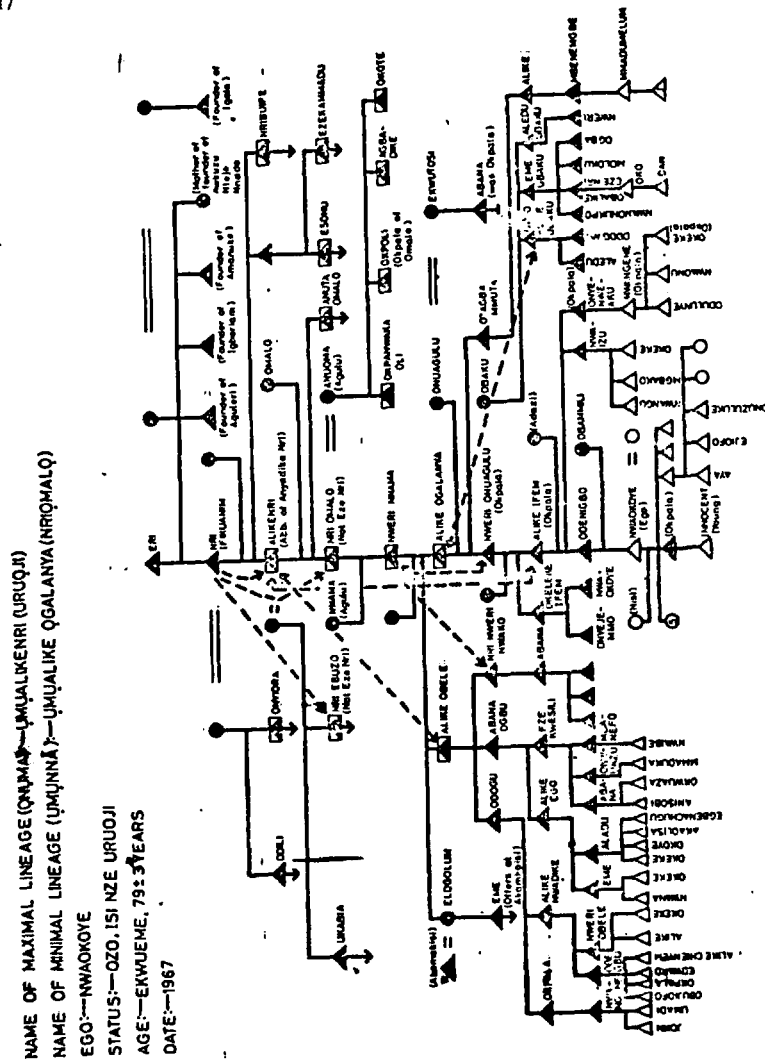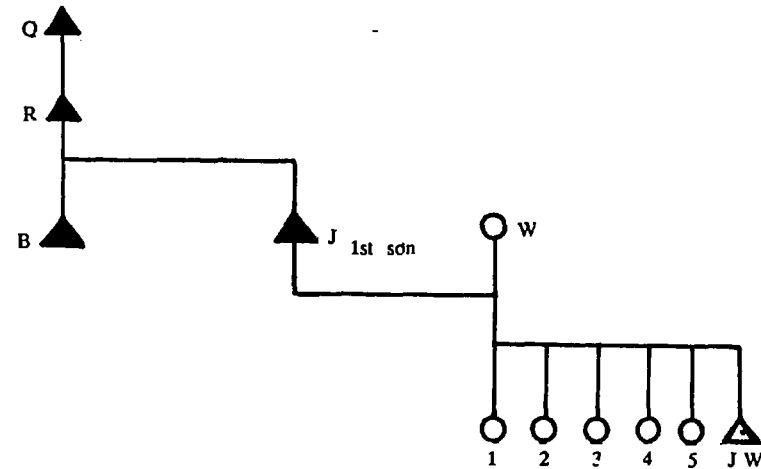AGE:—EKWUEME, 79±3 YEARS
DATE:—1967

Fig. 18: Case-Study VI: Kinship relations (see Appendix 1):

anticipating she would have a male child as she was pregnant when the husband, J died, did the mortuary rite of her husband's father, R. It was believed that J gave her the money to cover the expenses before his death. By this act she was trying to ensure that her unborn child (if he was male) would be the inheritor of her father-in-law's temple, *obu*. She also performed the mortuary rite of her husband. B was very angry with his late brother's wife and refused to contribute a kobo to his father's mortuary rite. Unfortunately for W, she delivered a female child. According to Nri, custom, the temple *(obu)* of Q and R are automatically transferred to B. B refused to inherit W and she decided to stay and bear children for her late husband. After some years she bore a male child JW. She demanded that the temple of Q and R be transferred to her son. B refused and argued that the *obu* had been transferred before the birth of JW, and added that JW was not in the direct line. B was fined for saying that, since a child born in "ghost marriage" was regarded as being in direct line. The verdict of the *Nzemabua*, Ezi Nri's Council, was that B should be the custodian of Q and R temple until JW was old enough. The principle of the

judgement is based on Nri tradition:
(a) J died after his father's death
(b) JW is legitimate by Ghost marriage
(c) If B had inherited W then JW could not claim seniority.
(d) JW is still the senior line.
(e) But B can use the *ofo* of Q in taking the *ozo* title but must return it to JW when the time comes.
(f) B must pay all the debts owed by R and redeem all the land, because he is biologically senior. When JW grows up he will pay B back some of the expenses.

B embarked on series of wicked acts directed against W; and B's relationship with his lineage, degenerated. Then, the time came when B decided to take the *ozo* title. The *ozo* association of his lineage refused to recommend him, he was however able to win over some of the members and as a result the association split into three: those who were against him, those who supported him and those who were neutral or sat on the fence. B decided to consult the *afa*. The *afa* was fully aware of B's biography and the relationship of his lineage, which he told me in confidence.

The *afa* pronouncement reflected the decision

of the *Nzemabua*. When the *afa* was asked why, he said that B must adhere to tradition otherwise the ancestors would stop protecting him. B's action fell short of expectations in terms of Nri social structure. B had no alternative he delayed taking the *ozo* title and during this period he paid his father's debts, redeemed most of his father's land, changed his attitude towards W and JW and finally the *ozo* association was unanimous in recommending him. He had since taken the *ozo* title and was in high spirits when he told me the story, thus confirming the *afa's* story.

Three levels of interpretation are involved: that between person and persons, between person and groups and between group and supernaturals. The first two levels deal with the paramount reality of everyday life which has its foundation in predecessors (past), contemporaries (present), and successors (future) actions. Past actions generate future actions. The third level deals with actions connected with the "finite province", in this case religion. A different type of social action is generated at this level, because the schemes used to interpret the world of predecessors are different from those used to interpret the world of contemporaries and successors.

