

SOME POLITICAL ASPECTS OF RITUAL AND BELIEF
CONCERNING DEATH.

by

DAVID EDWARD MAHONY

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Abstract

This thesis considers ritual and belief pertaining to death, and locates these in a political or economic context. The contexts considered include those of alliance (Chapter I), economic interest groups (Chapter II), authority (Chapter III), and political interest groups (Chapter IV). All involve a consideration of either the political or economic purposes of groups.

For the most part, the orientation followed relates to two dimensions of human experience: the ritual dimension and the political dimension. These I see as having been variously described as 'Custom and Politics' (Cohen 1969b), 'Communitas and Structure' (Turner 1969), the ethical experience and the political experience (Baldelli 1972). I see these as not dissimilar ways of depicting the two dimensions. This thesis studies the relationship between these two dimensions with regard to death, and the various problems that death occasions. Diverse cultural materials are treated in this respect.

Although from the work of some writers (Turner and Baldelli) it seems that these dimensions of human experience are fundamentally antagonistic one to another, almost compartmentalized one from the other in an ideal-typical sense, this thesis seeks to establish a very close correlation between the strength or vitality of custom (communitas, the ethical experience), and the political or economic factor. Conversely, an equally close correlation exists between the decline of custom and the political or economic factor.

Although these dimensions of human experience are in a sense understood as being independent of one another, the dynamic involvement

of custom in a political or economic process, the intensification of customary symbolic forms by a political or economic group, means that political or economic man in the pursuit of his interests is able to exploit the ideological resources of ritual man and his creations. Death is treated as the province of the ritual dimension, and it is the customary symbolic forms thereof, that man can manipulate for political or economic purposes.

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Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the political aspects of ritual and belief pertaining to death. It involves a consideration of two dimensions of human experience: the political dimension and the ritual dimension, and studies the relationship between these two with regard to death. The political dimension refers to the question of power, the struggle for it, the exercise and distribution of it, and will be concerned with the political purposes of groups. Diverse cultural materials will be treated from this perspective.

The ritual dimension is another dimension of human experience, and in a number of cases studied here, is seen as an independent dimension,-independent that is to say, from the designs of political man. In this respect death is understood as the province of autonomous ritual man. The relationship between these two dimensions is shown to be one in which political man makes use of the creations of ritual man. Ritual symbolic forms articulate the political purposes of groups.

Death is a perennial problem of human existence. By this, I mean that it is a physiological, a natural event, which is an integral part of the human lot, and which occasions a number of problems. For instance there is the problem of the disposal of the body; the problem of adjustment, emotional and practical that confronts groups and people when they suffer a bereavement; and there is the problem of meaning: here I think of death as one of the great imponderables of human existence, and note the comprehensive belief systems which render death intelligible, which place it in some scheme comprehensible to man.

The solutions to these various problems are seen in the symbolic constructions of a collectivity-the autonomous creations of ritual man, and in a number of instances I shall study the way in which these solutions are harnessed to political purposes, are dynamically involved in political processes. Perhaps I can draw the following distinction: on the one hand there is the question of what happens at death (the ritual dimension), and on the other, what happens to death (the political dimension), the way in which death is used for political purposes. This brings out clearly the distinction between the two dimensions and would parallel Plamenatz's distinction between ideology as such, and the political or economic exploitation of that ideology (Plamenatz 1971). This is a point I pursue in some detail in the final chapter of the thesis. The creations of ritual man are ideological, and political man exploits these.

Chapter 1 concerns the ritual services of affliction performed among the Ambo of Central Africa (Stefaniszyn 1950) and among the LoDagaa of West Africa (Goody 1962). It ends with a consideration of the overall significance of clanship among the Central African Tribes. I follow Maquet's analysis of power whereby these examples are studied because of the political potential that ritual services of affliction have in the context of an "institutionalised societal relation, the elementary relation of alliance." (Maquet 1971 p.22). Maquet looks at seven such societal relations in what he calls "a global society", and alliance is but one of them. He writes: "When we refer exclusively to those relations that bring together actors of the same society, we shall use the adjective 'societal'." (Maquet p.17). On page 23 he writes: "Each one of the seven relations is the focus of a specific societal network. The latter is separately institutionalised in each global society where it appears."

Where alliance is concerned I examine the ritual and political aspects of what Goody refers to as "not burying one's own dead." (Goody 1962 p.64).

Chapter 11 also considers the ritual and political aspects of "not burying one's own dead", but the structural and cultural context is different, namely, contemporary America, California. (Mitford 1963). This involves an examination of the American Funeral Industry which has a ritual interest and an economic interest in death. Again, I follow Maquet's analysis of power, but this time understand the ritual and political aspects in terms of "the institutionalised societal relation, the elementary relation of association." (Maquet 1971 p.22 and p.217 ff). He writes of an association in a global society, and this I apply to the American Funeral Industry which is both a ritual interest group and an economic interest group.

Chapter 111 takes up the perspective of an association in a global society and considers the ritualization of authority at death. The materials chosen are the Yako associations (Forde 1962), and the Yoruba Ogboni Cult of Oyo (Morton-Williams 1960a and 1960b). I first of all detail the governmental competences of several of the Yako associations and contrast their ideological use of death to articulate and support in ritual a political position in the global society, with the ideology of the kin groups.

The Yoruba Ogboni Cult of Oyo is seen as an association in a global society and is understood as having a profound philosophical orientation towards death. In this latter respect, it differs from the associations among the Yako. I consider the political location of this cult, an authoritative association with an important governmental competence

in the Oyo polity, and understand its philosophical orientation as ideologically legitimizing its power position.

Chapter IV. The concern of this chapter is with interest groups in a period of political change. The examples chosen are the Creoles of Sierre Leone (Cohen 1971); the Merina of Madagascar (Bloch 1971); and an illustration from Java (Geertz 1957). Both the Creoles and the Merina concern cults of the dead, comprehensive belief systems, and these symbolic constructions are seen as being dynamically involved in the political processes of ethnic groupings in a contemporary situation. The Javanese example illustrates the emergence of politically diverse interest groups in a period of socio-cultural change, and concentration on conflict at a funeral delineates this process-how each group has come to locate death as a perennial problem in its own particularistic ideological perspective.

Chapter V sums up some of the previous material from the point of view of identity and ideology, but starts with a consideration of an example taken from the Tallensi in which I discuss what I mean by identity in a political sense. I locate it as a phenomenon in the political dimension of human experience. The section on ideology attempts to examine the material from the perspective that Flamenatz's study affords (Flamenatz 1971). This relates to what I have already stated: on the one hand there is an ideology as such, and on the other, the political or economic exploitation of that ideology. That is to say, there is ritual man and his creations, and political man and his interests.

Throughout this thesis I follow Cohen's perspective on politics as referring to the processes involved in the struggle for,

in the exercise of and in the distribution of power in the social system, and see politics as the control by men over the behaviour of other men. Such control can be of a political, an economic, a moral or a ritual kind, or a combination of these. (Cohen 1969b p.5.)

Chapter 1

Services of Affliction

- i) The Ambo
- ii) The LoDagaa
- iii) Clanship and the Central African Tribes

In this chapter I consider ritual services of affliction as they occur in the political context of what Maquet would call the "institutionalised societal relation", that of alliance, where he sees alliance as a channel for power relations (Maquet 1971 p.22 and p.81). As regards the ritual dimension, services of affliction are understood as the rites and ceremonies carried out on behalf of the bereaved by other categories of persons or groups. This refers to the ritual aspect of "not burying one's own dead", and in this respect I detail the symbolic behaviour of the Ambo together with a few examples taken from the LoDagaa and note what the actual services comprise-what they are and who performs them. I then consider the political aspect of this and in particular refer to the Ambo and the Central African Tribes in general to discuss the notion of clanship and to note what is a possible political potential of the alliances articulated by the symbolic behaviour concerned with ritual services of affliction. First to be considered, therefore, are the Ambo.

The Ambo are a matrilineal sub-tribe of the Lala of N. Rhodesia among whom there operates the institution of funeral friendship. The funeral friend performs specific tasks in connection with death and burial. Such a person occupies a position in relation to the bereaved group, which is (to quote Goody in his reference to the LoDagaa), "near but not too near, removed but not too removed." (Goody 1962 p.67). He does not belong to the kin group or the clan of the bereaved, yet neither is he so distant as to be considered a stranger, for these two categories are normally excluded from touching the dead body and from performing the burial rites. In this respect I refer to the funeral friend as an outsider: he is not a stranger. Stefaniszyn writes of him, "The avowed object of this life-long friendship is to do the last

service to the friend" (Stefaniszyn 1950 p.291). Later he writes, "The funeral friends play the chief part in all funeral ceremonies." (Stefaniszyn p.292). The services of the funeral friend can be considered under three heads, namely: pre-burial activities, burial activities, and post-burial activities.

Firstly, pre-burial activities. As soon as a death has occurred the 'owner of the dead', a kinsman responsible for all the necessary ceremonies sends messages to the nearest headman, a fowl being the customarily appropriate gift. But to the funeral friend a goat is sent, and when the friend arrives and enters the hut of the deceased where the body is lying surrounded by mourning kin, he or she launches into the most violent maledictions, accusing the closest relatives of the death of the friend: "You, brothers and sisters, you have bewitched him. The witchcraft of your mother kills me. You will not sleep with your wife. Others will marry her." (Stefaniszyn 1950 p.292). After this the funeral friend tries to give the deceased some water to drink and curses the body itself, using the most obscene language and referring to its private parts. He addresses the dead body thus: You devil, get up from where you lie. You only pretend that you have died; you are alive. You are only worrying people by seeming to be dead, but you are not." The mourners may be addressed thus: "You people, you devils, why do you cry over her, when you have killed her!" Again, the funeral friend will erupt into cursing and crying out the words for the private parts. (Stefaniszyn 1950 p.292).

This account of the pre-burial activities shows us the cathartic accomodation on the part of the bereaved kin to the fact of death. This is achieved for them by the funeral friend. He is

instrumental in facilitating such an accommodation, for in his words and actions, there is a sense in which death is taken out of the subjective universe of the bereaved. It is removed from their subjective ruminations and externalised in the mouth of an outsider (but not a stranger). Like a subjective problem, it is objectified in the very recognition given to it by a third party and hence it is in a way perhaps made that much more bearable. The attempt to make the dead drink water, the fruitless demand on him to rise, the reference to the life-connoting private parts, are all the symbolic acts of the funeral friend. They communicate with a dramatic and inexorable finality the fact of death. It is an outsider who brings home to those inside, the brute fact of mortality.

It is the funeral friend who can give voice to sentiments which would be inappropriate if voiced by the bereaved kin themselves, i.e. the accusation that the kin themselves have killed the deceased with their witchcraft. It is here that I follow Gluckman's analysis of joking relationships. (Gluckman 1965). The use of a 'negative' accusation made as it is by an outsider, a third party, stands as a symbolic form that functions to reinforce and sustain the positive and ideal-moral ethos 'inside' the bereaved group. A positive moral unity within the group is, at least, from an ideal perspective, "reflexed". By this I mean to say that an assertion of the negative brings a positive reflex-reaction. The funeral friend's reference to behaviour which is the reversal of normal morality cannot but serve to emphasise that morality which should obtain between kin, and where ideally, witchcraft should have no place. There is thus licence in ritual form, licence permitted the privileged outsider, by which the positive moral values are enforced in the prescribed formulaic and ritualized behaviour associated with the institution of funeral friendship. Such

ritual communicates moral values at a time when the group is confronted with the problem of death. In a sense, death of its nature can threaten and destroy form (just as can witchcraft destroy a moral order), and as much as anything, a prescribed ritual form stands as a specific antidote to this.

Burial activities. A funeral friend of the same sex as the deceased is permitted to handle the corpse, to wash the body and to anoint it with castor oil, and to bind a string of beads around the neck of the deceased. He or she closes the eyes of the deceased. The funeral friends carry the body to the grave and finally lay it to rest. It is male funeral friends who actually go down into the grave, thus disposing of the corpse there. This part of the operation is considered too heavy for any woman among the funeral friends to do. Having disposed of the body, the funeral friend comes out of the grave and with his elbows pushes some earth into the grave at the head and the feet of the corpse, saying, "You have died, go after him who killed you." During the burial a female funeral friend smears the hut floor of the deceased, while others cook porridge and a meal of fowl for the grave-diggers. The meal finished, the female funeral friends then sweep away the ashes of the fires lit in the yard by those who watched during the night. The funeral friend who went down into the grave is allowed to keep the basket which was used to throw out the earth from the grave when digging.

Lastly, post-burial activities. If there is sufficient grain the 'owner of the dead' gives a beer party in honour of the dead. A woman funeral friend of the deceased is the chief brewer, and in this she may be assisted by other funeral friends. The male funeral friend who first went down into the grave, puts the first handful of millet into a water-jar, thus indicating that brewing is to begin, and at this

the funeral friend in charge of the brewing operation lets out a shrill cry. Later too, the female friend lets out another shrill cry to mark a further stage in the brewing, when the owner of the dead takes the big jar off the fire when the beer has been boiled. Funeral friends and relatives of the deceased sing, dance and play gourd drums at the beginning, at the boiling and at the mixing of the fermented brew. Beer is given by the owner of the dead to the grave-diggers, those who buried the deceased and who are referred to jokingly as "hyenas". (Stefaniszyn p.293 and p.296). Singing, dancing and drinking-all cathartic activities-occupy the whole night, the most prominent part being taken by the funeral friends. At the close of the funeral beer festivities a special beer pot is kept for the funeral friend who swept the hut of the deceased and the ashes from the yard.

From these observations it is apparent that funeral friends perform contrasting services in that they first of all do the dirty work of death-the actual final disposal of the corpse. They sully themselves so to speak in the excrement of mortality-carrying the body and placing it in the grave. Note that they are referred to as "hyenas" by the bereaved kin. In her comment on Stefaniszyn's article, Douglas (nee Tew AFRICA 1951) raised the question as to a correlation between "beliefs in magical contamination from death" and the existence of funeral friendship. (Tew 1951 p.124). No precise information is given by Stefaniszyn on this aspect, though among the LoDagaa such a correlation, as will be seen, can certainly be established.

On the other hand the funeral friends perform the convivial service of effecting a commensality and communitas among the bereaved in their situation of marginality. For instance, the one who went down into the grave (and here I note the 'hyena' aspect) is the first to

put the handful of millet into the water-jar (and here I note the convivial aspect). It is not just a superficial question of drowning one's sorrows: it is a profound matter of the deliberate stimulation of conviviality and communion within the bereaved group. There is, as has been noted, the cathartic impulse at work in the singing, dancing and drinking which are thrown into vivid relief by the fact that they are continued throughout the dark night. It is the funeral friends who perform these services of affliction and facilitate a ritualized accomodation to the fact of death.

Perhaps these services can be seen as symbolic forms and techniques which function to create an order, a regularity in the very face of death. Here one is reminded of Douglas's analysis of ritual. It does not merely externalise experience, she claims: "It is not enough to say that ritual helps us to experience more vividly what we would have experienced anyway." (Douglas 1970 p.79). Ritual is an integral dimension of all human action and experience, and Douglas reiterates what Lienhardt stressed, namely, "that ritual has as one of its objectives to control situations and to modify experience." (Douglas 1970 p.83). Perhaps the quotation that Douglas takes from Lienhardt is also applicable here, ".....human symbolic action moves with the rhythm of the natural world..... recreating that rhythm in moral terms." (Quoted by Douglas p.82). Here, the rhythm of the natural world embodies death as an experience, a physiological event, and for the bereaved this experience receives a cathartic mediation through the symbolic action of the funeral friends, who translate this 'natural' rhythm into moral and ritual terms.

This aspect of the rhythm of the natural world (of which death is an experience) and its relation to a moral order is evident in the

work of Baldelli (Baldelli 1972). He writes of an 'ethical' experience, something which is essentially non-political, and in an ideal-typical sense, antagonistic to a political experience, the experience of power. The quintessence of this ethical dimension is custom. It is custom that embodies what he calls the ethical capital, namely, that "Faith in other people (which)...as it is more precarious...needs constant reassurance. Whatever their specific purposes, things done together-hunting, warring, eating, learning, praying, dancing,-are reassuring as their repetition and ritualization show." (Baldelli 1972 p.33). Characteristic of custom (the repository of the ethical capital) is its peculiar rhythm. The rhythm of custom, he writes, "is like biological rhythms in that it is supple, resilient, in harmony with other rhythms, quickening or slackening its tempo, but suffering no interruption without great risk." (p.55). Elsewhere he states that the motive force and goal of customs "can be summed up as a perpetuation which answers to man's deepest sources of unhappiness and despair-the perspective of total destruction." (p.57). He goes on to speak of the "soothing, lulling effect in the regular rhythms of customs, in their alternations, and harmonies similar to those of the seasons." (p.57).

Pertinent in this respect is Baldelli's positive association between death and the ethical capital. It is implicit in the quotation already given where death can be seen as the "perspective of total destruction". It is also found in a quasi-philosophical commentary on pp.39-41, where death as an experience engenders the ethical capital. He draws a correlation between the perspective of total destruction and the ethical experience. What I draw attention to, therefore, is 1. the fact of death as a natural experience in the biological rhythm of the world; 2. the existence of customs concerning death; and 3. the ethical repository of such customary institutions.

In this account of the Ambo I have located their symbolic behaviour, a customary institution, in the context of death. As a problem, death requires some solution, a means by which it can be understood and controlled. The symbolic constructions which effect this embody not just comprehensive belief systems, but also the ritual and ceremonial (and in this case cathartic) action which in a sense "control" this problem, and put order into an experience of chaos, i.e. such actions as are embodied in the ritual services of affliction. What I stress is that this ritual dimension of human experience is in its own respect, autonomous: it is the ritual creation of man in the face of death, and constitutes the ethical capital.

I now turn to consider what political man can make of this ritual dimension, (or to keep Baldelli's orientation, how the ethical capital can be converted into political capital), and here I find that this ritual symbolic action of funeral friendship can have a political significance or serviceability in terms of the institutionalised societal relation, the elementary relation of alliance. As far as the Ambo are concerned I note the units between which funeral friendship is established. It obtains between certain clans depending on whether there is an accepted association (either hostile or dependent) between respective clan objects. For instance, a member of the Goat Clan may enter into a funeral friendship with any member of the Iron Clan, male or female, because the clan objects of iron and goat are considered antagonistic towards one another, a goat being killed with an iron implement. An example of a dependent relationship between clan objects would be that of the Goat Clan vis a vis the Musamba Tree Clan. The Musamba Tree is the most common source of bark rope; and it is with bark rope that the goat is customarily secured. What these two examples

show is that the possible network can be cast fairly widely. There is potentially a large field, and Stefaniszyn lists a table of possible relationships between clans. For instance, the Fish Clan can relate to the Musamba Tree Clan, to the Grass Clan, to the Crocodile Clan and to the Rain Clan. And in turn each of these clans has its own particular field of affiliations. The ideological rationale for such relationships on the part of the Fish Clan to various other clans is as follows:-

The Musamba Tree Clan, "We are elders because we tie you up when you are killed"-the fish being caught are strung up on bark twine. The riposte is, "You are slaves serving us." The rationale for the Grass Clan vis a vis the Fish Clan is, "We are elders, you hide in us." The riposte is, "We are chiefs, you are our hut." and so on.

(Stefaniszyn 1950 p.297).

Stefaniszyn identifies four social circles of which the Ambo may be a member. There is the village, the clan segment, the clan, and the circle of funeral friendship. Each village group belongs to a matrilineal clan segment under its hereditary head, while four or five other clans live related through marriage. The original clan segment may even be in a minority in its own village, and be obliged to enter into economic and social relations with others who may be classified as strangers. But such strangers are excluded from the religious and ritual affairs of the clan segment, and it is here that funeral friendships play a part. It is a ritual relationship concerning religious affairs of the clan segment, and a funeral friend is the only non-clansmen permitted a part (a prominent one at that) in rites and sacrifice of the segment to which he does not belong. It is a relationship which transects clan barriers.

As noted earlier, the Ambo categorize their social world into

'clansmen' and 'strangers'. Neither of these is allowed to handle the corpse. The latter category encompasses those who are not of the same matrilineal clan as the deceased and includes affines, for even affinal relationships bear an alien stamp for the Ambo. The marriage partner is a stranger. The funeral friend however occupies a sort of intermediate position, or an interstitial one. That is why I call him an outsider. Following Gluckman's analysis of joking relationships, it is possible to understand that funeral friends by virtue of their widely ramifying range of permitted affiliations with various other clans, can be the friends of those who are strangers to one's own group. (Gluckman 1965 p.97-102). Gluckman looks to Fortes's work on the Tallensi where one finds that joking relationships exist in such an arrangement that one's own joking partner can be the friend of one's enemy. (Fortes 1945).

From Douglas's comment on Stefaniszyn's article (Douglas, nee Tew AFRICA 1951 p.123) one finds that such a ritual arrangement is politically advantageous, for (to quote Douglas) "corporate groups based on kinship are small and unstable. The need for some kind of extra-kinship alliance in such societies is really understandable. The funeral friendship seems to offer each individual strong links which extend across the weak kinship groupings." Following Cohen's perspective, one could see such symbolic activity as a ritual communion between potential enemies. (Cohen 1969b p.221). This aspect of ritual activity, and Douglas's explanation of the Ambo material I propose to return to later, but before doing that I should like to consider one or two examples of ritual services of affliction as they occur among the LoDagaa. Again the perspective will be that of ritual man confronted with the problem of death, what he makes of it, his response to it in ritual terms, and

the potential this has for political man-the political serviceability
of such symbolic forms.

Goody's book on the LoDagaa (1962) concerns that ritual and belief which (in the terms I am writing) enable man to cope with the problem of death. I reiterate what I stressed earlier, namely, that it is not just beliefs and thought systems per se, but ritual and ceremonial activities as embodied in the services of affliction that comprise the symbolic constructions which provide, in the context of a collectivity, a 'solution' to death. It is important to say this, because the ancestor worship which Goody concentrates on, is a symbolic construction of ritual man, which political man can make use of in the internal societal relations of authority. My concern however is with the services of affliction (which Goody remarks on at intervals throughout the book), and these I see as having a relevance in the elementary relation of alliance. First of all I concentrate on the analysis of several symbolic forms employed in such services, and then locate these in a structural context.

The services of affliction among the LoDagaa, performed as they are by various groups, are the proper province of people who come from outside the immediate circle of bereaved kin, those who, to use the earlier-mentioned quotation, "are near but not too near, removed but not too removed." (Goody p.67). As already noted, Douglas drew attention to the question of a correlation between magical beliefs connected with death and the existence of funeral friendship. Stefaniszyn's article did not allow her to make a definitive assertion on this matter, there being no reference to contagious dirt, pollution and magical beliefs. However, the LoDagaa material does permit a correlation between the highly ritualized services of affliction embodied in the activities of the burial group, for instance, and the existence of magical beliefs concerned with the pollution and contagious dirt surrounding the death, burial and disposal of the body. Such services are performed

by an 'outsider' who is, so to speak, immune to these dangers.

For instance, there is the importance of such an outsider in the procedures involved in the washing and anointing of the dead body. This task is not the province of the immediate kin. Instead, classificatory 'wives' and 'sisters', who are old women well past the menopause, who are considered to have 'turned to men', and have the attributes of asexuality-these carry out the ablutions on the dead body. In this they are supervised by a woman from the 'outside', who organizes the activities and whose place it is the classificatory 'wives' and 'sisters' to assist. They bathe the dead man in hot water to remove all body dirt. (Goody 1962 p.55 ff).

Widows are prohibited from doing this for fear that they should attempt to commit suicide by biting the body of the dead husband. The dirt from the body would mystically defile her and she would then have to be purified by the grave-diggers, since these have been rendered immune to any effects of contamination or pollution, by virtue of their special protective medicine. I note the correlation between an outside category immune to pollution and so qualified to perform a service of affliction, and an inside category more than susceptible to pollution dangers and unable to act for itself in the circumstances of death. Such beliefs force a reliance by the afflicted on the services of this outside category.

Among the LoDagaa there are two groups, the LoWiili and the LoDagaba, that Goody concentrates on. Both have matrilineal and patrilineal. The inhabitants of a parish belong to a number of different patrilineal, whose members are usually found living near their fellow clansmen.

The patrilines are widely dispersed over the region and the subdivisions found within one parish are localised groups of members, and these Goody refers to as clan sectors. (Goody p.7). Among the LoWiili the clan sector is divided into a known number of patrilineages, whereas among the LoDagaba there is a looser form of internal organization and no division into a recognized number of lineages. Moreover its clan sectors and lineages are smaller in size. (Goody p.8).

The matrilineages, like the patrilines are spread over a wide area but unlike them they have no territorially localized subdivisions, since marriage is virilocal. Among the LoWiili all property is inherited patrilineally whereas among the LoDagaba (as among the Yako) immovable property passes along the patrilineal line, but movable goods take the matrilineal line. The patrilines are grouped together into more inclusive units in two ways: i) by joking partnerships, and ii) by legends of common origin. Goody writes that those associated in this latter way he calls linked clans and these have a greater part to play among the LoDagaba where lineages are of less importance. The matrilineages are four in number and are the Some, the Da, the Hienbe, and the Kambire. These too are paired in joking partnerships. (Goody p.8).

From Goody's material I mention, by way of illustration, two sorts of groups: the burial groups and the joking partnerships. Goody identifies three types of exchange concerning the performance of services:- paired exchange, circular exchange, and diffuse exchange. (Goody p.66). He points out (p.65) that ritual services among the LoDagaba function mostly by paired exchange, "as when two groups consisting of one or more patrilineages act as grave-diggers for each other. On the other hand, three or more groups sometimes engage in a diffuse exchange of services of affliction, so that when one is in need of assistance, the members of all

the other groups participate." (Goody p.65).

First to be considered therefore are the burial groups who have the task of digging the grave and disposing of the body. Among the LoWiili this is done not by members of the same lineage as the deceased but by more distant agnates, or even members of another patriclan, who must "be near but not too near, removed but not too removed." Among the LoDagaba there operates a system of diffuse exchange-any grave-digger from a neighbouring patrilineal group other than that which the deceased belonged to, may come and assist. (Goody p.67).

The special task of these groups is the digging of the grave and the disposing of the body therein. They also construct the funeral stand on which the corpse will be fixed in a sitting position during the funeral ceremonies and prior to interment. The task is, mystically speaking a dangerous one, because of the contaminatory nature of grave-digging, and more particularly of the magical defilement associated with any work on a dead body. Those engaged in such work have a monopoly of special protective medicine, grave-medicine, and they belong to a grave-diggers' fraternity. In this they constitute a ritual interest group, and their job, though not an honoured one, is nonetheless highly lucrative. The grave-diggers are entitled to collect various offerings which are strewn at the foot of the funeral stand, for on first coming to a funeral, a mourner has to stop in front of the dead body, throw some cowries at the foot of the corpse and then stand in front of the xylophones and throw some more shell money onto the instruments being played. The grave-diggers take the former offerings, the musicians the latter.

The grave-diggers take charge of the body after the old women have performed their ministrations of washing and anointing it. They loosen the limbs and carry it outside the compound. This is done not by the ordinary exit but by way of a special hole made in the wall of the courtyard belonging to the set of rooms in which the man died. The normal exit is taboo on such an occasion. Having been carried outside, the corpse is leaned against the wall of the byre and seated on a wooden board that serves as its door. The grave-diggers begin to prepare the funeral stand in which the corpse is to be placed in a sitting position upon the platform.

In as much as they operate in the realm of the betwixt and the between, the grave-diggers' activities are characterised as the reversal of normality (rituals of reversal). They also perform actions which are normally defiling and disgusting, but which can be understood as prophylactically and therapeutically consonant with the actions of a rite de passage. For instance, should any fluids drop down from the corpse into their mouths, they must swallow these rather than spit them out. In all, the grave-diggers, forming as they do a fraternity constitute a ritual interest group whose services are well rewarded. They have a distinctive identity which is legitimized by their exclusive possession of protective medicine. Apart from this, they can form part of the institutionalised societal relation, the elementary relation of alliance, which links groups together in a network, and the significance of which I shall comment on later. Interesting to note here is the fact that the grave-diggers are an association of sorts and can be understood in terms of the elementary relation of association (the which perspective I shall use for the American Funeral Industry). On the other hand they function in the context of alliance.

Having discussed the grave-diggers I consider the joking partnerships among the LoDagaa. Goody mentions that the joking partnerships operate on a more inclusive basis than the burial groups, that is to say, between clans or in some cases between groups of linked clans. Joking partnerships are common to both the matrilineal and the patrilineal and it is at funeral ceremonies in particular that such partnerships come to the fore. (Goody p.69).

I single out for interest the actions of the joking partners on the first and second days of the funeral ceremonies, and their symbolic behaviour in the rite of bathing the widower which takes place after a burial. In the early stages of a funeral, the joking partners act as companions to the bereaved, restraining them in their grief. This is the first day of the funeral and contrasts with the second in that the atmosphere is one of heavily charged grief and disbelief. Not that there is no sorrow on the second and subsequent days, but the first day is one of initial and immediate sorrow, utter manifestations of grief. The subsequent days show the fact of death as having sunk in: the bereaved now know that the deceased's soul has indeed left his body. (Goody p.123)

On the first day as the xylophones are playing, the lineage "wives" and "sisters" of the dead man walk and run about in the area in front of the house, making lamentations and holding their hands behind the nape of the neck in an accepted manner of grief. Close male kinsfolk act in a manner somewhat more subdued than that of the womenfolk. Periodically one of the mourners, one of the immediately bereaved, breaks into a trot and a bystander either intercepts or chases after the bereaved and quietens him by seizing his wrist. Those continuing to display such violent grief are secured round the wrist by a length of fibre or hide, the other end of which is held by a companion or follower of the bereaved.

There are different methods of tying and restraining the bereaved and these are socially determined by the reactions to grief expected to be shown by the different categories of bereaved. (Goody 87-88). Such a display varies according to the role of the deceased and the relationship of others to him. For instance, when a man dies, the father, mother and wife of the deceased are tied by hide, whereas the brother and sister of the deceased are only secured by fibre. Hide is reserved for those who, it is believed, are hardest hit by the death. Children of the deceased are expected to be least affected. When a wife dies, the husband's lot of grief is greatest-far greater than her grief would be, had he been the one to die. In this case he is tied by hide and cloth, with string round his waist and ankle.

Those who hold the fibre or hide which is tied to the bereaved and so restrain them are the joking partners. To be able to do this they have to stand in a certain relationship to the deceased and the bereaved. It has to be someone who is a joking partner in the matrilineal framework and at the same time, a member of another lineage within the same patrilineal. (Goody p.87).

The joking partners are said to be able to "make hot things cold" by "throwing ashes", the cool residue of the hot fire. (Goody p.69 and p.89). The young children of the deceased's compound, and sometimes the children of the dead man's full sisters or those from a dead woman's natural home have ashes painted on their faces. The ashes smeared on the face of the children serve to disguise them from the deceased. Joking partners put ashes on young children when the father dies, so that he will not recognise them and will think of them instead as grandchildren. He will not take them after him. (Goody p.89). Given this particular context of

ritual and belief, the actions of the joking partner towards the children can be seen functionally as a protective one. The children constitute the 'future' of a corporate group, those who will perpetuate its personnel, and these are protected by the joking partners who perform this service. This service of affliction would in a sense have the logical, beneficial consequence of protecting the group in its recruitment aspect.

Their actions are cathartic in effect in that they restrain the bereaved and tie strings of cowries around the neck of close personal friends of the deceased who show too much grief. At this level the externalization of grief is essentially cathartic. Grief is not something which has to be contended with alone. It is not an experience in subjective isolation, an experience whose dimensions are of an unbearable and unrestricted depth. It is an experience whose subjective traumatic import is made that much less by the objectification afforded it in the ritualized and highly formalized procedures followed out by the joking partner, one who is near but not too near, removed but not too removed, -one who is sufficiently close to appreciate the import of grief but not so close and too emotionally involved, as to preclude his doing anything socially and cathartically constructive about it.

So much for the first day. Now I consider the second. This one is not so charged with the heavily emotional effect of an immediate and initial grief. The joking partner's role is now not so much one of restraining the bereaved but more of guying their behaviour and making the bereaved laugh. The companions of the bereaved see to it that the bereaved partake of food and drink (beer). The joking partners will playfully ask for money at a funeral. A refusal to contribute merits a volume of abuse, directed partly against the dead man but also against his whole clan, especially in the form of allusive references to traditional stories about the origins of each matriclan. Goody writes of a

woman's plastering ashes upon the face and chest of the close agnatic kin, wives and sister's children of the dead man. She was a joking partner of the deceased, and at her actions others did the same to the spectators. (Goody p.122 ff).

The dead man belonged to the Kambire matriclan and his children were therefore the 'children of Kambire'. The joking partners of the Kambire were the Hienbe. After the bereaved had thus been plastered, the women whose fathers were Hienbe (the children of Hienbe) went around among the spectators, seizing all the female offspring of Kambire men they could recognize, and covering the upper part of their bodies in mud. When the women had so done with the females, one of the men of the matriclan pointed out to them some of the male children of Kambire fathers. These people were threatened with a plastering unless they contributed money. (Goody p.124).

In these ritual actions and services, there is an apparent catharsis and *communitas*. It is a *communitas* that Turner stresses as being a phenomenon of marginality (Turner 1969),-of the marginal situation; and death above all is just such a situation. This correlates with what Baldelli has written concerning death and the ethical capital. The ethical experience which he describes is equally intelligible in terms of the concept '*communitas*', and the reader will quite readily find sufficient parallels between Turner's account of the characteristics of *communitas* and Baldelli's delineation of the ethical experience. The ritual actions of this *communitas*-custom engendered in a situation of marginality-enable people to cope with the problem of death, to control its emotional ramifications. These ritual actions do, in effect, as Baldelli writes, answer to man's deepest sources of unhappiness and despair-the perspective

of total destruction. Here one is reminded of Gluckman's remarks concerning clan jokers. They are concerned "with preserving life.....with urging life despite death." (Gluckman 1965 p.99). It is this aspect which I wish to turn to now when I consider the rite of bathing the widower-a rite which takes place after a burial.

A matriclan joking partner from within the husband's own patriclan brought a knife, an arrow and three stones, called Tenggaan Kube since these stones were seen as belonging to the Earth shrine. (Goody p.184). The procedures which followed constituted as much as anything measures taken to prevent the suicide of the widower-whose grief as noted earlier would be heaviest of all. In "urging life despite death", the joking partner among the LoDagaa obliged the widower to drink water in which had been placed the arrow, the knife and the three stones. As he did so, the joking partner made a speech, which I quote in full (Goody p.184-185):-

"In the water you drink, can you see the arrow, the knife and the three stones? With the knife a person can kill himself. With the arrow he can do the same. But look at these stones. Today I give you both the knife and the arrow. If you are thinking of killing yourself, of cutting your throat with the knife, you wont be able to do that. If you take an arrow and say you'll wound yourself, the poison can't kill you. People would say that the Earth shrine wishes it so, and others would think that you knew something about your wife's death. So today we give you these things to cool your anger. In time you'll follow your wife; but she can never return to you. If you wound yourself, you'll be sick three years without dying; and when you recover, you'll have to make a payment to the Earth shrine."

In this speech two aspects are prominent, namely, the sanction against suicide and the sanction against the killing of one's wife.

Both of these are embodied in the services of affliction which betoken an eminently moral order. Both are concerned with urging life despite death, and perhaps one can understand this ritual symbolic behaviour along the lines that Turner might pursue (See Turner 1962 and 1965). This means considering the knife and the arrow and the stones as they appear in their particular conjunction here, as well as noting their appearance elsewhere in other symbolic circumstances.