The *dibia afa* interprets social reality with reference to the past as contained in Nri traditions. He constantly refers to fragments of Nri history, myths, legends, places, and religious beliefs. He relates these to the actions of individuals as determined in their biographies. Because successors are held to inherit the consequences of the actions of predecessors he attempts to interpret future in terms of past and present. Thus, *dibia afa* by combining past and present, moves to the level of determining a future course of action. He does this by interpreting *afa* signs and symbols and constructing the interpretation into social reality. His interpretation and construction which determine future action are based on past and present actions of actors. The expression of Nri religion and philosophy pervades *afa* symbolism, as shown in: (a) the constant evocations of the four market days whose supernatural origin from *Chukwu* provides a mystical canopy of action (b) the division of the

'year into ritual time (c) and the mystification of the genealogies with concept of reincarnation. In this way, time, history, social structure and biography are ritualized and symbolically interpreted as social reality in *afa*.

Schutz argues that the everyday, common-sense world is, the "paramount reality" basic to our understanding. Within it, by means of 'epoche' of the "natural attitude", we suspend doubts that things might be other than they seem, that the outer world and other people exist and that they have a past, present and future. But there also exist 'finite provinces of meaning' within the "paramount reality", in which we may allow ourselves to doubt, in which common sense beliefs about 'real world' may be temporarily suspended. These provinces are those of religion and science which are experienced as 'real' as long as they engage our attention. Schutz holds that one cannot pass from one province of meaning to another because they are discontinuous. Passage can be achieved by a 'leap of consciousness: (Schutz 1974 pp. 22 - 25). A study of *afa* demonstrates that the discontinuity between the 'finite provinces' and 'paramount reality' is bridged by the signs and symbolism of *aja*. *Afa* is knowledge - of the inner and the outer forms, of the "finite provinces" and of the "paramount reality" transformed into social actions which are made up of elements of the past, present and future. As a symbolic system *afa* may be functionally considered using the words of Turner, as "triggers of social action - and of personal action in the public arena". (1975b, p. 155). The social action triggered by *afa* could be understood and analyzed as a systemic process involving the interaction of elements of the past, present and future, that is: what was, what is and what shall be.

CONCLUSIONS

Afa as an Integrated System:

The first part of this book deals mainly with the ethnographic background of the Nri people, specifically describing and analyzing the ecological, religious, economic, political and social context in which *afa* is expressed as institutionalized systems of symbols, social reality, communication and action. *Afa* as a system of symbols is analyzed in the second part and it is argued that *afa* deals with the problem of 'knowing' by a complex method of transformation. 'Old' realities are transformed into *afa* signs, which are transformed into 'new' social realities. Transformation occurs at various levels, mystical, social and linguistic. The rationality at the mystical level is through belief in *Agwu* as one of the supernatural beings forces, that mediate between the actions of the supernaturals, whence good or evil emanates into the world through the dead ancestors *(mmuo)*, and human beings. It is human action in social context, that determines the fortune and misfortune that befall man. Desirable social action generates good fortunes and progress, while undesirable social action generates bad fortune and retrogression. At the social and the linguistic levels, the 16 signs, are combined into 256 pairs of signs. A pair of such signs is coded to refer to an aspect of social action.

It is the ability of the *Dibia afa* to combine these signs which symbolically refer to aspects of knowledge: interpreted in terms of, and reconstructed into social action of his clients, that gives credibility to the *afa* work. The *afa* training equips him not only with the mystical power which the people believe he has, but also with facts to reconstruct social reality. These facts are known to him, because he knows some aspects of the biography of his clients, the history of the society and the social structure. A successful *dibia afa* is one with "the sociological imagination" to reconstruct social reality which determines or generates the social action of his clients or

community.

The *dibia afa's* success depends on complicated pattern of communication links with the 'inner' and social world. As a member of the social world, he is a participant observer of his and others' social world. As a member of the *afa* association it is believed that he communicates with *Agwu*. Indeed, the *dibia afa* tells his clients, what every one in the society would generally accept as social reality. But to convince his clients, reality has to be transformed through a mystical and social process by use of signs and symbols. It is this transformation that gives his construction of reality, credibility. By transforming 'old' social reality into 'new' social reality, he generates a new set of social action. Thus, symbols, social reality, communication and control though analyzed as separate systems belong to one larger integrated system manifested in Social Action.

Social Reality and Action Conceived as: What was, What is and What shall be:

Ideally, Nri traditional philosophy is based on the relationship linking the past, present and future. In other words, it is based on the relationship linking what was, what is and what shall be. This conception is expressed in the genealogical structure that models the collective actions of contemporaries (the living), in terms of predecessors (ancestors), and successors (the unborn). In this system of belief, fathers under certain conditions, are expected to re-incarnate in their grand-children: thus the past is linked with the future through the present.

Nri people do not see past and present, or past and future, or present and future in dialectic relationships. What they perceive is both mystical and mundane social relationships linking them, and are collectively expressed in genealogical and age-grade structures which constitute the field of social action. To them, the ideal, that is, what ought to be, is part of the past. It has been lived

by the ancestor yet it can be achieved to some degree by articulating the actions of the recent past (elders) who are embodiments and inheritors of the remote past (ancestors) with that of the most recent (youths). The future though unpredictable can be reconstructed with materials derived from the 'past' and 'present'. This concept of a link running through "What was", "What is" and "What shall be" is the central theme behind the philosophy of *afa* as a system of social action. Hence *afa* is a philosophical discipline with two main objectives: to articulate the past, present and future symbolically and reduce them into 'practical' social action. Afa belongs to the school of philosophy hereby called Empirico-metaphysical phenomenology.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS AT NRI TOWN: CASE-STUDIES

Here are 8 out of 310 observed cases of clients seeking the help of the four chief *dibia afa* in Nri and some cases of the dibia's findings: the relationship between themselves and the supernaturals (see Table 10). Misfortune as well as good fortune had moved them to consult the *dibia*. The *dibia*, by decoding the messages transmitted through the *afa*, attempts to interpret and generate social action by constructing 'new' reality from 'old' ones, employing a system of symbolism.

Case I:

P's seven year old son died three weeks ago and his retail business at Onitsha had not been doing well for sometime. Last week another series of misfortunes had visited his family; his elder daughter's suitor died in a car crash; his sister's daughter living with him was bitten by a snake and was admitted to the hospital; his shop was involved in a minor fire accident. P could not bear it any longer. As a Christian he had been praying hard since these calamities began. His mother and maternal uncles who were adherents of Nri traditional religion insisted that the matter must be mystically investigated: misfortune cannot be unrelated to certain supernatural forces and some people in the society. What are these supernatural forces? Who are these people and why should they continue to harass Mr. P? What can be done to stop them? These were the questions put before the *dibia afa* whom Mr. P's relations, in a frantic effort to resolve the issue eventually consulted. Mr. P did not go with them. However, he had tacitly supported the move, for afterall, he had given them N10, saying that it was up to them to spend it judiciously. The diviner said: "P had taken an oath and cheated his partner in trade." P confessed: he had really cheated by not telling his partner about a deal he made. He argued that the deal was not related to their partnership, since it

had been made when he travelled to Jos, although the expenses were borne by the partnership. Mr. P refunded the money and the material; his uncle offered the sacrifice to the supernatural being associated with the oath.