Firstly, the arrow and the knife. There is a certain ambiguity here, for these two artifacts embody contradictory connotations. On the one hand the use of the knife and the arrow sustains life in that they are instrumental in getting food for the group. They are used in the hunt and in the distribution of the catch. As symbols it can be said of them that they provide a stimulatory impetus to the feelings commensurate with whatever activity it is desired should obtain. Thus as far as hunting activity goes, the knife and the arrow can be said to evoke and maintain the necessary desires and feelings associated with a successful hunt. There are two aspects here. Firstly there is the utilitarian one concerned with the technical details for the provision of food, and secondly, the other aspect, the moral one—that concerned with the well-being of the group which is facilitated by the provision of sustenance. This perhaps can be linked with Turner's remark that symbolic referents tend to cluster around opposite poles. (Turner 1965). There are the physiological facts of 'blood and gut' activity, as well as the 'sacralized' normative aspect of group sustenance. I choose the word 'sacralized' with reference to Wilson when she writes of the Nyakyusa thus: "first, those things are treated

as sacred which are necessary to the survival of the group..." (Wilson 1957 p.228). It is in this respect that one encounters the dimension of an ethical and moral imperative, a social and moral fact, not just a pragmatic, utilitarian one.

On the other hand, the knife and the arrow are instruments of suicide and therefore injurious to the group or community. Since it is the particular ritual context which determines which referent will be uppermost, it is clear from the words spoken by the joking partner that here the suicidal referent is paramount. The knife and the arrow are suggestive of gross physiological processes and evoke powerful emotions. There is the 'blood and gut' aspect of suicide. But from an ideological aspect it is seen that suicide is something that is negatively valued. If symbols do evince the stimulatory impetus mentioned above, why then present them to the bereaved widower? The answer to this is best understood in a positional analysis of the stones and the water. But before going into this it is worthwhile noting that Wilson speaks of rituals as 'enhancing' fear and then relieving it. (Wilson 1957 p.232). Such symbols here create fear and the attendant cluster of emotions. Yet these are controlled. I now look at the way in which this negatively valued act (and emotions) of suicide are controlled. (I note here what was stressed earlier-that ritual has as one of its prime objectives the control of experience.)

These symbols occur in conjunction with other symbols, and the overall semantic configuration which emerges from this particular concatenation of symbols is that of clearly stated positive values. The knife and the arrow are immersed in water together with three stones, and these latter are of the Earth shrine. The stones of the Earth shrine

have certain symbolic connotations—the protection of life and the warding off of evil influences, death and disease. Suicide is an offense against the Earth shrine and those who have committed it are not entitled to a 'decent' burial. The stones from the shrine can be buried at the foot of the ladder leading to the roof, or in the doorway of the byre. (Goody p.78).

Here they function for the symbolic maintenance of hearth and home.

Elsewhere I read that they are used in the rite of 'sweeping the soul' (Goody p.367). When the soul leaves the body it leaves the skin all dirty and a sacrifice has to be made to cleanse the body so that the soul can re-enter. Goody describes the sacrifice for a youth who had returned from work in the south, and of whom it was said that his soul had been seen in the market place. Hence the need for the rite. Without going into any detail, it is evident that the stones afford a symbolic location for the values, norms and feelings associated with hearth and home, and the returning son is reminded in such a ritual of duties and feelings towards his kin and lineage home.

The stones therefore function in the broadest sense for that which is socially and morally good. In this specifically operational context of the mortuary ritual and from the particular conjunction of the stones vis a vis other symbols in the rite, it is apparent that the stones constitute something of a symbolic antidote to the connotative and conative significance of the arrow and the knife. They neutralise the socially harmful suggestions evoked by these instruments and exert a control for the good. Similarly, the water which cools the anger. In this symbolic complex the widower is presented with suggestion and counter-suggestion, measure and counter-measure. Fear and tension are enhanced so that they may be relieved. The drinking of the water is thus symbolically purgative in its effect. It means that a problem has been recognized, i.e. the possibility of suicide by a grieving widower.

As such it is susceptible to the solutions of control, a ritual control. In a sense it may be said that the drinking of the water has a medical and prophylactic aspect in that it is the drinking of a solution, and the whole act embraces the physiological fact of actually taking in water into the body, and the ideological fact of taking into oneself (accepting) the norms and values of the community, one natural value of which is the urging of life despite death.

A similar service of affliction, i.e. the urging of life despite death is reported by Fortes on the Tallensi (Fortes 1945 p.95-96). He discussed it under the head of "Privileged Moral Concern", though it was not performed by joking partners. Pairs of clans or lineages usually on the margin of the field of clanship of each had the privilege of moral coercion over each other's members. In particular Fortes writes of a man whose child had been accidentally burned to death, and the father had consequently abandoned himself to grief and wished to die. His brothers therefore sent for members of that clan to whom their own would have to yield, i.e. the clan which could evince its "privileged moral concern"; and it was these people who persuaded the grief-stricken father to accept food and water, a sign that he was willing to throw off despair.

Thus I conclude a few instances of the ritual services of affliction performed among the LoDagaa. I have concentrated on the burial groups and the joking partners, and where the latter are concerned, their activities on the first and second day of the funeral, and at the rite of the bathing of the widower. All these instances of symbolic behaviour are the autonomous creations of ritual man in the face of death. This I link up with what has already been stated—that death is a marginal situation, and for Turner *communitas* is a

phenomenon of marginality: religion and art are its products, not economics and politics. This is what I mean when I say that such creations are autonomous, i.e. they are not 'politically determined'.

Nonetheless, they can and do have a relevance for political man-man who is concerned with relations of power, how these are organized and articulated symbolically. This is where morality, *communitas* and catharsis (in short, custom) can be seen as serviceable in channeling and in supporting an elementary relation of alliance. Goody remarks that such services of affliction are functionally similar to marriage, but in this they have a greater potential for elaboration, "for the very reason that services of affliction do not have the same biological basis as rights in women. A whole hierarchy of exchanging groups may be erected." (Goody p.65). He also remarks, and I quote, "They serve not only to relieve affliction but also to create bonds of a political kind. By the externalization of these duties towards one's dead.....a system of exchange is built up that in itself makes for the rule of law and order. For by such methods positive relationships are established between groups, and these provide a strong reaction against acts that lead to a breakdown in the system of reciprocal services. In this way, the system of reciprocating groups tends to perpetuate not only specific services in the context of which the groups have emerged, but also positive social relationships in general. Both the exchange of services and the threat of the withdrawal of reciprocity are mechanisms of special importance to segmentary or stateless systems-those in which central institutions for the maintenance of social control are absent." (Goody p.69). This extract from Goody's material delineates what is, in effect, the political strength of custom, for custom is able to furnish the form of political relations with a substance which is inherently resilient.

Where the elementary relation of alliance is concerned-in particular the Ambo and the LoDagaa material-I have noted the potentiality of death as an occasion which is resorted to in order to support a network of political alliances. Such customary symbolic behaviour as embodied in the ritual services of affliction can be used to articulate relationships of power between groups. For the Ambo and the LoDagaa, emphasis has been on such a relationship as it obtains between groups of equal standing, so to speak. This symbolic behaviour can afford a solidarity or communion between units (and potential enemies in a system where political organization is segmentary). It can afford the groups a ritual and moral cohesion and dependency which is politically functional. Thus I have observed the symbolization of enduring ties of an alliance nature between like units. But, and this is important to note, such a relationship need not be between groups of equal standing. It can obtain between groups of unequal standing politically, for social order involves relations between superiors, inferiors and equals. For instance, I later note how an incoming conquering force can institute a relationship with the conquered (or the conquered with the conqueror), which is articulated and buttressed by symbolic services that one performs for the other at a funeral. A relationship of power is thereby stabilized-though this is fundamentally an elementary relation of alliance.

Having considered the ritual and moral significance of services of affliction among the Ambo and the LoDagaa and commented on the political potential of these, I return to the Ambo material in order to discuss it vis a vis the notion of clanship as such, and suggest that a useful perspective can be found by locating ritual services of affliction in the context of identity. Among the Ambo, it will be remembered, the institution of funeral friendship which obtained between clans was something that Stefaniszyn attached great significance to. The interrelation of clan objects had its primary aim in the assistance at the funeral of a friend, and that joking relationships were, in this respect, "accessory". (Stefaniszyn AFRICA 1950 p.290). Richards in her article entitled "Reciprocal Clan Relationships among the Bemba of N.E. Rhodesia" (MAN 1937) also attached importance to the "ceremonial duties which are chiefly confined to funeral rites.", and she went into historical reasons for the development of the customary institution of funeral friendship (Bemba:-banungwe; Ambo:-bunungwe). Likewise, Douglas in her comment on Stefaniszyn's material attempted to place the joking relations between clans within the wider context of the funeral friendship. This orientation is something which Colson, writing of the Tonga, is not too willing to accept. She prefers to retain the term "clan-joking relationship" since among the Tonga the funeral is only one and perhaps not the most important institution in which the relationship between clans operates (Colson 1962). What I choose to stress, however, is precisely the fact that such an arrangement is between clans as such.

Clans, it would appear from Apthorpe's foreword to Stefaniszyn's book (1964), have posed a problem for the Central Africanist-especially of the Manchester School. On the one hand, they are seen as non-corporate, its members never coming together on any occasion as a mass unit, so to speak.

On the other hand, they are, as Colson rightly points out, far from non-ephemeral in their existence. In fact they are for the Tonga an invariable institution, and the Tonga themselves will argue that clanship is of the greatest importance in their lives. "The clan-not as a body of people, but as an institution-is the most permanent element in Tonga social organization." (Colson: Seven Tribes of British Central Africa. 1949 p.132). Their perduring nature stands in contrast to the immediate flux of matrilineal groupings and village formations. Gluckman in his foreword to Colson's book (1962) notes this point with emphasis. Although clans are not so tangibly and immediately corporate (in this they differ from the matrilineal groupings), their very great significance cannot be overlooked. I quote, "Hence the clans stand for an ultimate social morality, through the system which interlinks many clans as clan-jokers and one set of values of social life are embodied in the only enduring groups." (foreword xi). He elaborates on this in his book "Politics, Law and Ritual" in the chapter on stateless societies and the maintenance of order. He chooses Colson's Tonga, who indigenously, had no chiefs, and among whom the institution of clan-joking relationships functioned to uphold an order sanctioned by an ultimate social morality. Among the Bemba and the Ambo, however, chiefs did exist-and given this structural difference between the tribes, I shall endeavour to see what could be a possible function of this cultural institution, common to them all.

Apthorpe commends Stefaniszyn for showing clanship "to be of considerable social significance as a concept which is current and acted upon in the population concerned." (Stefaniszyn 1964 viii-ix). Richards too, in her material on the Bemba emphasises the significance of the clan or mukoa membership, which "determines a man's legal affiliation, his descent, and his succession to the name and status of dead relatives, or

to particular offices, ritual or political. It gives him rights to hospitality and support." (Richards MAN 1937 p.188). A man describes himself as a member of such and such a mukoa, and uses the mukoa name, which is the distinguishing mark of the clan. Thus what is borne out in Stefaniszyn's, Richards's and Colson's material is the ultimate significance of belonging to a clan, even though it may not be so tangibly and immediately corporate on the ground, as is the matrilineal grouping in a village.

Now the institution of funeral friendship operates, as has been stressed, between clans, and in all these cases rests on either a hostile or dependent association between clan objects. I earlier commented on the political significance of such a cultural form when writing on services of affliction. Richards's reasons concerning the origin of the institution among the Bemba lay in the tentative explanation that reciprocal clan relationships derived from the Bemba method of conquest, where the first settlers prayed to local spirits and buried chiefs, who had been newcomers (MAN 1937 p.192). Here, the institution functions as a customary symbolic form which articulates and stabilizes a new relationship of power between an incoming group and autochthonous inhabitants. This, of course, is a historical explanation and would not necessarily account for the persistence of such a custom at the time Richards was writing her article (its being that time which I am interested in here). Douglas gave her reasons as to the function of this custom among the Ambo (the which reason I quoted on p.11). Such an explanation I do not contest, but wonder whether the material might not be located in a broader perspective, a 'political' perspective wherein I may demonstrate what could be a function of this customary institution common to all the tribes I am speaking of.

Before returning to this broader perspective, I should like to note with emphasis what Gluckman had to say concerning the clan relationships, i.e. that they endorsed and kept in awareness "an ultimate social morality." This fact I have stressed when considering the services of affliction-the way in which a morality is ritually implemented-the 'privileged moral concern etc'. I ask what is ultimate, and why so, about these relationships? One finds that in so far as any one clan has a widely ramifying range of permitted networks, it is not improbable that by tracing the networks of each clan, one will eventually be brought to encompass the whole tribe as a unit. Of the Tonga, Colson writes, "This results in a web of ties between clans rather than a division of the clans into a number of segments." (Colson 1962 p.73). In a similar vein, Stefaniszyn sees clanship as an integrating factor among the Ambo: "The function of funeral friendship is the social integration of potentially and actually mistrustful 'strangers'" (Stefaniszyn 1964 p.7). (Here one is reminded of Cohen's communion between potential enemies). It is in this respect that one can eventually speak of an ultimate social morality, where because of the various possible permutations and combinations of linkages and their ramifications, the whole tribe can be embraced as a clearly demarcated entity, within which such links, in their variety, operate. See here the table provided by Colson p.74 of her book (it seems there is a network system, not entirely close-knit, but certainly not entirely loose-knit.) The ultimate social morality has therefore as its boundaries, the tribe: it is anchored to this social grouping. This is so for the Tonga and for the Ambo (See the final section of Stefaniszyn's article for the multifarious clan affiliations. AFRICA 1950). For the Bemba one finds, so Richards tells us, that there has been a marked extension of reciprocal relationships beyond the historically original dyadic association of clans, and that this is noticeably the case where

educated Bemba are concerned. (MAN 1937 p.193). She writes that they, "make careful lists of all the possible pairs of clans and reach a far greater number than those supplied by an illiterate old native". (p.193). Earlier Richards remarks concerning this extension, "I have no evidence that this process took place in the past but I have seen it occurring today." (p.193) It seems then that there is a proliferation if not an intensification of a customary symbolic form. One would presume that this association between clan objects is not purely an ideational, algebraic or metaphysical exercise, but is implemented in social and ritual action, being based on ceremonial functions, the chief duties of which are, as has been seen, those "confined to funeral rites." (Richards MAN 1937 p.190).

I now ask, what does it mean to perform services of affliction for the person of a different clan? Remember that a man's social identity in these cases lies in his clan membership. At a funeral the very fact that people from different clans are present in their role-playing capacity as respective clan members per se, means that it is clan identities that are of ultimate significance. Cohen has written (1969a) "A man discovers his identity in interaction with others." (1969a p.221). What emerges from the funeral ritual is that clan identities are asserted in interaction. A man dies as a member of his clan-just as he so lived-and the participation of funeral friends in their capacity as members of respective clans is a vindication of this very fact. It is in the performance of these services in all their emotional, moral and cathartic import, that identities are legitimized. But it is legitimation through interaction, for one's own boundaries achieve definition not in isolation but through interaction. It has been seen how the funeral friends constitute an outside category which imposes a morality and facilitates a *communitas*

within the bereaved group. If they are an outside vis a vis an inside, then in this mutual arrangement they must be an inside to some outside, and so have services performed for themselves. In this way, the morality is extended to an ultimate dimension, that of the widest social grouping.

Clanship, therefore, is a distinctive feature for the Tonga, the Bemba and the Ambo. But it is both a moral and a political feature. The political feature is this widest social grouping and the moral universe that it constitutes for the tribe, and within which reciprocal relationships function. In as much as power is segmentary and the various clans are possible and potential enemies (a point already noted) then the institution of funeral friendship, which definitively asserts a clan identity creates a communion between potential enemies and binds them in the moral universe of the widest identity, a tribal identity.

This tribal identity relates to the broader 'political' perspective which I mentioned earlier. It concerns the 'why so' of these ultimate relationships, and I would try to understand it as having a relevance in a Colonial context. Regarding the Bemba I noted the proliferation if not intensification of a customary symbolic form,- particularly among the educated. An analagous situation of such an intensification may be found in the case of Colson's Makah Indians, where a traditional symbolic form (gossip and scandalizing) functioned in a contemporary situation to delineate a distinctiveness, to uphold Makah norms and values and articulate an identity vis a vis that which was not Makah. It symbolized the distinctiveness of a social grouping in the American nation, "whose other members were excluded from this war of scandal" (Gluckman's comment. Gluckman 1965 p.299). It maintained an awareness of that which was Makah, and inspite of the seemingly divisive consequences of gossip and scandal in the community, nonetheless

served as an integrating factor for the Makah as Makah in the flux of modern social, economic and political forces. It thus articulated a moral and political identity which had a relevance only in the overall context of Makah involvement in and interaction with the wider social system. An analysis along similar lines, of a customary institution, would be Cohen's study of the Arab 'hamula' in the overall context of Arab involvement (an enforced one) in the State of Israel. (Cohen 1965).

In the like fashion I would perhaps postulate such a significance for the customary institution of funeral friendship as it operates within and integrates a tribe: it functions in the political context of Colonial government. This context is well-documented by Richards for the Bemba (Richards 1940 p.112-120), and by Colson for the Tonga (Colson 1962 Chpt VII p.207-232), though Stefaniszyn does not detail it for the Ambo. Indigenous political and economic structures may change under the impact of new social, political and economic forces. Significantly enough Richards points out, "All the imikoa are paired with opposite clans that perform reciprocal ritual duties for each other, but this form of social grouping does not seem to affect the political organization at all at the present day." (Richards 1940 p.87-88). Couple this with what she wrote concerning the educated Bemba and perhaps it will be understood that the persistence of this customary symbolic form-at the time she was writing-served to articulate a tribal identity, something which was kept in awareness and given a new significance, a political complexion, in the impact on indigenous political and economic structures, of new complex processes and forces. It is an identity which becomes situationally relevant in the Colonial context.

This correlates strongly with what Baldelli has written concerning the resilience of custom. It will be recalled that he drew the distinction between an ethical experience (custom being the repository

of the ethical capital) and that concerned with power-the political experience. Power, he saw as epitomized in the organizational and administrative structures of the State. Chapter 11 of his book deals at length with this difference between custom and the State, and what he sees as the political exploitation of the ethical capital (and custom) by the State, and how there is a difference in 'rhythms' between the two (p.55). This antithesis paralleled Turner's analysis of *communitas* and structure. Moreover Baldelli mentioned how custom could persist while the organizational and administrative structures of the State underwent change or could disappear altogether (p.55-57). As has been observed in Richards's material, there were the inikoa on the one hand, and the political organization on the other.

This dichotomy is reasonable enough, but it has to be pointed out that custom and *communitas* can be studied as political responses. *Communitas*, Turner writes, can be seen as the response of structural inferiors (and, I add, those threatened with structural inferiority.) Structural inferiors are those, for example, who are politically disadvantaged in the State, and the threat of structural inferiority would depict the situation of those groups which are politically powerful but whose dominance is in question or under attack. As noted, such a response in a political situation can serve to hold together, informally, a political grouping. It denotes what can be seen as the 'political' strength of custom-the conversion of the ethical capital into an informal political capital. Custom is here the resource of a political group, and this is a matter I will pursue in Chapter V in connection with the Creoles and the Merina. Where the performance of ritual services at a funeral is concerned, I see these as customary activities which can serve to integrate a tribe by means of a network of alliances, and give it an identity in a political situation, i.e. a Colonial context.

Chapter 11

The American Funeral Industry.

Maquet (1971) writes of "societal relations", and with this term he refers "exclusively to those relations that bring together actors of the same society." (p.17). He distinguishes a number of such relations in society and says that "each relation is the focus of a specific societal network", and this network "is institutionalised in each society where it appears." (p.23). One of these relations is the elementary relation of alliance which I have already looked at in connection with the performance of services of affliction, and another is the elementary relation of association which "binds actors who voluntarily unite in order to reach a common goal." (p.25). He writes of an association in a global society as "essentially a group of men inside a global society who combine to apply pressure on others in order to attain their common goal." (p.226). Elsewhere he speaks of "a corporate body", "a pressure group". (p.230). This description depicts a corporate interest group and such is the American Funeral Industry.

Just as the various groups in the Ambo and the LoDagaa contexts were seen to perform cathartic services for the bereaved and to dispose of the dead body, so the American Funeral Industry can be seen as performing services in connection with the body and the bereaved-the latter undergoing what the funeral director considers 'grief-therapy'. In this respect it would seem that the Funeral Industry could be understood under the head "services of affliction" in as much as the bereaved and the dead body receive attention and service from an outside category. This understanding would be inaccurate for an important difference which distinguishes the operations of the American Funeral Industry from the services of affliction among the LoDagaa and the Ambo (and the Central African Tribes in general) is the lack of reciprocity. Among these latter there is the mutual performance of such services, whereas

in the American example the idea of mutual performance, reciprocal services does not arise. Instead it is the matter of an exclusive, full-time association in a global society which has a monopoly on the performance of particular services-services which it performs, at a fee, for those outside the association.

Goody (1962 p.66-67) comments on the fact that specialist groups performing their services may form a pariah group and in this case the orientation would look to "the position of groups who are obliged to perform services that the society recognizes to be inadequately rewarded, obliged either by the threat of force as in certain conquest situations, or by the existence of other sanctions. In other words, it (concentration on the idea of reciprocal interaction) may neglect the power or authority differential between the parties involved in the transfer of goods and services." (p.66-67). This quotation from Goody, if I understand it aright, would seem to imply the existence of negative sanctions applied to oblige a group to perform certain services. However, the American Funeral Industry cannot be seen simply in this light, since from Mitford's account and treatment of it an opposite situation would appear to exist. It is not obliged by the threat of force. On the contrary Mitford points to the positive economic benefits which accrue to the Industry in its position of ritual authority.

According to Goody, "not burying one's own dead" (p.64) was an injunction for the LoDagaa-a positive injunction which necessitated a reliance upon groups and categories of persons outside the circle of bereaved kin, and which had possibilities for the channeling of power in political alliances. In the American situation it would seem that

the words still apply but the categories or groups that have to be relied upon are of an associational kind, that is to say, full-time specialised interest groups in the global society, which have a common goal in promoting a particular life style concerning death and the disposal of the body.

This specialist associational context may not always have been the case, for Mitford remarks that from colonial days until the 19th century the American Funeral was almost exclusively a family affair in the sense that the family and close friends performed most of the duties in connection with the dead body itself. They would wash the body and lay it out, drape it in a winding sheet and order the coffin from the local carpenter. They would carry the coffin on foot from the home of the deceased to the church, and afterwards to the graveyard, and would, were the church sexton unavailable, dig the grave. The funeral service would be held in the church over the pall-covered bier, and a brief committal prayer would be said at the graveside. Between the death and the actual funeral the body would lie in the family parlour where the mourners could take it in turns to watch over the body. Noteworthy in this account is the significance of close friends who would be able to perform services for the bereaved. Mitford goes on to note how the first undertakers were drawn mainly from three occupations, all concerned with some aspect of burial: the livery stable keeper who provided the hearse and funeral carriage; the carpenter or cabinet maker who made the coffins; and the sexton who was generally in charge of bell-tolling and grave-digging. Mitford mentions that in some of the larger cities midwives and nurses advertised their services as occupational layers-out of the dead. (Mitford 1963 p.163).

This contrasts with the contemporary situation where

institutional differentiation is seen in the emergence of full-time specialized interest groups which undertake to perform services. Maybe Mitford's depiction of the traditional situation delineates a context in which (to use Southall's perspective) there is a broadness of role definition and a diffuseness in the application of roles. Frankenberg who refers to Southall's analysis of role relationships, writes of a situation in which there is a predominance of multiple role relationships. (Frankenberg 1966 p.248-251 and p.287-288). For instance, the livery stable keeper, the carpenter and cabinet maker, the nurse and the midwife perform certain services in connection with the dead which may be subsidiary to other of their occupational concerns. The relationship of the bereaved to those performing services may perhaps indicate a new role rather than a new role relationship with a different person. The relationship to the livery stable keeper may vary depending on the type of service required. A bereaved person will need a different type of service from that which a non-bereaved person requires. The bereaved and the non-bereaved, in this respect, have different roles. Writing of multiple role relationships Frankenberg says: "People....tend to play different roles to the same person" (p.287), and "....new social ties are multiplied: the same people, new relationships with them." (p.288). In the context of institutional differentiation the broadness of role definition and diffuseness in the application of roles are no longer conspicuous features of social organization. Frankenberg writes: "At the same time as roles become more narrow in their application to different sectors of social life, they become less diffuse and more specific in their definition." (p.249). He mentions that in the countryside with a peasant economy there are few specialists, that one individual must plough and sow and reap and mow to be a farmer's boy. In the town a diffuse role has been replaced by many specific ones.

One group of specialists carries out one particular role, another group another role. (p.250). This is what one finds as far as the American Funeral Industry is concerned.

The Funeral Industry has a ritual concern and an economic concern with death. The former concern I understand in terms of 'custom' and the latter, in terms of 'politics'. I choose the word 'politics' to refer here to the economic concern which the Funeral Industry has with a particular way of death and in this perspective understand the Industry as an economic interest group which manipulates the symbolic forms of 'custom' in the pursuit, monopoly and defence of its economic interest. This involves a consideration of the Industry's struggle against critical opposition, and its symbolic justification of its own position. As much as anything Mitford's book can be seen as the political symbol of a counter-position: it is not simply a technical expose of the operations of the Funeral Industry. It is the counter-position, for example, of the Funeral Associations whose wish for simple custom and inexpensive funerals involves them in a struggle against the monopolies of the Funeral Industry. The latter, are in turn impelled to justify and defend their position.

Where an association in a global society is concerned there are, according to Maquet, two aspects to be considered-the internal and the external. The former refers to the way in which the group is functionally organized within in the pursuit of its interest. The latter aspect has two facets and concerns the relations between the association and the global society. On the one hand the Industry depends for its ritual and economic survival on a willing consumer public, those outside the association. Here, the interest group is at

a structural advantage so to speak if its members are united in the pursuit of a common goal and if non-members with whom it comes into contact are not usually so united. This in part is explained by the fact that the Funeral Industry is a full-time specialist group, whereas its clients are not full-time bereaved. Thus it is better able to exert pressure on clients in such a situation and so maintain a monopoly on its ritual and economic interest in death. On the other hand there is the question of opposition to the monopolies of the Funeral Industry and this as I have already mentioned comes from such as the Funeral Associations, and here there is a full-time corporate opposition within the global society. This involves a consideration of the way in which the Funeral Industry organizes itself and of the symbolic means by which it defends itself and promotes its interest in coping with such opposition.

In the case of services of affliction among the Bemba it will be remembered that I suggested there was a correlation between the proliferation and intensification of a customary symbolic form on the one hand, and the political factor on the other. In a similar sense I understand the profusion and creation of customary procedures concerning the American Way of Death as correlated with the economic factor:-the economic interest of the Funeral Industry, for the Industry is an economic interest group which is also an association of ritual experts who conduct, control and create customary ritual procedures concerning death. They have a monopoly on these customary procedures and an economic interest in them.

Although I have written in terms of a Funeral Industry as such and thereby presupposed something like a monolithic interest group,

in effect I am dealing with a multiplicity of interest groups. The Funeral Industry is composed of a number of separate interest groups which have a collective concern with a particular way of death, and this is most noticeable when that way of death is attacked in all its aspects. In spite of this collective concern the various groups-as regards the specialist services that each performs-are seen to stand in a logical relationship of competition one with another. There are for instance the funeral directors, the casket manufacturers, the vault manufacturers, the florists, the cemetery promoters and those in the cremation business.

The most important position is occupied by the funeral director. It is he, according to Mitford, "who pockets slightly more than half of the funeral dollar" (p.97). However, he is more often than not placed in a debt relation to the casket manufacturers, and these creditors may often take over failing mortuaries. The casket manufacturers aim to oblige the funeral director to sell the most expensive caskets, the costliest ones being built of the thickest metal and the cheaper ones being constructed of thin sheet metal over a wooden frame. (There was thus little difference in appearance between the two types of casket, merely a difference in weight and cost. Eventually the casket-manufacturers decided that it would be better to make the cheaper variety so hideous that customers would decide on the more expensive article-the solid metal casket. This created difficulties for another interest group, the crematoria for the latter's equipment was not geared to the combustion of metal caskets.)

The funeral director therefore is seen to occupy a particularly important place financially and ritually in the Funeral business, and in this respect Mitford considers the other interest groups under the head:

"The Allied Industries". One such allied industry is the cemetery business and a relationship of conflict and competition exists between this industry and the funeral director. The funeral directors are in the most advantageous position because they are usually the first of the interest groups to come into contact with a client and after the funeral director has dealt with him there is little money left over for a grave.

The cemetery promoters claim that the funeral directors induce the bereaved family to spend most of the money on the casket (and the funeral director may himself be under pressure from the casket manufacturers to sell the costliest caskets) and even dissuade the client from making direct contact with the cemeteries and instead order a cheap grave over the telephone.

The American Cemetery (a trade magazine) advises that the purchase of a grave should not be handled through the funeral director and that the bereaved should make a personal visit to the cemetery. A counter-weapon to the funeral directors is the "pre-need" sale whereby the consumer public are induced to buy their graves well in advance of their own demise. This issue even came to the courts and Mitford notes one such case before the Texas legislature when the funeral directors sponsored a measure to regulate pre-need selling. (Mitford 1963 p.101).

Another interest group concerns itself with the sale of vaults and to a large extent has to rely on the good will of the funeral directors. The vault manufacturers are concerned that the funeral director's clients should purchase an expensive vault in which to place the casket. Mitford remarks that these manufacturers are constantly hauling the cemetery people into court. (p.102), though they do their utmost to cultivate the friendship of the funeral directors.

The flower industry is another important interest group which has an economic and ritual concern with death. It too has to rely on the good will of the funeral director, who words the obituary notices

in the newspapers, takes care of the flowers when they are delivered to the chapel (the funeral director's establishment), arranges them and finally disposes of them. From this he gets no profit and Mitford notes a logical conflict of interest in the ritual of the funeral: a full floral blanket, ritually and economically advantageous to the florists would completely cover the ornate casket and detract from the ritual concern of the funeral director's work. Such differences are submerged however in the struggle against what is seen as a common danger: the attack on the economics and ritual of the American Way of Death.

Those in the cremation business have a financial interest in the sale of niche and urn, and of columbarium where the ashes so placed will receive a perpetual care. It is principally the cemetery operators who are in the business and much debate seems to have centered around the economic merits and demerits of cremation vis a vis ground burial. This particular manner of what the Industry calls "preparing the remains for memorialization" affects the interests of the funeral directors for those clients who ask the funeral director for cremation tend to choose on the whole cheaper and less elaborate caskets. Needless to say, the funeral director will try to dissuade clients from choosing cremation. (See Mitford p.144).

Each of these interest groups has its own particular justification, its own symbolic rationale for the customary practices which it follows. For instance, the activities of the funeral director have as the ultimate objective the creation of what is called the "Beautiful Memory Picture". This is the *raison d'etre* of the whole ritual he conducts. I quote: "The Mortician is a purveyor of memories....

a man who provides as a vital part of his service a memory picture in which dignity and beauty and peace are the essential elements. A memory picture is not just for the moment, it exists for all time..... making the transition from life to death more majestic and the parting easier for the survivors to accept", and "How much is it worth to have life's most precious events recorded in the archives of the mind?..... But the worth of a memory cannot be measured in money.....its value transcends all cost." (Taken from the photographic montage preceding the title page of Mitford's book). This poetic phraseology directed to the consumer briefly alludes to the question of cost but plays it down and instead infuses the justification with those sentiments which are intended to have a moral and ritual appeal to the bereaved whose thoughts are thereby oriented to what is essentially a non-economic ritual event of the Beautiful Memory Picture. Indeed, the very words "Beautiful Memory Picture" are fundamentally non-economic, non-political and are related to the thoughts, feelings and emotions which are evoked by the experience of death. In this sense they relate to the autonomous creations of ritual man in his reaction to death. The funeral director is a ritual expert in his management and direction of the proceedings in the funeral home. His job is not a mere technical one, facilitating the actual disposal of the dead. It is a ritual office, and the words quoted above to justify the creation of the Beautiful Memory Picture, I understand as 'myth'-in the sense that Leach uses the word, for they are used "to validate a social custom, to accompany a religious performance." (Leach 1970 p.265).

Cremation, too, has its ritual, poetic language. Mitford refers to what those in the business see as the "....clean, beautiful method of resolution by incandescence rather than the unspeakable horrors of decay.....we think of our loved one as in his ethereal body

as 'robed in his garments of light'." (p.144). Later one reads, "In its niche, the urn holding the snow-white fragments of the earthly garment, which for a time clothed the soul of the loved one, is safe from the driving rains of autumn and the snows of winter." (p.145). This is not a technical account of what happens in the act of cremation, but a poetic description which justifies the practice of cremation. Its words are intended to imply a warmth of human values and portray (from the point of view of the crematorium) that which is morally and ritually good. On the one hand there is the physiological aspect of the images evoked by the description, the sensory pole:-the concrete niche, the material and tangible urn, the ashes and the elements. On the other hand there is the ideological pole which speaks the value of cremation:-the solicitude for the 'soul of the loved one', the 'snow-white fragments' (not simply ashes). These words evoke ultimate values and sentiments, thoughts and feelings concerning death and are designed to impel people to act ritually, that is to say, to impel clients to ask for the ritual practice of cremation, when they come to dispose of their dead.

A similar language-orientation is found in the cemetery business. This aspect is exemplified in Forest Lawn Memorial Park of Southern California where the poetic language receives a visual implementation in statuary, churches, mausoleums, floral displays and works of art. What words there are to describe the various parts of the ritual panorama are resonant with values, feelings and emotions, all of which place death, so to speak, in an ultimate poetic perspective: death as an experience which is the province of ritual man. This ritual response is seen in such words as, "Whispering Pines, Babyland, Everlasting Love, Kindly Light, Memorial Court of Honour, Hall of History, Haven of Peace, Triumphant Faith, Ascension, Brotherly Love." There is a church called

"Wee Kirk o' the Heather", statues with such names as "Little Duck Mother", "Little Pals", "Look Mommy!" There is also a large painting of the Crucifixion and a stained glass reproduction of the Last Supper. These are visual symbols which themselves give a justification for the 'ritual' existence of the cemetery.

This perspective is that of ritual man and the creation of custom. The creator of Forest Lawn was Dr. Hubert Eaton, and I should like to concentrate on the example of Eaton because Mitford provides interesting material that not only enables one to focus on ritual man and his creations but also on the activities of economic man and his interests. Saying this however I do not imply an emphasis on the individual at the expense of the group. Eaton is an example of a successful cemetery promoter, but the cemetery promoters as such constitute an interest group.

Forest Lawn Memorial Park Association, Inc., is a non-profit corporation and Mitford describes it as "the sun around which cluster a galaxy of Eaton-controlled commercial corporations and holding companies." (p.135). There is the Forest Lawn Company, a Nevada corporation, which is a land company. There is a holding company which owns over 99% of the land company's stock. There is a life insurance company (which at the time Mitford was writing had been recently sold), a mortgage and loan company. The actual operation of the cemetery-the running of the mortuary, the flower shop, the sale of graves, crypts, vaults, statuary, postcards and souvenirs-is the responsibility of the non-profit corporation, and Mitford writes, "Discreetly behind the scenes is Eaton's land company, skimming off 50% of the proceeds of sales of lots, plots and graves, and 60% of the gross on all sales of niches, crypts, vaults and other mausoleum space." (Mitford p.135).

Earlier in her book Mitford concentrates on this non-profit aspect of cemetery promotions. The sale of land for use as a cemetery is tax free and cemeteries can be established as non-profit corporations. This non-profit aspect obviates the necessity to pay income tax on the sale of graves. Mitford takes the hypothetical example of Foreverness Lawn Memory Gardens, Inc. (p.113). This is organized as a non-profit cemetery corporation which is closely controlled by the promoters. Foreverness does not own any land itself. Instead the acreage which will be used for burial plots is owned by the promoters, either in their own names or in the name of a closely held land company. They enter into a contract with themselves: the land company has a contract with Foreverness which provides that Foreverness will operate the cemetery and sell the graves, and the promoters will receive for each grave sold 50% of the selling price and for each mausoleum crypt 60%. When all this is coupled with the business of "pre-need" sales and the consequent large-scale development of land for cemetery purposes, then far higher profits can be realized in this sphere of real estate, than in the case of the real estate promoter who divides up and sells land for live occupancy. (p.113).