Case II:

In another maximal lineage in Nri, a professional driver had accidentally killed a man with his lorry. It was recalled that he was involved in a fatal accident a year ago. His paternal and maternal relations were really concerned. The Christian ones suggested a service to implore divine protection. The traditional ones decided to consult the *dibia afa*. They suspected that it was the work of *agwu*, a supernatural being and force. The *dibia afa* confirmed this, and advised that a sacrifice be made to *agwu* and that *ekwensu*, a spirit with an inveterate inclination to do harm, should be ritually "tied" to stop it causing more bloody havoc. (See chapter 1, for the role of these supernaturals and spirits).

Case III:

B, a man from a nearby village, had been dramatically successful in his business in the past two years. He had made a reasonable fortune and things looked very rosy, and the future promising. Will this good fortune continue? Can it be kept going? Are some people not becoming jealous? Those were some of the questions disturbing the successful man and some of his relations. They went to the *dibia* who assured them that things were and would be fine, but warned that B must always remember that the local supernatural being of the village called *Ogugu* and his ancestors were rewarding him because he had taken good care of the minimal lineage. If he continued such acts of benevolence, his prosperity would increase. B was delighted and felt relaxed to face the future with greater confidence.

Case IV:

D's wife had delivered a male child. The child must be a re-incarnate of one of the successful ancestors whose name the child should bear. The naming ceremony was soon to be performed. The *dibia afa* was consulted to find out which of the ancestors had re-incarnated in the child. The answer was that it was his grand-father's uncle. This man had been wealthy and honest, as well as a man of great personality. The child was expected to have those qualities.

Case V:

Members of the *Nzemabua*, the main councillors of the Eze Nri, decided to invite three *dibia afa* to investigate the condition of the spiritual health of Nri. The *dibia afas'* findings confirmed their fears that some citizens of Nri were undermining the traditional system. Names were mentioned and the *Nzemabua* sent words to them advising them to be moderate in handling matters connected with Nri. This admonition was needed and moderation became the slogan constantly used by members of the *Nzemabua* whenever they had the opportunity to address the Nri Progress Union or similar groups.

Case VI:

B, had accumulated some wealth; his father had died some years ago. His grandfather had attained some status in the social hierarchy, having taken the *ozo* title, though his father could not do this before he died. He decided to take the *ozo* title. There were some problems to be resolved. Should B use the *ofo* which was a political-ritual staff of his grandfather as a titled man since B was not the first son, for he died many years ago? Would it be useful and safe for him to take the *ozo* title? What was the attitude of the spirits of the deceased ancestors? These were some of the questions put before the *dibia afa*.

The answers were as follows: B should only use the *ofo* staff of his grandfather after paying debts owed by his father. The *ozo* title would be useful and safe for him if he kept to the social code of "justice and truth" (B was known to be a social misfit, replete with duplicity and double-dealing). The *dibia afa* declared that the ancestors were not at all pleased with him, and that he should offer various sacrifices and live a decent life.

B delayed the taking of the title until the following year. During this period he paid his father's debts; offered several sacrifices and tried to turn a new leaf.

Case VII:

Z, the Chief Priest of the local supernatural being, *alusi ngene* died suddenly. A few weeks later, members of the minimal lineage that 'own' and 'control' the *alusi* congregated at the temple *(obu)* of the minimal lineage. *(Alusi* are 'owned' by lineages), (see Onwuejeogwu, 1974). Three elders recited the genealogy of the minimal lineage as part of their offerings to the ancestors of the lineages. The principles of succession to the priesthood were discussed and re-affirmed. Two possible incumbents M and N were mentioned and both were enthusiastic to take the office. The usual procedure is that all questions about the *alusi* are determined through *afa*.

Members of the minimal lineage also wanted to know why Z died suddenly so that something could be done to avoid future repercussions. Two questions were to be placed before the *afa*: did Z die a good death? Who was to succeed, M or N? The elders should consult three diviners according to traditional procedure on such issue. The result was as follows:-

	1ST QUESTION	2ND QUESTION	
	ABOUT Z	ABOUT M	ABOUT N
1st Afa	Yes	Yes	No
2nd Afa	Yes	No	Yes
3rd Afa	Yes	Yes	No
Result	Z died well	Positive consensus for M.	Negative consensus for N

The members of the minimal lineage were delighted about the answers to the first question. The *afa* were unanimous. They had demanded, among other things, a sacrifice of thanksgiving and this was offered. The elders appointed M the next priest but N protested; he was cautioned to keep quiet for after all, he was not the right candidate. Indeed everybody had predicted that M would be selected. M was a 'good man'. The findings of the second *afa* with regards to the second question was ignored, having been outweighed by the consensus of the other two and therefore of no consequence.

Case VIII:

Occasionally, at least once a month, the *dibia afa* himself wants to know about his relationship with the supernaturals including *agwu*, that controls *afa*. Dibia *afa* F, consulted his *afa* as usual. *Afa* said: "The supernaturals have turned against you. You are expected to be neutral in all village disputes. Are you not now becoming meddlesome? Your clients are questioning their confidence in you." F, announced to members of his lineage that he had nothing to do with the land dispute between E and K who were once his clients. Some months ago E had mentioned F, as his chief witness in the court of Eze Nri. People frowned at it saying: "A *dibia afa* must not talk openly" Thus F, in trying to find out his relationship with the supernaturals found out more about his relationship with his clients and the public opinion of Nri community.

APPENDIX 2
TABLE OF KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY - NRI (IGBO)
(See Figure 3 for Numbers 1 - 95

1.