Mitford describes the financial arrangements which exist between these various Eaton-controlled corporations and holding companies on the one hand, and Memorial Park Association, Inc., on the other. When the cemetery needs additional land, it does not acquire it directly, even though to do so would be to the 'tax free' advantage of the cemetery. Instead what happens is that the land company buys and develops land with money which it borrows from the cemetery at only 3% interest. In 1959 Eaton's land company had borrowed over 5 million dollars from the non-profit company at an extremely favourable rate.

In fact all Eaton's commercial companies enjoy the most beneficial arrangements with the non-profit Memorial Park Company, and Mitford mentions how Eaton's land company sold several churches to the non-profit company for 18 times their depreciated cost and so realized a profit of over 1 million dollars. (p.135).

Having considered ritual man's concern and economic man's concern with death I examine in detail what happens when a death occurs, and here three factors are significant: 1. the activities performed in connection with the dead body itself; 2. those services performed for the bereaved; 3. those who perform these services. A number of interest groups are mobilized into action but in particular the funeral director and his establishment, the chapel or funeral home, which operates twenty four hours a day. The funeral director is the first to perform any service. The body is removed to his establishment, the chapel which has a number of various rooms. There is an arrangements room where the bereaved discuss arrangements concerning the type of funeral wanted; a selection room where the bereaved select a casket in which the deceased is to be placed; a preparation room where the dead body undergoes various treatments-embalming and restorative work-before being placed in the casket; and a slumber room where the restored and embalmed body in its casket can be viewed by the bereaved kin and friends. The funeral home has within its confines, so to speak, a number of ritually demarcated areas.

In the preparation room the body is treated by a specialist dermasurgeon, a mortician who has undergone special training at an embalming school. His equipment comprises scalpels, scissors, augers forceps, clamps, needles, pumps, tubes, bowls and basins. He has an array of fluids, sprays, pastes, oils, powders and creams with which to

treat tissues. In addition there are ranges of cosmetic waxes and paints to model such things as missing ears and lips, and there is even Plaster of Paris to replace lost limbs. First of all the blood is drained out through the veins and an embalming fluid is pumped in through the arteries. A choice of embalming fluids is available, and these are used according to the age and sex of the deceased and the type of skin complexion which the dermasurgeon aims at producing in the dead body. In all, from three to six gallons of a dyed and perfumed solution of formaldehyde, glycerin, borax, phenol, alcohol and water are pumped into the body and circulate around it. After this a trocar, a long hollow needle attached to a tube is inserted into the abdomen and poked around the entrails and chest cavity. The contents of these are pumped out and a special cavity fluid is pumped in. This completes the work on embalming, and the body is then let rest for eight to ten hours before restorative work on limbs and tissues can begin.

Restorative work on the embalmed body means that lost limbs can be replaced by substitutes cast in Plaster of Paris. Restorative waxes can provide model replacements for lip, ear or nose if need be. Swollen tissues can be reduced by removing tissue, and a variety of massage creams can be pumped into the hollowed and sunken areas by means of a hypodermic syringe, and the positioning of lips and the formation of features of the face are achieved by the insertion of various pins. After this process the body is shaved, washed and dressed. Cosmetic creams are applied to hands and face, the hair is shampooed and combed, and the hands manicured, and the deceased provided with burial clothing and footwear.

Jones (1967) describes the treatment afforded an eighty year old lady. The hair "is newly done, pale blond. The eyelids are held

down over eye-caps (two sizes, round or oval, flesh or transparent).....
 The mouth is held over padding by a....fanged device, covered thickly
 with a heavy flush of youth foundation and carefully painted in with
 pale colours camouflaging any little awkwardnesses.....The prettily
 tinted face looks just like plaster....the wrinkles have all been
 lifted, stitched away." (Jones 1967 p.25). She is then placed in a casket
 which has already been selected by the bereaved kin, and this "is lined with
 ruched, bone-coloured egg-shell velvet.....There is a ruched pillow
 under her head....she is dressed in pale pink lace over taffeta, and a
 little cloud of matching net hovers round her shoulders." Elsewhere
 in her book Jones describes the American casket: "Inside.....is the
 greatest glory, a cosmetic range of frosted crepes and moon-dust velvets
 gathered, pleated, ruched and twitched into the most fantastic variety
 of linings with a plump pillow, side sheets, coverlet and lid to match,
 pastel for ladies, ruby for gentlemen." (Jones 1967 p.80).

The body is thus ready for viewing in its casket in the
 slumber room. The actual funeral service, be it in a church or in the
 chapel of the funeral home is an open-casket affair and at the end of
 the service mourners and friends file past the open-casket to take their
 last look. It is here that the Beautiful Memory Picture finds its
 raison d'etre and grief-therapy (evidenced in the quotations I earlier
 gave on p.47) achieves its effect. After this ritual the casket is
 removed to the graveside. Mitford's description of the way in which
 the casket is removed from the funeral home shows to what extent the
 procedure is highly technical, fully mechanized. The casket is moved
 by a hydraulically operated device, a Porto-Lift, to a Glide-Easy
 casket carriage, thence to a Cadillac Funeral Coach. At the graveside
 it is lowered into the grave by a patented mechanical lowering device.

An artificial grass mat conceals the sere earth, and over the grave, to conceal the sky is a portable Steril Chapel Tent. The ritual scattering of the earth is facilitated by a Gordon Leak Proof Earth Dispenser. (Mitford p.46).

In this account I have concentrated in some detail on the activities in which the funeral director and his establishment play a very prominent part. The services offered and performed denote such a specialization of crafts and skills, such a technical complexity that the bereaved would scarcely be able to dispose of the body on their own. These technical skills are the province of ritual specialists, and these specialists are not really dissimilar to the LoDagaa burial group, for the magic and pollution which surrounded the activities of the latter and diacritically marked them off from others are not unlike the mystery and secrecy which shroud the operations of the former in the procedures followed when a body is embalmed and restored. Mitford points out (p.39) that the undertakers have an intractable reticence concerning embalming. They are loath to discuss the subject outside the trade. Even their trade journals are practically unobtainable where the general public are concerned. (p.233). In both the Californian and the LoDagaa contexts, the groups are surrounded by a plethora of ritual secrecy. Both have their own jealously guarded, exclusive techniques and mastery. In both cases, the groups are marked off as ritual experts, who by virtue of their skills exercise a ritual control over the proceedings and over those who take part in them. At one point Mitford writes of the funeral director as "directing the participants through this maze of gadgetry..." (p.46). He is in a controlling position. He conducts the ritual.

At first sight it may appear that the appurtenances and paraphernalia of the mortician in his preparation room, the gadgets of the funeral director are all purely technical contrivances and that these satisfy the basic needs of the actual disposal of the dead body. There is this utilitarian, technical aspect of procedures and artifacts- the purely functional side of disposal. This, however, is only one aspect of human activity. Leach points out, "In fact, of course, very few social actions have this elementary functionally defined form." (Leach 1970 p.11). When writing of the Kachin method of growing rice and the purely functional necessities it involves he states, "Kachin do all these things and in so far as they do this they are performing simple technical acts of a functional kind. These actions serve to satisfy 'basic needs'. But there is much more to it than that. In Kachin 'customary procedure' the routines of clearing the ground, planting the seed, fencing the plot and weeding the growing crop are all patterned according to formal conventions and interspersed with all kinds of technically superfluous frills and decorations.....And so it is with every kind of technical action; there is always the element which is functionally essential and another element which is simply local custom, an aesthetic frill." (p.12). These frills constitute the symbolic actions, the collective representations of a group or community. This is so as regards the disposal of the dead in California. There is another dimension to it than the purely functional, and that is the ritual, cultural dimension. Likewise Worsley (1970) writes that goals which are considered "empirical" have to be achieved by performing "ritual" actions as well as "empirical". He writes that even the scientist working in his laboratory is conducting experiments in a social context and that the laboratory itself is a "complex social sub-system with its norms of behaviour, both those directly intrinsic to the

performance of the work task and other social norms. Thus, the scientist's white coat may have far more to do with status than hygiene. To this degree, our 'technical' acts are thoroughly invested with other complex, non-technical, social meanings." (p.303).

In a similar position is the mortician in his preparation room. The whole array of gadgets and cosmetic paraphernalia are not simply technical instrumentalities, but cultural artifacts-the cultural artifacts of a ritual interest group. Leach has written "Technique has economic material consequences which are measurable and predictable; ritual on the other hand is a symbolic statement which 'says' something about the individuals involved in the action." (Leach 1970 p.13). These cultural artifacts therefore communicate the position of an exclusive ritual group. Moreover they stand as a warranty for that position and the ritual competence vested in it. They validate it. Scissors and scalpels are not just scissors and scalpels but cultural artifacts invested with a symbolic significance which asserts the competence of ritual experts.

Similarly understood are buildings themselves. The funeral home and the cemetery are both geographical locations which have technical functions concerning the actual disposal of the dead. But they also have an ideological function in that they are focal symbols of ritual interest groups and afford a distinguishing justification-a warranty-for the ritual procedures conducted by these groups. These buildings and geographical locations symbolize the identity of the groups. They indicate demarcated areas, geographically and ritually, and ritually announce the group to the outside world, the global society. They validate the existence of the group, objectify in concrete and in physical spaces, so to speak, the group's position.

All these symbols therefore have important functions as regards the internal relations of the association. In particular, the ritual activity on the body is significant. If I consider just ritual man and the internal relations of the association, and neglect for the moment both the external relations of the association and the motivation of economic man, then maybe the Beautiful Memory Picture can be seen in a sense as the creation of and creative of the normative impulse. In this respect I quote Hertz: "The group requires actions that will focus the attention of its members, orientate their imagination in a definite direction, and which will inspire the belief in everybody. The material on which the collective activity will focus after death and which will be the object of the rites is naturally the very body of the deceased." (Hertz 1960 p.83). These activities bring the members of the ritual interest group together. The seemingly technical acts which they perform on the body have their ritual significance in the fact that they are (to quote Worsley), "invested with other complex, non-technical social meanings." This is evident in the quotation Mitford gives from the writings of W. M. Krieger, managing director of the influential National Selected Morticians Association. He describes a staff-meeting at a funeral establishment when the funeral director briefs all on their ritual duties. They are compared to a football team. All have their respective parts and "even the bench-warming third string substitute (must be made to) feel that he is important if the game is to be won." (Mitford p.44-45). This relates to what I call the normative impulse of the group-the way in which members of the group are bound to one another. A team spirit is fostered in team work and a team spirit demands the communication of norms and values which bind the group together and give it a corporate being.

The ritual group has a distinctive language of its own which is not really dissimilar in function to the traditional use of Latin in the Catholic Church. For instance there are the words used to describe matters relating to death. A death certificate is known as a 'vital statistics form'. One never refers to a corpse or body, but 'Mr' or 'Mrs' as the case may be. The funeral director does not have a job to do, but has a 'call'. The dead body is not hauled, but rather 'transferred' or 'removed'. Graves are spoken of as being 'opened and closed', not dug and filled. One speaks of a 'memorial park' not a graveyard or cemetery. There is a 'casket' not a coffin, a 'slumber room' not a laying-out room, a 'casket coach' rather than a hearse. Moreover the deceased 'expired' he did not die.

These are but a few examples. Admittedly it is intended that such words have as a manifest function a euphemistic purpose, i.e. to soften, so to speak, the rigour and harshness surrounding the occasion of death. However they also have an important latent function in that they take on the character of a sort of sacred liturgy, a ritual language which is the possession of a particular group and which expresses and validates the status of that group. (Hence my likening it to Latin). It denotes the competence of ritual experts. There is a sense in which the activities that I have looked at, the use of particular words to denote them, can be seen as "sacralized" in as much as they satisfy the criterion which I quoted when I considered the LoDagaa, namely Wilson's words: "...first, those things are treated as sacred which are necessary to the survival of the group..." The activities of the funeral director and his establishment are in a very obvious (though perhaps trivially true) sense, vital to the ritual survival of the group.

The several preceding paragraphs have delineated the situation of the association in its internal aspect and have concentrated solely on the ritual perspective. As regards the external relations of the association one finds that the global society (and here I refer to the bereaved who seek services from the association) has a ritual dependency on the association and conversely the association depends for its ritual and economic survival on the global society. This ritual survival (and thereby the economic survival) is facilitated by the association's monopoly and manipulation of customary symbolic forms whereby the bereaved are rendered dependent and ritually controlled.

However, as I earlier commented, there is another aspect pertaining to the external relations and the global society and that concerns the actions of a corporate interest group in a situation of conflict, the struggle to protect an interest and maintain a monopoly on it, and so relates to the way in which the group copes with opposition and the organizational problems that this necessitates. The relationship of conflict has implications for the internal relations of the group. It deepens ideological perspectives and group assumptions and sees an intensification of group symbolic forms.

Such an intensification is found in the various ideological justifications that are asserted to support particular ritual practices. For instance, the National Funeral Directors Association commissioned two writers to explore the tradition of the American Funeral. In response these 'official historians', as Mitford calls them, eventually published The History of American Funeral Directing and Funeral Customs the World Over. (Mitford p.155). These writers justified the customary practices of the American Way of Death by stating that

professional funeral services from a lay occupational group-with all that this entails in the way of embalming, restoration and viewing the body-had their roots deep in the history of Western civilization. I quote: "The roots of American Funeral behaviour extends back in a direct line several thousand years to early Judaeo-Christian beliefs as to the nature of God, man and the hereafter.....the antiquity of these roots.." (Mitford p.155).

This ideological justification resorts to the traditions of the past in order to claim unimpeachable authenticity and authority for the practices of the present. There is even the sense of divine warranty. (This latter aspect is evident in the mausoleum business: i.e. Christ was said to have been placed in a sort of "pre-need" mausoleum belonging to Joseph of Arimathea. Mitford p.120). The Funeral Industry's recourse to such official historians is analagous to Leach's depiction of story telling among the Kachins: "it serves to validate the status of the individual who tells the story or rather of the individual who hires a bard to tell the story." (Leach 1970 p.265). These official historians are the bards of the Funeral Industry, and when Leach writes "if the status of one individual is validated that almost always means that the status of someone else is denigrated" (Leach p.266), this is seen to have a relevance in the context of conflict and struggle. The Funeral Industry validates its status in the face of opposition from such as Mitford and the Funeral Associations. Whether one agrees with Mitford's analysis is not really relevant because for the observer what is important is not so much who is right or who is speaking the truth, but rather what are the symbolic forms that people employ to validate their status. In this sense, Leach's idea of there being no "authentic version" of a myth is pertinent (Leach p.265). When Mitford demolishes the arguments and

claims of the Funeral Industry she is providing a charter or myth for her own position just as surely as the Funeral Directors are for theirs when they hire bards or official historians.

Similarly understood are the Funeral Industry's claims regarding hygiene and mental health. Embalming of the body is said by the Industry to be a hygienic activity. It prevents the spread of diseases. In fact Mitford points to a conflict of interest between the medical profession and the funeral directors. The latter dislike autopsies and always advise clients against them, for autopsies make the task of embalming and restoring much more difficult and the creation of a Beautiful Memory Picture more problematic to achieve. Moreover it is not then so easy to sell the clients an expensive casket when a post-mortem has been performed on the deceased. The medical profession, needless to say, disputes these claims of the Funeral Industry which are put forward on grounds of hygiene. (Mitford p.54). Again, what concerns the observer is not the "authentic version" but competing claims and respective forms of validation for certain positions.

Mental health is put forward as another justification for the ritual activities which the funeral director undertakes. In an embalming textbook it is written, "In his care of each subject the embalmer has a heavy responsibility for his skill and interest will largely determine the degree of permanent mental trauma to be suffered by all those closely associated with the deceased." (Mitford p.58-59). The funeral directors speak of "grief-therapy" and this is a term used to describe the mental and emotional comfort which is achieved for the bereaved family as a result of being able to view the embalmed and restored deceased. There are also such phrases as "therapy of mourning" and "grief-syndrome". Mitford was unable to verify with the

psychiatrists she consulted, any of the claims regarding mental health that the Funeral Industry asserted. As noted before it is more the matter of competing interests rather than "authentic versions".

In a situation of conflict and competition a group has to be effectively organized. There have to be channels of communication, mechanisms by which common problems can be discussed and views disseminated, decisions made and implemented. In the case of the Funeral Industry this is particularly so where a common front among the various sections of the Industry is needed. In this respect I consider the examples of "The Nosy Clergy", the Florists, and the Cremation Business. All of these relate to the manner in which the promotion of a particular ritual and economic interest in the face of conflict, necessitates organization. The ritual and the economic concern of the Funeral Industry come under attack or are seen as threatened.

The "Nosy Clergy" constituted a threat to the interests of the funeral director for the clergyman, accompanying as he would the bereaved family in its visit to the selection room of the funeral home would do his utmost to keep the family's expenses as low as possible, advising always the lower priced caskets. To overcome this problem, the pages of Mortuary Management, a trade journal, suggested that the funeral director insist on the family's entering the selection room alone, while the clergyman be obliged to discuss certain matters in the funeral director's office. The ruse was to isolate him from the family and so counteract any influence he might exert in the direction of cheaper wares. The funeral director would already have engaged in a little sales talk before the family entered the selection room. Other illustrations on this question of advice are given by Mitford.

In this example one sees the manner in which common problems and common enemies can be discussed. There can be the pooling of information and the communication of decisions. In this respect, trade magazines and conventions are very important and presuppose a high degree of formal-rational organization, in which advice is disseminated even to the lowliest funeral director. By these means he is kept in the national picture, so to speak. The trade journals offer not only the latest methods for promoting trade (with all that a psychological armoury can offer), but also those for combating critics and enemies. The clergy were seen as a particular section of society which interfered with the interests of the Funeral Industry. However, the correspondence about them in some trade magazine does not merely serve to solve the problem practically. More significantly (and perhaps of a latent function) it solidifies group awareness, deepens group assumptions and brings the corporateness of the group into sharp focus: that group against all comers. When the funeral directors subscribe to a trade journal, they subscribe to an identity, of which the trade journal is a ritual assertion.

Secondly, the Florists and the trouble they experienced in connection with the "Please Omit" notices. Such notices were the ones which appeared in the obituary columns of the newspapers and requested no flowers. Some of them even suggested that the money which would otherwise have been spent on floral tributes be given to some charitable cause. This was very bad publicity for the florists. They were faced with a problem. Their interests were at stake and stood to suffer as long as such notices continued to appear in the obituary columns. Between 65 and 70 per cent of the flower industry's revenue derived from the sale of funeral flowers. (Mitford p.103).

This example highlights not only the problem of a particular group but also the relationship between that group and others engaged in the Funeral Industry, notably the funeral director. Both he and the florists had an interest in the American Way of Death. Mitford reports that the floral tributes could prove a festering nuisance which could detract from the glory of the Beautiful Memory Picture, the work of the funeral director. In this sense the Please Omit notices would not necessarily disadvantage the funeral director. Moreover he had control over the wording of obituary notices. In this situation the florists had to act and their task was to point to a common danger, a common problem, a common enemy: how the Please Omit notices were but the first attempts to erode the American Way of Death, and that worse could follow. The florists today: the funeral directors tomorrow. The florists made the threat to their own interest into a threat against a common interest.

The response of the florists was the communication of the problem in the pages of a number of funeral and cemetery trade journals. The Florists Telegraph Delivery Association sponsored a full-page advertisement in such journals. In the extract quoted by Mitford one reads how the florists set out to win over the funeral director and make him aware of what was a common problem: "What will they want to omit next?.....All but the plainest caskets?.....And the next time a client asks you about Please Omit, remember that you and your florist friends serve the bereaved best by understanding their needs better perhaps than they do themselves." (Mitford p.105).

In the actions of the florists, ideological and practical aspects are clearly discerned. The idea is put across of flowers as a symbolic form. Flowers are attributed with the most pleasant, the

happiest of connotations which will serve the memory through the years. They are claimed to be part of a great cultural tradition, and thus become operative as a moral and ritual imperative. These symbolic aspects are exploited to the full while the support of the funeral director is engaged. But throughout this, what I stress is the communication of a problem in a trade journal. It facilitates action and decision.

The practical aspects of the florists' actions are illustrated in the letter referred to by Mitford and written by a member of Allied Florists of St. Louis. It was directed against Please Omit notices, and made no attempt to conceal the sanctions available to the florists in their plan of campaign against the newspapers, i.e. the withdrawal of advertisements from offending newspapers. In the early fifties a campaign was launched, backed by a two-million dollar a year advertising budget to get rid of the Please Omit notices altogether. A survey carried out by the florists revealed that 75 to 85 per cent of the country's newspapers accepted Please Omit notices. Florists Information Council field-men were then sent into the affected areas "wielding both clubs and carrots, the latter consisting of a series of eighty five line ads on the obituary pages of seventy newspapers..... for obvious reasons the American Funeral Director was listed for six insertions." (Mitford p.107). By 1959 one hundred and ninety-nine newspapers had agreed to refrain from using Please Omit phrases. "Delinquent newspapers" could be brought back into line with a "return call" by the field-men. Mitford's own efforts to get the newspapers to publish a Please Omit notice failed: "Why, the florists would be right down our necks." (p.109).

This example indicates that the effectiveness of an interest group in achieving its purpose relies on both the ability and facility

to recognize a problem, communicate it, discuss it, come to a decision and do something practically about it. The florists were organized along formal-rational lines. They had an Information Council and were able to conduct surveys. They could propagate their ideology in trade journals and the press. More importantly, however, they had at their disposal a number of sanctions.

These sanctions were of four sorts:-the ritual and the moral, both of which betokened elements of normative compulsion; and the economic and the political, which indicated recourse to pragmatic methods. The first of these is the appeal to a cultural tradition-how floral tributes are an integral part of the funeral heritage. I have noted how the industry exploited this approach in the letter already referred to: it relies on an emotional response, aroused by the appeal to the past. Floral tributes are thus promoted as a ritual obligation, an integral part of the cultural heritage concerning death. The second of these sanctions is the moral one. The florists stress the symbolic significance of flowers and promote the idea that they symbolise the moral obligations incumbent upon the sympathiser in his relationship to the bereaved. For the significance of the lack of flowers at a funeral Mitford writes: "Such Please Omit notices, they (the florists) warn, may even rupture lifelong friendships." (p.105). The message put across here relies for support on the sanctions of the moral appeal.

Since it appears that these sanctions might not always succeed in eliminating Please Omit notices from the obituary columns of the press, then more telling, pragmatic sanctions of an economic or political nature are available, as was evidenced in the campaign launched by the florists, whereby they came to secure an advertising hold over the

newspapers. Lastly, there are the political sanctions. Mitford does not really go into any details on these with regard to the actions of the florists, though the illustration she gives of the activities of those in the niche and urn business shows clearly the strength of political lobbying and the sanctions employed. It is to this illustration that I finally turn.

In California there was a move to bring in an amendment to the then existing law which would permit the next of kin to obtain possession of cremated remains for private burial or scattering. The Funeral Industry was alarmed at this and the niche and urn lobbyists followed a threefold course in the defence of their interests. Firstly, they circulated among the legislators photographs which showed partially cremated remains-bits of bone and shin-recognizable enough to horrify, and claimed that these would litter the California landscape if the proposed amendment were allowed. Secondly, they claimed that the scattering of the remains would endanger public health, and thirdly, that permitting the dispersion of the remains would hamper crime detection in the cases of suspected poisoning.

The lobbyists were against the English practice of scattering, and the photographs which they employed in their struggle are best understood in terms of an ideological weapon. The showing of such photographs was a symbolic form of communication not unlike an accusation of witchcraft in its effect, in that the pictures were intended to discredit an adversary and to establish the legitimacy of the protagonist's position. Both rely on the same technique of playing up the gross and the horrific, the physiological aspect of the symbol (the sensory pole), and at the same time thereby imputing debased values to an opponent (the ideological pole). By negative reference the position of the

protagonist is validated, and in the case here, the 'proper' procedure, the full treatment tidies up the horrific bric-a-brac, deposits them neatly in an urn and leaves them ultimately to perpetual care in a niche and columbarium. The presentation of such solicitude is intended thereby to betray the most noble of values and the most moral of positions on the part of the niche and urn business and its lobbyists, and to leave little doubt as to the imputations about the character of the opposition. Also implicit from the photographs is that the niche and urn business, its method of care is in fact a ritual propriety (not just morally right). The other two arguments were similarly intended to support what was a political position and relied on such types of appeals as I have noted in connection with the justification of ritual practices. Although each of these arguments was shown to be false, according to the account that Mitford gives, nonetheless, the amendment failed to get through "because of a combination of fear, superstition and enormous lobby pressure." (Mitford p.148).

This chapter has considered the dynamic involvement of custom in an economic venture. Baldelli has written that custom, in contrast to political structures, dies a natural death. (Baldelli 1972 p.56). The dichotomy as he delineates it may seem reasonable enough, though I would stress that the natural vitality of custom (if it so be called) is closely correlated with the strength of the political or economic motive. I have noted how the American Funeral Industry because of its economic concern with death, intensifies, if not creates customary ritual practices concerning death.

Chapter 111

Death and Authority

- i) The Yako Associations
- ii) The Yoruba Ogboni Cult of Oyo

Politics refers as much to the distribution and exercise of power as it does to the struggle for it. It is this distributive and executive aspect which I wish to consider now. In this chapter I shall be concerned with associations in a global society from the perspective of death and authority. In his thesis on ancestor worship Scheinfeld (1960) studied belief systems concerned with death and explained how these could furnish a ritual support to those in positions of authority. He referred in passing to the Yako and delineated the factors which helped to explain why the Yako had no system of ancestor worship. I shall not be concerned with the Yako's lack of ancestor worship. What I hope to consider is that for the Yako-at least as regards authority-death is a significant event, and although Forde does not write of any complex belief systems associated with death (such systems, from Scheinfeld's thesis, I see people resorting to in order to justify the claims of authority) nonetheless death is an occasion which those in positions of authority are able to make use of-an occasion which they resort to in order to dramatize what Duncan would call the principles of social order in the community, namely that social order which is concerned with hierarchy and rank, with relations between superiors, inferiors and equals, and the legitimation of such relations. Pertinent here is his remark: "From a sociological view, the drama of community is a drama of authority, a struggle by those in power, or those seeking power, to control symbols that are already powerful....." (Duncan 1972 p.64). And later on the same page, he writes: "A principle of social order must always be personified in some kind of dramatic action if it is to be comprehensible to all classes and conditions of men." (Duncan p.64). Where the Yako are concerned I consider the way in which authoritative associations stage themselves in dramatic action during mortuary rites, before a communal audience, whose approval legitimizes their power position in society.

Firstly, however, a word about associations and authority in general. I have already noted when considering the American Funeral Industry that the location of an association in the global society is intelligible in terms of two necessary aspects: the internal and the external. The former concerns the internal relations of a corporately organized group, and the latter the external relations of the group, its out-group aspect. Similarly, authority can here be seen in two aspects: firstly the way in which authority within the group obtains and holds it together; and secondly, the exercise of authority by the association as a corporate body over the rest of the global society, that is to say, its authoritative position in the government of society.

Authority is concerned with the legitimate exercise and distribution of power in the social system, and power is seen as the control by men over the behaviour of other men, and such control can draw on a number of social relationships-moral, ritual, economic and political. A relationship of authority, where such power is legitimately exercised, is always asymmetrical. According to Maquet, the external relationship is always an expression of the tension between two unequal forces-the group member being supported by his associates whereas the non-member is isolated. (Maquet p.226). As will be evident from what I wrote when considering the organization of corporate opposition to the American Funeral Industry, Maquet's view that a non-member is necessarily isolated need not always obtain. In the case of the Yako the relationship between the associations with important governmental competences and the kin groups is a relationship between two types of corporately organized groups, one in a superordinate or superior position, the other in a subordinate or inferior one. Nonetheless it is one in which, to quote Duncan, "Superiors must persuade inferiors to accept

their rule. This is done through the glorification of symbols of majesty and power as symbols of social order in many kinds of social dramas....." (Duncan 1972 p.53). My concern is with a social drama of one kind, that pertaining to mortuary rites.

I consider the aspect of internal relations, the cohesion within and the way in which people in their role-playing capacity, their position as associates relate to one another. Here, authority within the group, an authority which binds associates one to another and regulates the relationship between them, is the function of the collective representations of the group. Maquet, borrowing the Western legal concept of the association as a "moral being" (Maquet p.223) sees that it is able to act as a physical person, can accept or refuse a candidate and has various rights and obligations towards him. In a sense the collective representations of the group, which embody the norms and values to which the associates subscribe and by which they act towards one another constitute something over and above the associates, so to speak, who comprise the group. They are the collective consciousness, the symbolic order of the group and have a supra-individual significance. In this respect the group has a corporate moral personality and this is not just an aggregate of the moral attributes of a multiple of individuals oriented towards associational interests. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and the moral being of the association evinces through the mystification of symbols, an objective facticity which is something over and above, something more than just the subjective moral experiences of individuals. The norms and values which control the members of the group, like a Durkheimian social fact, act with a constraining force which morally binds associates one to another, and more significantly to the association as such. It is this objective

facticity of the association that matters, and this is seen in the fact that when a new associate is admitted a tie is established between that associate and the association rather than between the recent associate and each of the older members. It is such a situation which Duncan describes when he writes thus: "Now we must subordinate ourselves to the customs and traditions of the group. 'He that puts on a public gown must put off a private person.'" (Duncan 1972 p.184). This, as will be seen, certainly applies to the activities of one of the Yako associations, namely, Ikpungkara.

The supra-individual fact of authority, the objective facticity of an authoritative relationship and association is of crucial importance and is directly expressed through the media of such things as tangible and material artifacts. These cultural artifacts are the concrete symbolization of that office which invests an incumbent with legitimate power. I draw a distinction and say that ordinary power may simply be the act of a person whereas authority is an attribute of office which empowers an incumbent to act legitimately. Authority concerns primarily position and office. At least this will be the perspective followed in connection with the Yako associations and the rites they perform on the death of a member. Such legitimate power is not a personal possession: it is an attribute of the office or position which invests an incumbent. Tangible and material artifacts, the cultural symbols which articulate this position of legitimate power are detached from the person but attached to the office. It is the office that matters and it is the office that an incumbent fills. When I say that these symbols are detached I mean that they are not part of the physical person, for they are literally outside him and symbolize the enduring stability of office. Yet they come to him as incumbent via the office. It is in this sense that the cultural artifacts symbolize an

association which is over and above the participants in that relationship; in this sense that they betoken an objective facticity and not merely an externalization of a subjective impression. The relationship is thus objectified and internalized. Cultural symbols and ritual activity communicate the norms, values, rights and duties associated with office and position. This symbolic order legitimizes the internal relations of the association.

Cohen has written "Symbols also objectify roles and give them a reality which is separate from the individual personalities of their incumbents." (Cohen 1969a p.220). As has been said, the symbolic order is in a sense outside related associates but not apart from them, internalized and objectified in each-thus coming to exhibit the characteristics of an objective facticity. Norms and values are materially symbolized. The group concepts and the assumptions underlying them are made tangible and intelligible through a ritual process (or a social drama, to use Duncan's term)-that is to say through a ritual action and cultural artifacts which communicate precisely those norms and values embodied in the organization of the group. This is what will be seen in the ritual and ceremony attending Yako mortuary rites where symbolic forms are functional in articulating the internal relations of the association around which such norms and values are structured.

In a similar vein Simmel wrote of group formation and the development of a code of honour. I quote: "Groups make certain that the conduct of their members will be appropriate through the establishment of a specific code of honour." (Simmel 1955 p.163). This relates to what I mentioned concerning authority within the group-how it is symbolized, seen as legitimate, and how it regulates the behaviour

between associates and binds them together. Simmel writes: ".....the association possesses a collective sense of honour.....They (groups) do so especially with regard to those specific differences which mark them off from the broadest group (the State).....The criteria of honour in all their intricacies become the symbols of social groups." (Simmel 1955 p.163-164). He goes on to point out how the widest unit- what I see as the global society- must evince concepts of honour sufficiently generalized as to be valid for all social groups within it, but that the specialist group or association has to have its own particularistic concepts of honour which diacritically distinguish it from all else in the global society.

This question of concepts of honour being sufficiently generalized brings me to a consideration of the external aspect of the association and the way in which authority is legitimately exercised over non-associates in the global society. There are, so to speak, two perspectives involved. Where the authoritative association is concerned the question can arise as to what extent the corporate group, seen from one perspective, stands as an exclusive interest group with its own power position to protect in the global society; and from another perspective, how it exercises social control in the name of some sort of common weal, explicit or implicit-how in this respect, the ideal mystifies the real in the differentials which obtain in the relations of power between groups and persons in society. Duncan's remarks are apposite in this respect for he points out that the power of those who control "...does not reside in the power of each rank to dominate an inferior rank, but in the acceptance by each rank of the principle of order which governs all...." (Duncan 1972 p.80). On the one hand the authoritative association has to act in terms of a generalized concept of honour which embraces and

upholds the common weal and thereby justifies its action vis a vis the wider global society. Yet conversely it has also to protect its own particularistic code of honour, and more importantly, the political interests around which such a code is structured and in terms of which it is symbolically functional. But what is paramount is the principle of social order, the principle of hierarchy in the community, and this principle is perfected in those social dramas which superiors stage before a communal audience, whose approval ultimately legitimizes their political rank in the global society.

The position of the association is therefore seen as that of a superordinate, and the rest of the global society, that of subordinate. All that I have said concerning authority and control within the group applies in a theoretical sense here. Symbolic forms are needed to articulate the position of the superordinate, a power position in the global society, and more significantly to legitimize it. Maquet however considers legitimacy as non-essential in a definition of political networks, as "secondary phenomenon on the level of collective representations that a society projects of itself." (Maquet 1971 p.88). In claiming this it seems that Maquet sees only the political variable as primary and attaches a secondary, non-essential significance to the symbolic variable. Both Cohen and Duncan would disagree with this one-sided orientation of Maquet's. Cohen writes: ".....although a regime may come to office and maintain itself for some time purely by force, its stability and continuity are achieved mainly through the symbols of authority which it manipulates. Subjects do not start their lives every morning by examining the disposition of power in their society to see whether the regime is still backed by the same amount of power as before, or whether that power has diminished and the regime can therefore be overthrown. The stability and continuity of the regime

are made possible through a complex system of symbolism that gives legitimacy by representing it ultimately as a natural part of the celestial order." (Cohen 1969a p.220-221). For Cohen the symbolism of political relations, relations wherein superordinates establish their legitimacy is of crucial significance in political anthropology. For Duncan, legitimation is likewise vital. He writes that we can do everything with bayonets but sit on them (Duncan 1972 p.200), and that the legitimation of authority whereby superiors persuade inferiors, by the manipulation and monopoly of powerful symbolic forms, to accept their rule (and the principle of social order which supports it) is achieved in the various social dramas that are staged by the superiors.

Finally, as a prelude to the Yako material, it may be relevant if I note Simmel's formal analysis of group organization and group configuration, when I delineate the situation of associations. Writing about multiple group affiliations he draws the distinction between groups that are concentric and those that are juxtaposed. As I shall note concerning the Yako, the relationship between the kin groups and the associations is concentric in that participation in the latter logically implies (given the structure of Yako society) participation in the former. But I shall also agree with Simmel when I come to examine the material that "The fact that these (kin groups and associations) are related to each other in a concentric way may mean not that they are related organically but that they are in mechanical juxtaposition." (Simmel 1955 p.147).

It is this element of mechanical juxtaposition that will be apposite here because it rightly implies one as in some way opposed to or set against the other-that is to say, the kin groups as opposed to the

associations in spite of or perhaps because of the concentric nature of the relationship. The relationship is not one without tension. Simmel writes that man can act in "mutually conflicting ways: he feels and acts with others, but also against others." (Simmel 1955 p.155). Thus although associates are also kinsmen from respective kin groups and can act with them, they can also act against them in as much as they are mechanically juxtaposed to them in their own position as associates of a superordinate association.