EGO'S PATRILINEAGE - 1 to 37:

NO IN CHART	KINSHIP RELATION TO EGO	TERMS OF REFERENCE	TERMS OF ADDRESS	EGO'S ATTITUDE OR BEHAVIOUR
1.	FFF	Nna Nnamu Ochie	Nna Ochie	Respect
2.	FF	Nna Ochie	Nnam Ochie	Respect
3.	FFB	Nna Ochie	Nnam Ochie	Respect
4.	FFZ	Nnem Ochie	Nnem Ochie	Respect
5.	F	Nnaa	Nnam	Respect, instruct
6.	FB	Nna Ochie	Nnam Ochie	Respect
7.	FZ	Ada	Adam Nwanyi	Cordial, instruct
8.	1st B	Diokpala	Nwam, Watam	Instruct
9.	B	Nwannem		If junior care and instruct / If senior -respect
10.	1st Z	Ada	Adam Nwanyi	Affection, instruct
11.	FBS	Nwa Nwanne Nnam or Nwannem	Nwam	Respect
12.	FBD	Ada	Adam	Cordial
13.	S of 63a	Nwa	Nwam	Cordial
14.	D of 63a	Nwam Nwanyi		Affection, instruct, Cordial
15.	1st S	Okpalam	Nwam	Cordial instruct
16.	1st D	Ada	Adam	Cordial, instruct
17.	Last S	Nwa	Nwam, Nwatam	Cordial, instruct
18.	Last D	Ada	Adam	Cordial, instruct
19.	BS	Nwa Nwanem Nwhoke or Nwanem	Nwam	Instruct
20.	BD	Ada Nwanem Nwaoke, or Nwanem Nwanyi	Adam	Cordial, instruct
21.	FBSS	Nwa Nwa Nwanem Nwaoke or Nwannem		Instruct
22.	SS of 63a	Nwa Nwa or Nwanem	Nwam	Instruct, cordial
23.	SD of 63a	Ada Nwam Nwoke or Ada	Adam	Respect
24.	SS	Nwa Nwam or Nwam Nwoke	Nwam	Cordial, affection, instruct

NO IN CHART	KINSHIP RELATION TO EGO	TERMS OF REFERENCE	TERMS OF ADDRESS	EGO'S ATTITUDE OR BEHAVIOUR
25.	SD	Ada Nwam Nwoke or Ada	Adam	Cordial, affection, instruct
26.	BSS	Nwa Nwam Nwanem or Nwanem	Nwam	Cordial, affection, instruct
27.	BSD	Ada Nwa Nwanem Nwoke or Ada	Adam	Cordial, affection, instruct
28.	FBSSS	Nwa Nwa Nwa Nwanne Nnam or Nwa Nnem	Nwam	Instruct, cordial
29.	FBSSD	Ada Nwa Nwa Nwanne Nnam or Ada	Adam	Instruct, cordial
30.	SSS	Nwa Nwa Nwam or Nwa	Nwam	Instruct, cordial
31.	SSD of 63a	Ada Nwa Nwam or Ada	Adam	Instruct, cordial
32.	SSS of 63a	Nwa Nwa Nwam or Nwa	Nwam	Instruct, cordial
33.	SSD	Ada Nwa Nwam or Ada	Adam	Instruct, cordial
34.	BSSS	Nwa Nwa Nwa Nwanem or Nwanem	Nwam	Instruct, cordial
35.	BSSD	Ada Nwa Nwa Nwanem or Ada	Adam	Instruct, cordial
36.	FBSSSS	Nwa Nwa Nwa Nwa Nwanem Nnam or Nwa Nnam	Nwam	Instruct advice
37.	FBSSSD	Ada Nwa Nwa Nwa Nwanne Nnam or Ada	Adam	Respect, advice

2.   EGO'S MOTHER'S PATRILINEAGE - 38 to 48:

38	MFF	Nnekwu Nnam Ochie	Nnam Ochie	Affection
39.	MF	Nnam Ochie	Nnam Ochie	Affection, Instruct, advice
40.	MFB	Nnam Ochie	Nnam Ochie	Affection
41.	MFZ	Nnekwu Nnemu Ochie	Nnem Ochie	Affection
42.	M	Nne	Nnem	Affection, respect, advice
43.	MB	Nnamu Ochie	Nnamu Ochie	Affection, respect, advice
44.	MZ	Nnemu Ochie	Nnemu Ochie	Affection
45.	MBS	Obele Nnamu Ochie	Nnamu Ochie	Affection
46.	MBD	Obele Nnemu Ochie	Nnemu Ochie	Affection
47.	MBSS	Obele Nnamu Ochie	Nnamu Ochie	Affection
48.	MBSSS	Obele Nnamu Ochie	Nnamu Ochie	Affection

3.   EGO'S MOTHER'S MOTHER'S PATRILINEAGE - 49 TO 52:

49.	MMF	Nnekwu Nnamu Ochie	Nnamu Ochie	Affection
50.	MM	Nnemu Ochie	Nnemu Ochie	Affection
51.	MMB	Nnamu Ochie	Nnamu Ochie	Affection
52.	MMZ	Nnemu Ochie	Nnemu Ochie	Affection

4.   EGO'S MOTHER'S MOTHER'S MOTHER'S PATRILINEAGE:

53.	MMM	Nnekwu Nnemu Ochie	Nnemu Ochie	Respect, affection

5.   EGO'S MOTHER'S FATHER'S MOTHER'S PATRILINEAGE:

54.	MFM	Nnekwu Nnemu Ochie	Nnemu Ochie	Affection

6.   EGO'S FATHER'S MOTHER'S PATRILINEAGE - 55 to 58:

55.	FMF	Nnekwu Nnamu Ochie	Nnamu Ochie	Affection
56.	FM	Nnemu Ochie	Nnamu Ochie	Affection
57.	FMB	Nnamu Ochic	Nnamu Ochie	Affection
58.	FMZ	Nnemu Ochie	Nnemu Ochie	Affection

7.   EGO'S FATHER'S MOTHER'S MOTHER'S PATRILINEAGE

59.	FMM	Nnekwu Nnemu Ochie	Nnemu Ochie	Respect by greeting

8.   EGO'S FATHER'S FATHER'S MOTHER'S PATRILINEAGE:

60.	FFM	Nnekwu Nnemu Ochie	Nnemu Ochie	Greeting

9.   EGO'S WIFE'S PATRILINEAGE - 61 to 69 and 63a:

61.	WFF	Nnekwu Ogom Nwaoke	Ogom	Respect, teach, help
62.	WF	Ogom Nwaoke	Ogom	Respect, teach, help
63.	1st W	Nwanyi Isi Chi	Nwanyim	Love, Cordial, advice, Understanding respect
64.	WB	Ogom Nwaoke	Ogom	Greeting, Love, Respect
65.	WZ	Ogom Nwanyi	Ogom	Greeting, Love, Respect
66.	WBS	Ogom Nwaoke	Ogom	Respect not deep
67.	WBD	Ogom Nwanyi	Ogom	Respect
68.	WBSS	Obele Ogom Nwaoke	Ogom	Greeting
69.	WBSD	Obele Ogom Nwaoke	Ogom	Greeting
63a.	2nd W	Nwanyi Nki Ibua	Nwanyim	Instruct