Having discussed in general terms the nature of associations and authority, and the structural location of associations in a superordinate capacity I consider the ritual and ceremonial in Yako society in a political context. Yako society comprises matrilineal, patrilineal and associations of various sorts. At the death of an elderly citizen neither the matrilineal nor the patrilineal ceremonialize or ritualize his demise, but the associations of which he was a member and which have an authoritative role in the government of Yako society go to elaborate lengths in the performance of ritual and ceremony, and this not only attends the funeral obsequies for the deceased: it also accompanies the admission of a new associate to a group that has just suffered the loss of one of its members. For the associations therefore the funeral is a twofold occasion: loss and replacement.

It will be my contention when considering the structure of Yako society that the associations' concern with death is ideological in contrast to which a similar concern were it to be evinced by the kinship groups would be ideologically misplaced. That is to say, there is a sense in which the associations espouse an ideology of death, and the kinship groups a distinct ideology of life. This is significant in

terms of the tension, the mechanical juxtaposition between the kinship groups and the associations.

The situation is best approached from the perspective of corporately organized interest groups and the manner in which these satisfy the organizational functions of the corporate political group. Firstly I consider the structure of the patrilans and the matrilans and the interests which these articulate and around which they materialize (Forde 1950). I do this in order to point out the difference between these on the one hand and the associations on the other.

Patrilans are divided into a number of patrilineages which are localised groups that live in wards. A number of different patrilineages inhabit the same ward while four or more wards constitute the village. The smallest distinctive elemental unit, a self-conscious corporate group is known as an eponama which is a term derived from the Yako word for the urethra (epo meaning "begotten", and nama- "urethra"), and according to Forde this stresses the biological link through males. The interest of the patrilineage is in immovable economic wealth with its members claiming and distributing among themselves, succession to rights in house sites, farm plots and oil palms. A senior man of standing, known as uwo-womon- "our father", arbitrates in disputes between members of the group, and is the leader in group affairs with the other groups.

A number of such patrilineages, eponamas, inhabit a demarcated dwelling area, the kepun, within which there is a large open-sided meeting house, the lepema, and a kepun shrine, the epundet. The kepun is an exogamous, corporate and territorially compact patrilan composed of a number of separate lineages with collective rights to a delimited dwelling area in the village, and to tracts of farm land in the

territory possessing a shrine and an assembly house for group rites and social intercourse. The leader of the kepun is the Obot Kepun, a priestly functionary.

What is emphasised by Forde is the separateness of the lineages within the kepun. The sociologically important point is the different origins of respective patrilineages—one eponama vis a vis other eponamas. If one speaks in terms of the identity of these elemental distinctive units of which the Yako is most conscious, one sees that it is symbolized not with regard to the processes of death but with regard to the processes of life. The word eponama does not merely stress the biological link between males: it is a symbol indicative of generative power, of potency and life-giving forces. It is not concerned with death. Aesthetically and naturally consonant with this is the fact that the spirits of the patriclan are not invoked at the death of a member of the clan. No rituals for the dead are performed at their shrines. Here an identity is expressed in a particular economic interest (immovable wealth) and is symbolized primarily in an ideology of life.

Similarly in this respect, the matriclans. These too evince what I call an ideology of life. Known as yajima, they have an economic interest in the inheritance of movable wealth, currency and livestock. But more than this, they have a paramount importance as regards the exercise of moral and ritual authority in the village. Unlike the patriclans, the matriclans are dispersed, marriage being virilocal. It is the matrilineal kin who receive payments to a woman's kin at her marriage. Every matriclan is associated with a fertility spirit, the yose, pl. ase. Within each village one of the matriclan spirits is considered to be superior in power and ritual status over every other matriclan spirit in the village.

It is the premier spirit regarded as the fertility spirit of the village and the most powerful supernatural force within it. The matriclan spirit is embodied in a miscellaneous number of cult objects. I note with emphasis that matriclan rituals are concerned with successive invocation of the fertility spirits at the shrine, and that every girl is brought by a close matrilineal kinsman, usually an older brother or mother's brother to the shrine of the fertility spirit of her matriclan during her first pregnancy.

Only the priests have direct access to this power of the yose. It constitutes the ritual sanction of moral authority in the wider field of social control in the village as a whole. The yose priests in any one village form a close-knit corporation, the Yabot, the leader of which is the Obot Lophon, who controls the cult of the first spirit in the village. The matriclan priests are linked with the rest of the village through the matriclan system and command powerful sanctions to enforce their decisions. Their authority is principally of a moral and ritual kind, and on their own, they have no secular powers of physical coercion but have to rely on the executive arm of the governmental associations—though the latter are ready to point out their autonomy from the Yabot. The Yabot is of much greater importance in the village-wide moral and ritual sphere than is the patrilineage. It is a most powerful corporate group but unlike the other associations that I shall look at it is primarily lineage-based and this has to be borne in mind when I come to examine the problem of recruitment to groups and the criteria which are used. Noteworthy throughout this brief account is the fact that the priests have an ideological concern with ase, the fertility spirits. I stress this.

On the death of a member no rituals are performed at the matriclan shrine. No spirits are invoked. The emphasis is not on death, but on fertility, a life-giving process. This aligns the matriclans with the patriclans in the contrast between these two on the one hand and the associations on the other. Eponama and Yose are symbolic of life, and stand distinguished from the associations in the latter's concern with death.

Above I have briefly looked at the patriclans and matriclans from the perspective of interest groups (economic, moral or ritual) and emphasized the respective ideologies of life which served to articulate such interests. Now I consider the associations-again from the perspective of the corporate interest group, and note that in Yako society these are broadly of two sorts: those which are intra-ward, and those which are inter-ward or village wide in scope. The intra-ward association which I shall consider is the Yakamben. Others mentioned in passing will be Ebiabu, a three-tier age-grade organization, and Eblombe, a warrior organization. The inter-ward associations to be examined will be Okengka and Ikpungkara. Concerning the governmental functions of these associations in general Forde remarks, "The co-ordination of political action in government.....is achieved to the extent that there is a mutual adjustment of their distinct competences by the several associations, which may include some form of conciliar organization of their respective leaders." (Forde 1964 p.166).

I examine the various competences of each of these associations and the 'ideological' symbolic activities that each performs at the funeral of one of its members. Among the Yako,

it is at a funeral, in the social drama enacted thereat, that one sees, to quote Duncan, how the "Principles of social order are kept alive in the glory of roles we use to sustain positions of superiority, inferiority and equality in social position." (Duncan 1972 p.23). Forde's example is of a deceased who had been affiliated to a number of associations (Forde 1962). When a death occurs the associations have to deal with the kinship groups, as the funeral is an occasion for the admission of an acceptable replacement from the kin groups, and the payment to the associations of heavy admission fees and the provision by the kin groups of a costly feast. The associations thus receive a new associate, fees and a feast. In their negotiations with the associations the kin groups provide a matrikin burier and a patrikin burier.

The funeral therefore can be understood in terms of Duncan's methodological proposition 3 (Duncan 1972 p.161): "The staging of an act in society is a social drama of authority." The condition or situation is that of the funeral, the act being presented is one which mourns the demise of a member of the association and celebrates the admission of a new associate. The roles played are ceremonial, for "ceremonies are social dramas in which we seek to uphold the dignity and majesty of social roles believed necessary to social order." (Duncan 1972 p.183). The ceremonial dramatization of superordinate roles at a funeral is, as I shall observe, ideologically crucial for the Yako associations, and their position within the social order.

Firstly therefore the intra-ward association, the Yakamben. The Yakamben are the leaders of the ward and they conduct periodical initiation of the boys of the ward and a rite after the farms are cleared

each year. In the ward it is the governing and judicial body, giving judgement between people of different patriclans and directing public obligations of the age-set. It has a moral authority over other men's associations in the ward, such as Ebiabu and Eblombe. Its head is the Ogbolia, and his deputy is the Ogometu. Although rights to succession to the office of Ogbolia were claimed by three or four patriclans in each ward, the ward leaders were nonetheless definitely not seen as a de jure assembly of patriclan heads and elders with any exclusive right to membership representing the clan section of the ward. Forde writes of the ward leaders as having a strong esprit de corps with regard to their authority in ward affairs. They are an association in a sense over and above the patriclans of the ward. It is here that I refer to the concentric nature of the relationship between the Yakamben and the patriclans, yet one in which the Yakamben are mechanically juxtaposed to the latter. This mechanical juxtaposition may indeed be a ritual necessity to distinguish the Yakamben as a corporate power group above the particularistic tendencies of the kin groups of the ward. To this end the Yakamben, like the other associations, have distinctive cultural symbols, namely, a spirit bundle, Ekpa, and Okowa, two fringed masks surmounted by skulls. Yakamben also had a directing inner group of about a dozen men who had charge of these cult objects, and Forde's deceased was a member of this inner group.

At the funeral the Yakamben, headed by the Ogbolia come to salute the deceased and dance for him in his compound before his burial. Two weeks later the Kekpan (which comprises inter alia the ward officers among the Yakamben) led by the Ogbolia come to the compound to remind the patrikin and matrikin buriers, of the deceased's membership of their association, and of the customary obligation on the kin groups

to provide a successor acceptable to the association together with the requisite fees and feasts. Noteworthy in this example is the tension between the association and the kin groups, the former threatening to bring the claims before the Yabot if the patriclans were not forthcoming in meeting the customary obligations. Eventually replacement in the cult group was achieved and demonstrated in feasting at the assembly house of the ward head.

I have already mentioned the age-grade organization, Ebiabu. This was at the disposal of the Yakamben, was concerned with public order, and had an executive authority in which it was empowered to act by the Yakamben. Its activities were directed by a smaller group of about a dozen men, the Imiedong, who were usually Yakamben. It comprised the able-bodied men of the ward, and initiations to it were usually held during the period of funeral ceremonies of members of the senior grade, Abu. At the funeral described by Forde, the deceased's age-set (most of whom had already died) were ceremonially and customarily provided with food, meat and money by the widows.

Eblombe, a warrior organization, was not at the disposal of Ogbolia or the Yakamben. Formerly a fighting force, nowadays it is a convivial and funerary club. For a fee, it would protect fruit trees, raffia and oil-palms being tapped for wine. It set its mark on protected property and contravention of its authority resulted in the offender's being brought before the Ward or Village Head. Membership was confined by succession to close patrikinsmen of former members and the admission was an obligation and a privilege. Admission followed the death and funeral of a member and was accompanied by ritual activities distinctive of the association-the carrying of weapons and the performance of mock reconnaissance and battle.

These briefly are several of the intra-ward associations. At a funeral not only do they become distinguished from the kin groups, but with their distinctive symbolic appurtenances, distinct from one another as well. Now however I consider the inter-ward associations of Okengka and Ikpungkara. Firstly, Okengka. This is concerned with politico-ritual co-ordination of ward leadership in the village as a whole. New admissions usually followed the deaths of members, but only men who were already senior and well established among the Yakamben of their ward were eligible for membership. Its prestige and authority derived from its control of the powerful Leopard Spirit which resided in a secret contraption (lekpetu) which men manipulated to give out a booming noise, the Voice of the Leopard. Forde writes of its being heard from behind the closed doors of the Okengka house, usually at night when the leading members are carrying out a rite at the death of a member of the group, or on the admission of a new member.

Okengka was concerned with control of inter-ward relationships and the settlement of disputes between different wards. Ward heads would bring to Okengka disputes which they were unable to solve for themselves. Okengka had a moral and ritual authority, and sanctioned very grave misfortune on any who went against its judgements:-both offender and his kin would be struck by an unpredictable misfortune. The head of Okengka as priest of the Village Leopard Cult was in turn one of the members of the Yabot. Okengka thus served to reinforce and support the authority of the various ward leaders, the Yakamben.

Lastly I turn to Ikpungkara, politically the most influential association in the village. It is a village-wide association and its members are drawn from different wards and form a very close-knit group,

pledged to secrecy by the supernatural sanctions of its spirit cult. It is an executive arm of the Yabot, concerned with the settlement of frequent disputes between individuals and lineages of different clans and wards, over the rights to farm land, and the detection and punishment of thefts of cows. Admission is by patrilineal succession to a deceased member, with the right and obligation on the part of the kin to provide fees, feast and a new associate.

On the death of a member, the leaders of Ikpungkara come to offer condolence to the kin groups but also to announce their own loss. A successor has to be found and initiated, and the kin groups in their dealings with the association delay payment and offer meat, palm wine and kola nuts as an earnest. This means that the dealings are quite protracted before actually being finalised, and much 'politicking' goes on among the kin groups in their search to find a suitable successor, one who will no doubt try to represent the interests of the kin groups in the wider field of governmental politics in the village. But from the association's point of view, the successor will be a member of a governmental interest group, a superordinate association, and as a clearly demarcated and exclusive entity such a group will have interests over and above the particularistic tendencies of the lineage.

At an initiation Ikpungkara members arrive with their distinctive spirit bundles in the ward square, and wearing special waist cloths and fibre hats, thus offer condolence as members of a distinctive interest group. The woven raphia skirt, the striped waistcloth and knitted fibre cap of the deceased are worn by the successor, who is placed on a stool while the two spirit bundles are displayed and the

members circle round him silently in single file four times. Not only is the new associate thus symbolically "incorporated" into the interest group in this rite of physical circumambulation, but his wearing of the deceased's ritual paraphernalia symbolises a continuity in the interests of the corporate group, as though the structural importance of such interests is something over and above the mere temporary existence of the human agent. The personnel come and go but the structure of the group or more importantly the interests around which such a corporate structure materialises, must be seen to have a continuity. In such a rite, the new associate is also cut off from the kin groups.

Relevant here are two comments from Duncan. He writes:

"A ceremonial role is always a group role, and it is an expression of rank within the group just as the institutional ceremony is an expression of rank within the community." (Duncan 1972 p.184). Here, the admission and initiation of a new associate discloses the principle of rank within Ikpungkara itself, just as on the wider level, the ceremonies conducted by the association (institution) are an expression of rank within the community. On the same page Duncan writes about the significance of clothes in relation to group membership. I quote: "Once in uniform we feel the power of the collectivity to which we now belong. Our longing for authority can at least be expressed. We indicate to others without and within institutions (and to ourselves) that we have enrolled in a group, and that we have a certain rank within the group. But in gaining social power we surrender the right to act freely and spontaneously as individuals. Now we must subordinate ourselves to the customs and traditions of the group. 'He that puts on a public gown must put off a private person.'" (Duncan 1972 p.184). This would certainly have a relevant application where the ritual activities of Ikpungkara are concerned.

I also refer to what I wrote earlier concerning authority and the significance of cultural artifacts (see pp.73-74). Such artifacts pertain to the public office, not the private person. They are detached from the person but attached to the office. By their use the objective facticity of authority is made manifest. Although in this case the ritual appurtenances belonged to the deceased, they belonged to him as an incumbent of an office and were primarily an attribute of that office. The new incumbent is invested with a reality, a legitimate political reality, so to speak, which is separate from his individual personality. Symbols thus objectify roles and a relationship is established between the incumbent and the association as such.

The actual physical materials, the cultural artifacts and paraphernalia of the group symbolise the permanence of enduring interests, and such symbols having as they do, a cathetic, cognitive and conative appeal, function to revitalize the norms and values and aims of that group vis a vis other groups. The rituals and ceremonies tune up the political awareness of the group, of the duties of members one towards another, and towards the association. They relegitimize a political position.

This is significantly expressed in the fact that during the night between its two last feasts, Ikpungkara makes a long circuit through the whole village during which everyone else has to stay indoors and maintain silence, while its drums beat all through the night. Again, as with the rite of physical circumambulation, there is an actual physical objectification of the interests of a particular group, in as much as these interests are dramatised as being village wide in their coverage and domain of influence. The beating of the drums at night and

the dark circuit through the village constitute a vivid symbolization of group interests and aims, and its position in the community. I have written of physical objectification but it is well to bear in mind that because of the very communication that such physical actions embody-the communication of group purposes, norms and values-these are seen as ritual symbolic forms which function to articulate a power position in the global society. It is as though Ikpungkara were drawing on the hidden powers of a transcendent darkness and dramatising an exclusive monopoly of these in its intention, literally to stake out an unimpeachable political domain and position of authority over and against all others in the village. Similarly the drums: not merely unseen significations of a particular interest and position but symbols charged with an emotive appeal, conative in their import, and whose potential is augmented by the very darkness which shuts the rest of the village behind doors in silence. In a sense one could say that this powerful association makes the province of the night its own just as it makes death its own. Perhaps death can be seen, in a sense, as a sort of transcendent ultimate occasion which functions to validate the position of the associations in the Yako social order.

What a funeral among the Yako thus enables one to observe is the symbolic and ceremonial dramatization of the political structure, the disposition of power in a global society. The social order is staged in a social drama, wherein superiors relate to inferiors, and inferiors to superiors, and the passage from a lower to a higher rank-status consecration, so to speak-the very basis on which the social order rests-receives a crucial dramatization at death. From Forde's material one sees to what a great extent there is an overlapping of membership between the associations. For instance, Oka (Forde's case) had been the third in rank of the four heads of Ikpungkara. He had been one of the nine

members of the small inner circle of Yakamben. He had been a member of the association of head hunters, and had been head of a prestigious society for wealthy men in his ward, the epoli. Elsewhere in Forde's writing one finds that the office of Ogbolia could be held concurrently with other offices in other associations (e.g. head of Ikpungkara). Similarly the overlap between the Abu grade of Ebiabu and the Yakamben. I have noted how the head of Okengka, who would anyway be a Yakamben, must automatically be a member of the Yabot and that election to the leadership of Okengka is subject to the approval of the Yabot. All these instances show how strong can be the overlapping of membership in different associations both within one ward and within the village.

This means that one is dealing to some extent with what Dahrendorf would call the superimposition of relations of imperative co-ordination. A relationship which is imperatively co-ordinated (Weber's term: *Herrschaftsverband*) logically comprises superordination and subordination whereby the former, by definition denotes the exercise of power over the latter, whose behaviour is thereby controlled. The relationship between the associations and the global society is precisely such a one. It is a relationship of authority and such relationships are a structural inevitability in any social system. Superimposition refers to a situation wherein the superordinate in a single imperatively co-ordinated relationship is also superordinate in another such relationship. There is therefore a coincidence among such relationships.