10.   EGO'S WIFE'S FATHER'S MOTHER'S PATRILINEAGE

70.	WFM	Ogom Nwanyi	Ogom	Respect

11. EGO'S WIFE'S MOTHER'S PATRILINEAGE - 71 to 73:

71.	WMF	Nnekwu Ogom Nwaoke	Ogom	Respect
72.	WM	Ogom Nwanyi	Ogom	Love, advice, help
73.	WMB	Ogom Nwaoke	Ogom	Respect

12. EGO'S WIFE'S MOTHER'S MOTHER'S PATRILINEAGE:

74.	WMM	Nnekwu Ogom Nwanyi	Ogom	Respect

13. EGO'S BROTHER,S WIFE'S PATRILINEAGE - 75 to 76:

75.	BWF	Ogom Nwaoke	Ogom	Respect, assistance
76.	BW	Nwunye Nwanem	Nwunyem	Love, respect, mutual help

14. EGO'S BROTHER'S WIFE'S MOTHER'S PATRILINEAGE:

77.	BWM	Ogom Nwanyi	Ogom	Respect

15. EGO'S SISTER'S HUSBAND'S PARTILINEAGE - 78 to 84:

78.	ZHF	Nnekwu Ogom Nwaoke	Ogom	Affection, respect, instruct assist
79.	ZH	Ogom Nwaoke	Ogom	Affection, respect, teach, help
80.	ZS	Nwadiana	Nwadiana	Affection, teaching, respect
81.	ZD	Nwadiana	Nwadiana	Affection, teaching respect
82.	ZSS	Nwadiana	Nwadiana	Affection, teaching, respect affection,
83.	ZSD	Nwadiana	Nwadiana	teaching, respect
84.	ZSSS	Nwadiana	Nwadiana	Respect

16. EGO'S SISTER'S HUSBAND'S MOTHER'S PATRILINEAGE:

85.	AHM	Nnekwu Ogom Nwanyi	Ogom	Respect only

17. EGO'S SON'S WIFE'S PATRILINEAGE - 86 to 87:

86.	SWF	Ogom Nwaoke	Ogom	Affection, instruct
87.	SW	Nwunye Nwam	Nwunyem	Affection, instruct

18. EGO'S SON'S WIFE'S MOTHER'S PATRILINEAGE:

88.	SWM	Ogom Nwanyi	Ogom	Respect

19. EGO'S DAUGHTER'S HUSBAND'S PATRINEAGE:

89.	DHF	Nnekwu Ogom Nwaoke	Ogom	Affection, respect
90.	DH	Ogom Nwaoke	Ogom	Affection, respect, help
91.	DS	Nwadiana	Nwadiana	Takes him like son, instruct
92.	DD	Nwadiana	Nwadiana	Treats her like daughter instruct
93.	DSS	Nwadiana	Nwadiana	Respect
94.	DSD	Nwadiana	Nwadiana	Respect

20. EGO'S DAUGHTER'S HUSBAND'S MOTHER'S PATRILINEAGE:

95.	DHM	Nnekwu Ogom Nwanyi	Ogom	Respect

Appendix 2 (contd.)

KEY

EGO (All terms are terms used by EGO)

F	-	Father
M	-	Mother
S	-	Son
D	-	Daughter
H	-	Husband
W	-	Wife
Z	-	Sister
B	-	Brother
DT	-	Descriptive term

APPENDIX 3
LIST OF EZE NRI WITH DATES OF REIGN PERIODS
Compiled by
M. Angulu Onwuejeogwu
Extract from Ethnogeneachronology:
Principles in the dating of Oral tradition.

King Lists	Approx. beginning of reigns	Approx. reign periods	Reign Interval
Eri	AD 996	AD 996 - 1041	45
Nri Ifikuanim*	AD 1043	AD 1043 - 1158	115
Nri Namoke*	AD 1090	AD 1090 - 1158	68
Nri Buife	AD 1159	AD 1159 - 1252	93
Nri (Name forgotten)	AD 1253	AD 1253 - 1299	46
Nri Nrijiofo	AD 1300	AD 1300 - 1370	70
Nri (Name forgotten)	AD 1371	AD 1371 - 1464	93
Nri Anyamata	AD 1465	AD 1465 - 1511	46
Nri Fenenu	AD 1512	AD 1512 - 1582	70
Nri Agu	AD 1583	AD 1583 - 1676	93
Nri Alike & Nri Apia*	AD 1677	AD 1677 - 1700	23
Nri Ezimilo	AD 1701	AD 1701 - 1723	22
Nri Ewenetem	AD 1724	AD 1724 - 1794	70
Nri Enweleana	AD 1795	AD 1795 - 1888	93
Nri Obalike	AD 1889	AD 1889 - 1936	-47
Nri Nrijiofo II	AD 1936	AD 1936 - present	In 1978 has ruled 41 years.

NOTES:

1. The upper limits of these dates had been cross-checked with the dates obtained from the Igbo-Ukwu carbon - 14 dates. The lower limits 1677 - 1936 have also been cross-checked by synchronizing them with dates obtained from historical events that occurred in the Bight of Benin and Biafra (Bonny), recorded by early writers.
2. A period of reign in Nri includes the reign period proper and the period of interregnum.
3. Those marked (*) ruled at the same period.
4. Those Eze Nri whose names are forgotten have no living descendants today.

APPENDIX 4
AFA DICTIONARY

AKA COMBINATIONS

NO.	A PAIR OF AFA WORDS	MEANING IN IGBO	TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH
1.	AKA (AKA) NABO	Oso	To run (i.e. to escape)
2.	AKA AKWU	Ndi ichie	Ancestors
3.	AKA AGHALI	Anu	Meat = blood sacrifice
4.	AKA ETE	Alusi nwe mmili	Alusi (force) that owns a body of water or river
5.	AKA UITE OR OGUTE	Ana Obu	Earth-Force of Obu
6.	AKA OBALA	Ana	Earth-Force
7.	AKA OBI	Ekugo	It is said = decided
8.	AKA OFU	Chi	Chi = Creative-Force
9.	AKA OGOLI	Ndi Ekwensu	Evil persons and spirits
10.	AKA OKALA	Oya	Illness
11.	AKA ORA	Ndu (Imi)	Life
12.	AKA OSE	Udo	Peace
13.	AKA OTULE	Ofo	Ofo staff of political ritual authority and power
14.	AKA OTUNUKPA	Osisi bu oji	The tree that is Iroko
15.	AKA UDI (ODI)	Ana	Earth-Force
16.	AKA ULULU	Ndiichie	Ancestors

In Appendix 4, (=) means; transformed

AKWU COMBINATIONS

NO	A PAIR OF AFA WORDS	MEANING IN IGBO	TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH
1	AKWU (AKWU) NABO	Ajo Onodu	Bad Condition
2.	AKWU AKA	Ebunu, Nwankwo	Ram, Man born on Nkwo
3.	AKWU AGHALI	Anu	Meat = blood sacrifice
4.	AKWU ETE	Onye Ukwu	Big man = Important person
5.	AKWU IJITE (OGUTE)	Ezi na Uno - Ngulu	Compound, Domestic Unit
6.	AKWU OBALA	Efi	Cow
7	AKWU OBI	Ewu	Goat
8.	AKWU OFU	Chi	Chi (Procreative force)
9.	AKWU OGOLI	Ira Uno	To abandon home
10.	AKWU OKALA	Izu	Meetings
11.	AKWU ORA	Uno	House
12.	AKWU OSE	Uche	Ambush = getting ready to harm
13.	AKWU OTULE	Ikwe Ekwe	To announce =
14.	AKWU (A) OTUNUKPA	Azu Oji, Obu ukwu	Back of Iroko Tree big temple = 'Big man.'
15.	AKWU (O) UDI	Onunu, Ana	Big hole = grave = Earth-Force
16.	AKWU ULULU	Ndiichie	Ancestors

AGHALI COMBINATIONS

NO	A PAIR OF AFA WORDS	MEANING IN IGBO	TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH
1.	AGHALI NABO	Mma, Ikenga	Knife, Right hand
2.	AGHALI AKA	Nwaoke	Male child
3.	AGHALI AKWU	Orai, Ogwu agwolagwo	'Medicine'
4.	AGHALI ETE	Onye Obo	Revengeful person
5.	AGHALI IJITE OGUTE	Ife akpado Igwe	Something handcuffed = to restrain
6.	AGHALI OBALA	Onye di ocha	Someone light in colour = wicked person
7.	AGHALI OBI	Ukwu, Irere	Legs, to be watchful
8.	AGHALI OFU	Ego	Money
9.	AGHALI OGOLI	Watekili	Child
10.	AGHALI OKALA	Onye ji alo na aka ndi Nze, Onyechi echichi	'Nze' man, a titled person
11.	AGHALI ORA	Nseka	Trouble and conflict
12.	AGHALI OSE	Ifele, Mkpi	Shameful, He-goat
13.	AGHALI OTULE	Uzu	Blacksmith
14.	AGHALI (A) OTUNUKPA	Okwu Ani	Worthless talk
15.	AGHALI (O) UDI	Ifite	One section of dual organization of a town
16.	AGHALI ULULU	Ajuluaju, Okwu Dafiadafia	Refusal, Incoherent talk

ETE COMBINATIONS

NO	A PAIR OF AFA WORDS	MEANING IN IGBO	TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH
1.	ETE (ETE) NABO	Ibide	Sudden incidents, Accident
2.	ETE AKA	Ife gbo	Ancient event
3.	ETE AKWU	Nnekwu	Hen
4.	ETE AGHALI	Obo	Revengeful and Uncompromising
5.	ETE OGUTE. (IJITE)	Akwukwa	Three-legged oven
6.	ETE OBALA	Ofolo	Light = alright
7.	ETE OBI	Ofe mmili	Over the river
8.	ETE OFU	Odigo mma	It is settled (alright)
9.	ETE OGOLI	Iladi, Oru nwanyi	Adultery = Woman's sexual organ.
10.	ETE OKALA	Nwanwanyi	Female child
11.	ETE ORA	Igba ama	To warn
12.	ETE OSE	A nwu go Iyi	It has been sworn
13.	ETE (O) TULE	Oji	Kolanut
14.	ETE (O) (ATUNUKPA)	Nwanwanyi	Female child
15.	ETE ODI	Imechi Uzo, Anyasi	Closing door = Night
16.	ETE ULULU	Nnekwu Okuku	Hen

IJITE COMBINATIONS

NO	A PAIR OF AFA WORDS	MEANING IN IGBO	TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH
1.	IJITE NABO (OGUTE)	Ife kwu nezi	Something standing, outside
2.	IJITE AKA	Ndigbo	Ancient people
3.	IJITE AKWU	Nnekwu mmadu, Ike	'Big man', buttocks
4.	IJITE AGHALI	Anu ka age me	Make a bloody offering
5.	IJITE ETE	Alusi	Alusi, supernatural being
6.	IJITE OBALA	Anwuli	Happinness
7.	IJITE OBI	Izo si ukwu ike na ana	You stand firmly on the ground
8	IJITE OFU	Chi kelu mmadu	Chi the creator of man
9.	IJITE OGOLI	Okwu aburo Okwu	Worthless talk to be ignored
10.	IJITE OKALA	Ukwu si ike nani	You stand firmly
11.	IJITE ORA	Chi mmadu	The Chi of a person
12.	IJITE OSE	Alusi bu Udo	Alusi, supernatural being that is called Udo
13.	IJITE OTULE	Anwuli dia	There is happiness
14.	IJITE OTUNUKPA	Ijedi mma	A happy adventure
15.	IJITE ODI	Ife aguchibido	Something behind closed door (secret)
16.	IJITE ULULU	Ikwu Uchu	Mourning, sorrow and tears

OBALA COMBINATIONS

NO	A PAIR OF AFA WORDS	MEANING IN IGBO	TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH
1.	OBALA NABO	Oma Agu	Forest Difficulties
2.	OBALA AKA	Ife bia je abia je	Something about to come - future event
3.	OBALA AKWU	Oga bu aya abia	Coming with war or with trouble
4.	OBALA AGHALI	Ife aga ji mma gbu	Something to be slaughtered.
5.	OBALA ETE	Ife mme	Bloody sacrifice
6.	OBALA UITE OGUTE	Dibia, Agwu	Traditional doctor, Agwu - force
7.	OBALA OBI	Oga melili	Must happen
8.	OBALA OFU	Mmanya	Any alcholic drink
9.	OBALA OGOLI	Echine Nti	Do not turn deaf ears = to listen
10.	OBALA OKALA	Awuwo	Crook
11.	OBALA ORA	I ga gba nana	Will escape
12.	OBALA OSE	Ogwu agwo	Medicine that was made
13.	OBALA OTULE	Dibia	Traditional doctor
14.	OBALA OTUNUKPA	Welu uche sobia	To follow up with common-sense
15.	OBALA ODI	Echine Nti	Do not turn deaf ears = to listen
16.	OBALA ULULU	Ogwa kwapu ife ojo ona elo	Put aside the evil he is thinking = to stop evil thinking.

OBI COMBINATIONS

NO	A PAIR OF AFA WORDS	MEANING IN IGBO	TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH
1	OBI NABO	Igba ezi Nje	To re-appear, twice
2.	OBI AKA	Ije	To go
3.	OBI AKWE	Ora	Populace, gathering of pople
4.	OBI AGHALI	Ana erere	They are walking on tip-toes = to be careful
5.	OBI ETE	Okuku	Chicken
6.	OBI OBALA	Oga di mma	Will be well = to be well
7.	OBI UITE	Oburo Okwo	Not important talk
8.	OBI OFU	Oburo Okwo dimkpa	Not serious talk
9.	OBI OGOLI	Iladi	To have sex
10.	OBI OKALA	Obia je bem	(Visitors) coming to me
11.	OBI ORA	Ife atuko atuko	A crowd
12.	OBI OSE	Obia	Stranger(s)
13.	OBI OTULE	Okwu ga sudo	Talks will end well (concluded)
14.	OBI OTUNUKPA	Ilite ife	Gaining something = to gain something
15.	OBI UDI	Ona bia	Is coming
16.	OBI ULULU	Akwa	Crying

OFU COMBINATIONS

NO	A PAIR OF AFA WORDS	MEANING IN IGBO	TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH
1.	OFU NABO	Ibu Afufu	To suffer
2.	OFU AKA	Igbanarigo	You have escaped = to escape
3.	OFU AKWU	Nzuko, Ofia	Meetings forest
4.	OFU AGHALI	Ife aga fe mme	Bloody sacrifice
5.	OFU (IJITE) OGUTE	Okwu ni nwero isi	Worthless talk
6.	OFU ETE	Uru	Sorrow, grief
7.	OFU OBALA	Mmanya	Alcholic drinks
8.	OFU OBI.	Ajo ije	Bad journey, unsuccessful business.
9.	OFU OGOLI	Oseaka	Worthless & troublesome individual
10.	OFU OKALA	Nkwu ojukwu	Palm tree called Ojukwu
11.	OFU ORA	Okochi	Dry season
12.	OFU OSE	Ili Nsi	To eat poison
13.	OFU OTULE	Afufu dia	Suffering is there
14.	OFU OTUNUKPA	Ilite ife oma	Gaining good things
15.	OFU ODI	Alu eme	Abomiation occurs
16.	OFU ULULU	Igbanarigo	You have escaped = escape

OGOLI COMBINATIONS

NO	A PAIR OF AFA WORDS	MEANING IN IGBO	TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH
1.	OGOLI NABO	Oseaka	Worthless, destructive
2.	OGOLI AKA	Ozu ga nwu	Death will occur
3.	OGOLI AKWU	Onunu	Taking away things and denying
4.	OGOLI AGHALI	Ndi aka ekpe	Ill-luck persons
5.	OGOLI ETE	Oya afo ebute-bute na ede ka Igwe	Stomach illness
6.	OGOLI IJITE (OGUTE)	Alusi bu Ogugu	Alusi - being called Ogugu ·
7.	OGOLI OBALA	Ozu	Corpse
8.	OGOLI OBI	Nwa Nwanyi	Female child or girl
9.	OGOLI OFU	Oye	Oye day
10.	OGOLI OKALA	Nwanyi	Woman
11.	OGOLI ORA	Inya Oku	To warm fire = Illness
12.	OGOLI OSE	Na Anyasi	At night
13.	OGOLI OTULE	Ko Akiko	Tell story
14.	OGOLI OTUNUKPA	Nwa nwanyi	Female child, girl
15.	OGOLI (1) ODI	Ife nye duaka na ukwu	In big trouble
16.	OGOLI (I) ULULU	Onye ga kwa Ozu	Someone who will mourn

OKALA COMBINATIONS

NO	A PAIR OF AFA WORDS	MEANING IN IGBO	TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH
1.	OKALA NABO	Ife anazo azo	Something struggled for
2.	OKALA AKE	Oso	Run
3.	OKALA AKWU	Ife ike	Accident
4.	OKALA AGHALI	Anu	Meat
5.	OKALA ETE	Akpu	Kapok tree
6.	OKALA IJITE OGUTE	Nze	Ozo man
7.	OKALA OBALA	Awuwo	Blackmail, tricks
8.	OKALA OBI	Okwugo	Has said = decided
9.	OKALA OFU	Mmanya	Alcholic drink
10.	OKALA OGOLI	Ndi okala ogoli	Worthless and useless person
11.	OKALA ORA	Ju	To refuse, disagree
12.	OKALA OSE	Ase	Avoidance, respect
13.	OKALA OTULE	Ezigbo okwu	Good talk, truth
14.	OKALA OTUNUKPA	Awuwo	Blackmail, tricks
15.	OKALA ODI	Isu Ikpem	Watchfulness
16.	OKALA ULULU	Ikwa Njo	To remove evil

ORA COMBINATIONS

NO	A PAIR OF AFA WORDS	MEANING IN IGBO	TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH
1.	ORA NABO	Ose aka	Villain
2.	ORA AKA	Je ranra	Go and pay the fine
3.	ORA AKWU	Ife Nso	A 'taboo' = an avoidance
4.	ORA AGHALI	Umunna	Patrilineage
5.	ORA ETE	Anya mmili	Tears = weeping
6.	ORA IJITE	Ndichie Umunna	Ancestors of Patrilineage
7.	ORA OBALA	Ekwensu	Evil Force
8.	ORA OBI	Nwanne	Relations through mother
9.	ORA OFU	Nwanne	Relations through mother
10.	ORA OGOLI	Watakili	A child
11.	ORA OKALA	Watakili	A child
12.	ORA OSE	Oya	Illness
13.	ORA OTULE	Nwa Okpala	First male son
14.	ORA OTUNUKPA	Nwada	Daughter (first female child)
15.	ORA ODI	Ndi bu Ifite	Ifite sector of a settlement(Dual Association: Ezi and Ifite
16.	ORA ULULU	Ndi ogo	In-laws

OSE COMBINATIONS

NO	A PAIR OF AFA WORDS	MEANING IN IGBO	TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH
1.	OSE NABO	Anya	Eye = To see
2.	OSE AKA	Imeyeli, Agwu di na anya	To Act abnormally
3.	OSE AKWU	Zuali fa afia	Go to market for them = Give them things = to sacrifice
4.	OSE AGHALI	Zuali fa afia	Give them things = sacrifice
5.	OSE UITE (OGUTE)	Ejiyi eji	To be held
6.	OSE ETE	Sia lufa Nni	Cook for them = sacrifice food
7.	OSE OBALA	Nnwuli	Happiness, joy
8.	OSE OBI	Zua Afia	Go to market = offer things in sacrifice
9.	OSE OFU	Ndi Ulu	Crooks, profiteering persons
10.	OSE OGOLI	Iyi	A Waste
11.	OSE OKALA	Ndi nwe alo	Title persons who own 'alo' starves
12.	OSE ORA		You have escaped
13.	OSE OTULE	Igbapugo	Happiness
14.	OSE OTUNUKPA	Anwuli	Happiness
15.	OSE ODI	Anwuli	Anger
16.	OSE ULULU	Iwe	To be cautious
		Ize Ndu	

OTULE COMBINATIONS

NO	A PAIR OF AFA WORDS	MEANING IN IGBO	TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH
1.	OTULE NABO	Onu, Ajo Okwu, iko akiko	Mouth, Bad talk, to narrate
2.	OTULE AKA	Mkpu, alu eme	A shout of abomination
3.	OTULE AKWU	Ona fio uzu	Generating commotion
4.	OTULE AGHALI	Anwugo Iyi	Iyi has been sworn
5.	OTULE ETE	Akwa, Ili Uta	Egg = to accept fault, to regret
6.	OTULE OGUTE (UITE)	Okpa Kwalakwa	Cock
7.	OTULE OBALA	Ikpe Ile Oma	Peaceful talk
8.	OTULE OBI	Biko ka ona ekpe	Pleading
9.	OTULE OFU	Ka ekpedu-ekpedu	Negotiating for peace
10.	OTULE OGOLI	Onye Nsokwu	Foolish person
11.	OTULE OKALA	Akagwaka	Scheduled, appointed
12.	OTULE ORA	Nti, Inu na nti	Ears = hear.
13.	OTULE OSE	Ajo Onu	Bad mouth = evil talk
14.	OTULE OTUNKPA	Ita aka na onu	Biting finger in the mouth = Regretting painfully
15.	OTULE UDI	Egbe ga da	Gunshots will be heard = Death? Joy? Crisis?
16.	OTULE ULULU	Afo	Afo = a week day

OTUNUKPA COMBINATIONS

NO	A PAIR OF AFA WORDS	MEANING IN IGBO	TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH
1.	OTUNUKPA NABO	Ikedo mmadu	To handcuff, to involve in trouble
2	OTUNUKPA AKA	Igbanarigo	You have escaped
3.	OTUNUKPA AKWU	Ogodo	Clothes, Cloths
4.	OTUNUKPA AGHALI	Mmado	To tie down firmly, fix
5.	OTUNUKPA ETE	Onye ndafuge mmili	Person living on the other side of the river
6.	OTUNUKPA OGUTE (IJITE)	Ndi Nze, Ndi Ukwu	Titled ozo men, influential men
7.	OTUNUKPA OBALA	Udala	A juicy fruit tree = peace
8.	OTUNUKPA OBI	Ndi yi eyi, nwu onwu ike	Those who died accidentally, premature death
9.	OTUNUKPA OFU	Nseke	Trouble
10.	OTUNUKPA OGOLI	Ndi Nseke	Troublesome persons
11.	OTUNUKPA OKALA	Ukwu esigoi ike nani	Your legs are firm on ground to control
12.	OTUNUKPA ORA	Nseke	Trouble
13.	OTUNUKPA OSE	Ogodo	Clothes worn
14.	OTUNUKPA OTULE	Ndi mgbilimgba	People who have bells ozo men
15.	OTUNUKPA ODI	Ikedo Udo	To tie with rope = to be involved in trouble
16.	OTUNUKPA ULULU	Nyem Utaba Okpukpo	Give me tobacco snuff

UDI OR ODI COMBINATIONS

NO.	A PAIR OF AFA WORDS	MEANING IN IGBO	TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH
1.	ODI NABO	Odafiego	To misfire
2.	ODI AKA	Ibu	Load = heavy trouble
3.	ODI AKWU	Iwe na ewe	There is anger but do not let
4.	ODI AGHALI	Ugwa jeko selim	Misfortune falls on me
5.	ODI ETE	Odi egwu	It is dangerous, fearful
6.	ODI OGUTE IJITE	Ana	Earth-Force
7.	ODI OBALA	Nnenna, Nnemoche, Nne	Father's mother, Grand-mother, mother
8.	ODI OBI	O do go	Peace has been restored
9.	ODI OFU	Nnemu, Afo ime	Mother, pregnancy
10.	ODI OGOLI	Alusi bu Ogugu	Supernatural force called Ogugu
11.	ODI OKALA	Ukwu si ike nani	To stand firmly in full control
12.	ODI ORA	Iku Ume ndu, Ikuku	To breathe air or wind, Nose
13.	ODI OSE	Onon nenu okute	Sitting on stone; To be in difficulty, angry
14.	ODI OTULE	Nna, Ndinna	Father, fathers lineage
15.	ODI OTUNUKPA	Nnamoche	Father's mother, mother's patrilineage
16.	ODI ULULU	Ndi Ikwu Nne	Mother's patrilineage

ULULU COMBINATIONS

NO.	A PAIR OF AFA WORDS	MEANING IN IGBO	TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH
1.	ULULU NABO	Ikwu ugwo	To pay a debt or an obligation
2.	ULULU AKA	Nni	Food
3.	ULULU AKWU	Nni	Food
4.	ULULU AGHALI	Anu	Meat, Flesh
5.	ULULU ETE	Ede, Akwa	Cocoa-yam = Cry
6.	ULULU IJITE OGUTE	Ji, Ike obi	Yam = Strong mindedness
7.	ULULU OBALA	Nni	Food
8.	ULULU OBI	Nni	Food
9.	ULULU OFU	Nni	Food
10.	ULULU OGOLI	Ajo Nni	Bad food = food poisoned with medicine
11.	ULULU OKALA	Nni	Food
12.	ULULU ORA	Agu	Hunger
13.	ULULU OSE	Ajo Nni, Akpili	Bad Food, throat
14.	ULULU OTULE	Nni	Food
15.	ULULU OTUNUKPA	Nni	Food
16.	ULULU UDI	Ajo Nni	Bad food

APPENDIX 5

Table 16: Percentage of Men, Women and Children per ward :

Wards	% Men	% Women	% Children	Total no of persons
Agukwu	20.6 (1,271)	20.6 (1,269)	28.8 (3,604)	6,144

Table 17: Non-traditional Religions in Nri (Based on 1971-72 Survey by Onwuejeogwu)

	Name of Religion	Sex of Leader	When Founded	No Men	No Women	No Children	TOTAL
1.	R C M	M	C1905	573	866	2,468	4,007
2.	C M S	M	C1910	300	400	400	1,100
3.	Apostolic Church, Holy Prophets of God Odozi-Obodo	M	1965	12	50	40	102
4.	St. Peters Sabbath Mission	M	1967	108	170	80	358
5.	Christ Healing Sabbath	F	1968	10	25	30	65
6.	Christ Chosen Sabbath	M	1970	1	-	-	1
7.	Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim	F	1971	5	9	6	20
8.	Jehovah Witness	M	-	2	-	-	2
	TOTAL			1,011	1,520	3,124	5,655

Neutrals = 178 (mostly elites)

Notes on Table 17:

1. The position of the membership of non-traditional religion has not changed much since 1972 except that in 1976:
   (a) The only leader of Christ Chosen Sabbath has migrated to Port Harcourt and is now a prosperous trader. His Church in Nri has closed.
   (b) In 1972 membership of each denomination had dropped by about 3% but about 2% new members have joined each denomination.

Table 18: Percentages of Christians Converting to Traditional Religion and Traditional Religion Converting to Christian (Based on 1966-72 Field Survey by (Onwuejeogwu)

Maximal Lineages	Christians ⟶ Traditional	Traditional ⟶ Christian
Agukwu	28.7%	5.4%
Akamkpisi	32.0%	21.8%
Diodo	17%	

Sample used 1972 is 8811
Sample used 1976 is 1203

NOTE: (a) ⟶ Converting to
     (b) Sample survey with smaller number made in 1976 does not show any significant change. The conversion rate seems to increase on the average of about 1.8% both ways.
     (c) The number of neutrals i.e. those who are neither Christians nor traditional increased by 2.6%.

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