Where there exists a superimposition of such relationships there is, if one follows Dahrendorf, greater chance of conflict and threat to authority, greater chance for instability in the social system. Where the Yako are concerned the very structural arrangement in society

may be such as to lessen this aspect, for there, the superimposition of imperatively co-ordinated relationships is conjoined with relations which are of their nature both concentric and mechanically juxtaposed. This however does not necessarily obviate the tension and instability. Admittedly one may on the one hand be less inclined to speak in terms of major cleavages because the concentric nature of group affiliations means that recruitment to the associations comes from the outside so to speak. On the other hand, too close a tie to primary origins could generate tension and instability (arising from conflicting obligations) and make a mechanical juxtaposition a ritual necessity in clarifying and objectifying role positions and respective power positions.

Tension and instability are points which are explored by Scheinfeld in his thesis on ancestor worship. He points out that most social relations are unstable to some extent and that the more unstable they are, then the greater the necessity to symbolise and ritualise the relationship and mystify power positions in society. He goes on to say that instability in a social relationship may arise as a consequence of discrepancy between rights and expectations; as a consequence of conflict of roles, and as a consequence of a lack of differentiation in daily life which would serve to set off one individual from another. (pp.11-12). All this is certainly consonant with the Yako material, for there obtains a certain ambivalence, if not discrepancy in the expectations between the kin groups and the associations, and this stems from the differing perspectives that each has and relates to the position of these elements in a political structure where relationships are imperatively co-ordinated, and concentric in their configuration.

The question of differing perspectives and instability is apparent in Forde's article. I quote, "...the solidarity of the

associations in pursuing their own end and the public interest is constantly subject to divisive and disintegrative tendencies arising from ties of their members to corporate patrilineages and matrilineages." (Forde 1962 p.122). Although the kin groups in their customary symbolic actions vis a vis the associations communicate their own subordinate status, as much as they acknowledge the association's superordinate one, they nonetheless have one of their number in a superordinate position. This is one perspective. Conversely from the associational perspective the new associate and indeed all the associates have to be cut off ritually from their primary origins in ceremonies which orientate thoughts, feelings and emotions to associational interests and concerns. They have to be brought together ritually, and this is done at a funeral when they are feasted by the kin groups, for in such an action they are brought together in communion and ritually distinguished from those who do not belong to the association. This mechanism of commensality facilitates a ritual cohesion of the members of a political group. (See Appendix A for a further example concerning the political significance of feasting as part of mortuary rites.)

Yako society is intelligible in terms of Frankenberg's analysis of role relationships (which I referred to when discussing tradition in the American Funeral Industry. Frankenberg 1966 pp.287-288). It is characterized by multiple role relationships and by complexity. One is here concerned with what Gluckman would call role relations in a multiplex society, and in such a society a highly ritualized differentiation of role positions may be a structural necessity. Ritual in a multiplex society is crucial in delineating role positions, and where these role positions are those of authority-as they are in the Yako case-then the need may be all that much greater.

In all this, one has to return to the fact that of crucial relevance in understanding the difference between the associations and the kin groups is the way in which each has to contend with the organizational problem of recruitment. Among the patrilineages and the matrilineages recruitment is in a sense automatic, in that the child of every father is ipso facto a member of a patrilineage, and similarly the child of every mother, the member of a matrilineage. This means that birth is here both a necessary and a sufficient condition for that membership which is ascribed. Perhaps I can say that I am here concerned with what Simmel called the organic criteria for recruitment to what is a primary group, -recruitment on a lineage basis being very much organic in the physical sense and ideologically explicable in terms of eponama and ase which have to do with life and fertility.

The associations in contrast do not benefit, recruitment-wise, at anybody's birth. For them birth is neither necessary nor sufficient. Instead, what matters most to them is death, for it poses in a more immediate and natural way the problem of recruitment. It is at death that the associations suffer a loss and benefit by a replacement. They are distinguished from the kinship groups in that the criteria for recruitment are not organic, and membership is not ascribed but is achieved. They constitute secondary structures over the primary base of the lineages with these latter serving as a basic pool from which the associations draw their resources of personnel. I quote Simmel: "Group affiliations which are formed according to objective criteria constitute a superstructure which develops over and above those group affiliations which are formed according to natural immediately given criteria." (Simmel 1955 p.135).

In this respect a clear distinction has to be drawn between the kin groups and the associations as regards recruitment. Forde's article on the governmental role of associations in Yako society is a little confusing on this point, for a number of times he writes of the associations as being "self-perpetuating". He refers to those societies "in which self-perpetuating associations exercise autonomous ritual power and secular authority...." (Forde 1964 p.166). The Yakamben are considered as "a self-recruited and self-perpetuating body of notables..." (1964 p.170). Indigenous government in Umor "was effected through the loosely co-ordinated deliberations, judicial decisions, and executive acts of self-perpetuating spirit cult associations..." (1964 p.189). Now if they are thus described it is difficult to apply the same term to the kin groups and expect to bring out this vital difference in the criteria by which groups recruit members. I think it is more helpful to see the kin groups as self-perpetuating in the naturally reproductive sense, i.e. they reproduce themselves from within, and so deny the term to the associations who have to recruit from the outside.

Therefore the most important factor, the crucial variable lies in the organizational problem of recruitment to a corporate political group. Where such a group also occupies a superordinate position in a global society, then death will inevitably bring to the fore the problem of authority both internally and externally. A replacement overcomes this, and the conjunction of departure with arrival, so to speak, enables the corporate group to maintain its numbers, to orientate the feelings and thoughts of associates to group purposes, norms and values (internal aspect), while at the same time to ritualize its position against all the world, to demonstrate the superordinate position of the association in the global society (external aspect). Here I remark on

the twofold aspect of Ikpungkara's nocturnal monopoly. Its ritual and ceremony attending the death of an associate killed two birds with one stone, as it were. On the one hand the symbolic actions were part and parcel of the collective representations of the group which would serve to legitimize the internal relations of an exclusive political group. On the other hand its actions objectified, made symbolically tangible and intelligible its superordinate position over the kin groups who were customarily bound in obligation to it.

Earlier I noted how Cohen wrote that the "stability and continuity of the regime are made possible through a complex system of symbolism that gives legitimacy by representing it ultimately as a natural part of the celestial order." (Cohen 1969a p.220-221).

What are vital for the government of Yako society are the continuity and stability of the associations, and such is the nature of recruitment to these associations and the structural position of them vis a vis the kin groups, that their concern with death appears as natural. As far as they are concerned, death will always raise problems relating to the continuity and stability of the regime. From Duncan one finds that it is social dramas as such which are staged to overcome problems in the social order. In spite of the ritual tension and confrontation between the kin groups and the governmental associations, when the kin groups give one of their number to a superordinate association, and provide the requisite fees and feasts, they are ultimately dramatizing in a ceremonial manner not only their subordination, but more significantly their 'approval'. Duncan notes how superiors stage themselves before an audience, whose approval legitimizes their position of power. But the audience here is not a passive one. For the kin groups it is more a case of audience participation, since it is at a funeral that Yako

superiors are able to stage themselves before an audience of kin groups, and elicit approval from them in a direction which is vital to the continuity and stability of the Yako social order. Conversely, in their ritual actions the superordinate associations although they are diacritically distinguished from the kin groups, nonetheless in their relationship to these groups, they too bow to the principle of social order, on which their community rests. Death as a natural event is resorted to, used to give legitimacy to the political position of the associations in the Yako social order. Duncan writes: "Social groups must stage themselves before audiences whose approval legitimizes their power. Audiences in turn, must see the problems of the community acted out in some kind of dramatic presentation, for it is only through the forms created in such action that community problems become comprehensible as actions." (Duncan 1972 p.61).

Finally I say why I have allowed myself to speak in terms of an ideology, and my explanation rests entirely on the question of differing perspectives that various groups will experience according to their structural location in any society. Harris has written: "Ideologies as such can only be seen in diversity; for there to be a 'yes' there must be a 'no'" (Harris 1971 p.48). This of course refers to what Harris calls the logic of dichotomies-'yes' having a significance only in terms of that which it is not, namely, 'no'. I do not propose that the associations are 'death-centred' in any profoundly philosophical sense. All I would say is that in as much as there are tension and instability between the associations and the kin groups (a ritual confrontation), and in as much as the kin groups espouse a symbolic concern for life and the associations are activated to ritualize their power position vis a vis the kin groups, at death, then there may be a justification in

speaking of respective ideologies which afford one another a respective distinction: an ideology of life for the kin groups, and for the associations, an ideology of death.

In the example of the Yako I have explored the political significance of the ritual performed at death. Forde's article did not concern itself with any comprehensive belief systems pertaining to death and in that respect Yako society differed from those societies which evince a system of ancestor worship. Nonetheless in both these types of societies death is an occasion which can be resorted to in order to afford a ritual buttress to positions of authority.

I now consider another global society and another association, namely the Yoruba and the Ogboni Cult of Oyo. Like the Yako associations it too has an important governmental competence but unlike them it has a profound philosophical orientation towards death.

Morton-Williams's account of the Ogboni depicts an association which evinces a profound philosophical orientation towards death (Morton-Williams 1960a and 1960b), and Lucas writes of it under the head "Funeral Guilds" which are connected with the performance of funeral obsequies (Lucas 1948 p.227). It is a society which recruits itself from the elderly; a secret society whose very 'secrecy' is the worship of that Earth, the mother to which the dead eventually return, the Earth being looked on as the mother and the abode of the dead. I quote Morton-Williams: "In its elaborate ritual, Ogboni presents the image of the approach of death as a homecoming." (1960a p.39). Ogboni is thus the cult of the Earth, and it is the Earth that receives that component of man that is to become an ancestor (imole). In that its members are elderly, they constitute those who have reached the latter part of an expected time-span, and whose death would be considered as a "natural" conclusion.

Morton-Williams writes of the association as meeting the elderly's growing pre-occupation with death, and Idowu writes that the death of an aged person is an occasion for rejoicing, because the person has only been recalled home and his children live to bury him. (Idowu 1966 p.187). There is therefore an emphatic orientation whose explanatory solution envisages death as the recalling home of the aged. Two quotations from Idowu's book illustrate this: "Mo nre 'le-I am going home", and "Ile ti ya-I am ready for home". (Idowu 1966 p.189). At an Ogboni funeral the priests sing, "We are bringing him home, to become an Earth dwelling spirit." (Morton-Williams 1960b p.371). For the aged the worship of the Earth, the pre-occupation with death offers what is the only absolute certainty in their future. The Ogboni elders are those who have their worldly fate worked out, their social position achieved, and who now face the problems concerned with the later stages of their

own lives and with guiding the community in accordance with Yoruba values. (Morton-Williams 1960b p.372).

Death is a perennial problem and when I say this I refer to what I wrote in the introduction. There I endeavoured to understand death in terms of a problem of meaning, one of the great imponderables of human existence and referred to the comprehensive belief systems which rendered death intelligible and which placed it in some scheme comprehensible to man. For the Ogboni, death as a perennial problem has its solution so to speak in the ritual and mystery centred in the worship of the Earth. This philosophical orientation towards death is evinced in symbolic constructions, collective representations, which denote not only marginality (death itself being a marginal situation) but also symbolize that *communitas* which Turner points out is a phenomenon of marginality. *Communitas* I would see as being oriented towards moral imperatives and ideal values which relate people one to another in the community. This tallies with Morton-Williams's emphasis on the fact that Ogboni members are concerned with guiding the community in accordance with Yoruba values. This relates to what I consider the creation of ritual man and shows a dimension of human experience oriented towards ideal values, *communitas* and a solution to death. In this sense, the secret society is one of an institutionalized *communitas*, concerned with the implementation of ideal values of and in the community.

However, as I noted in connection with the authoritative associations among the Yako, a specialist association has to have its own particularistic concepts of honour which diacritically distinguish it from all else in the global society. This is evidenced in its monopoly of

certain symbolic forms. There appears a logical, if not aesthetically congruent association between the number 3, the fact of left-handedness, and death. These constitute the exclusive diacritica of the Ogboni Cult. I read that the numbers 4, 16, and 256 are given particular importance in the Yoruba system of divination (known as Ifa)-a system in which men seek to manipulate to their own advantage the relationship between themselves and the gods. Ogboni ritual however avoids these numbers. Its prime ritual accentuation is exclusively on the number 3. Morton-Williams mentions how 3 denotes "a sign of incompleteness and therefore a concern with process and time", and consequently death; whereas the number 4 has connotations of completion and perfection. (Morton-Williams 1960b p.372-373). Maybe, too, 4 is in a sense a "closed" number, a number of boundaries and structure, whereas 3 has dimensions which are essentially "open", and therefore resonant with *communitas*. Concerning left-handedness and leftness in general one finds that at initiation into the senior grade of the society, the novice is taught to observe such taboos as to dance only to the left and to knot his cloth on the left side. The Ogboni salute each other and hail the Earth with a gesture of bringing the clenched fists together three times, the left hand uppermost and thumbs in palms. This correlates with what Hertz has written: "The right hand.....placed below the left hand signifies according to context, the ideas of death, destruction and burial" (Hertz 1960 p.104), and "....the left hand.....has its domain.... but this is a dark and ill-famed region." (Hertz 1960 p.105).

Having established the particular philosophical orientation of the society and the symbols of marginality of which it has a distinguishing monopoly (and these I see as the autonomous creations of ritual man in his concern with death) I now note the political concerns

of the society, its structural location in a political context, the government of Oyo. This is carefully detailed by Morton-Williams (1960b) and in his article the Ogboni society is seen as constituting an unaligned third force in the Oyo polity. It stands between the Alafin (the king) on the one hand, and the Oyo Misi, the highest grade of titled office-holders in the kingdom on the other. Lucas points out that the Ogboni was the king's chief consultative chamber in all matters and its principal members formed a cabinet. (Lucas 1948 p.228 where he quotes Sopein, a writer in NIGERIAN CHRONICLE). All chiefs and leading persons in the community belonged to it. It recruited from the various patrilineal descent groups, but membership was achieved and exclusive, not just open to anybody who happened to be old. Membership conferred status and privilege.

The Ogboni association constituted a powerful governmental interest group, being a ritually united corporation of political and religious leaders. As regards external relations in the global society it had a very efficient communications network vis a vis the Alafin, the Oyo Misi, and the numerous religious cults, the orisa (Morton-Williams 1964). Lines of communication and representation rose up in a hierarchy from the basic unit of the individual worshipper through the domestic cults to the main hierarchy of cult officials, and thence all lines from the various cults converged in the Ogboni society. The Oyo Misi were obliged to sit in on the Ogboni meetings and each member of the Oyo Misi though having political and judicial authority in his own section of the town and though admitted to the senior grade of the cult, was not allowed to hold titled office. Thus their incorporation into the cult constituted a factor of control-control being exercised over them by the Ogboni. As for the Alafin, he was by custom represented by a woman at such meetings. The cult had therefore an efficient and widely-based network

of communication, and was the point of convergence for religious and secular forces (i.e. the Oyo Misi and the orisa cult representation).

As regards decision-making powers Ogboni had a full ritual authority to enforce decisions arrived at in the meetings, for such decisions had always to have the stamp of unanimity on them. Dissension from a majority decision was not permitted. All had to appear as a united block. The cult was hierarchical in structure for in its internal relations there was a division between the "children", and the Ologboni or Alawo, the latter being the actual owners of the mystery or the secret (i.e. the worship of the Earth to which the dead will return). Only the latter could assemble in the cult house. Ogboni had two leading officials, the Oluwo, the Lord of the Mystery, and the Apena, Maker of the Way who was in charge of the cult's judicial functions. It had a meeting house or lodge, the iledi.

The ritual and mystical sanctions for its judicial authority were symbolised in the sacred cult objects: the edan; the ajagbo; and the ikuku-oro. The first of these, the edan, was the only sacred object to be seen in public, and its use was directed towards the restoration of harmonious relations in the society at large. It was not really punitive, though disobedience to the religious ban under which it placed disputants led to death. The other two sacred objects seem to have related to internal authority relations, and the ajagbo was brought out in matters pertaining to punishment. The last one used, the ikuku-oro, had its place when the Ogboni were deeply divided over some issue. Both symbolised the disciplinary insistence on unanimity within the Ogboni lodge.

In this account I have detailed the way in which the organizational functions of the corporate political group are met—that is to say, the functions of distinctiveness, recruitment, communication, decision-making, discipline and authority in internal and external relations. But it is imperative to realize that the ideological rationale for the Ogboni's position as an authoritative power group with a governmental competence in the Yoruba polity of Oyo was its worship of the Earth and what I have called its philosophical orientation towards death. In this respect it has its own particular ideology which distinguishes it from the orisa cult groups, for noteworthy in Morton-Williams's article is the difference in world-view between the orisa cults and the Ogboni society—something I have already referred to when speaking of the different symbolic forms that each espouses.

The above account therefore has approached the Ogboni Cult from two perspectives i) the philosophical orientation towards death ii) the structural location of the Cult in the political context of the Oyo polity, and the consequent analysis of the organizational functions of the corporate political group. I have noted the spirit of *communitas* about the Cult:— As one oriented towards the worship of the Earth, it is directly involved when human blood is shed on the Earth, such an act constituting a profanity. This would remind one of the Nuer Leopard Skin Priest, whom Turner depicts as a *communitas* figure. (Turner 1969 p.119). Like the Ogboni, the Leopard Skin Priest has a mystical relationship to the Earth, and what Turner writes of him could thus be said of the Ogboni. He represents peace as against the feud and is unaligned with any specific political segment. Analogously the Ogboni, at least as far as the Kingdom of Oyo was concerned, constituted an unaligned third force between the Alafin and the Oyo Misi.

At the secret cult meetings in the Ogboni lodge the Oyo Misi who would be obligated to attend could never appeal to faction outside the society without breaking the condition of secrecy and inviting ritual sanction. But inside the lodge they could meet and talk freely, without fear of their being reported on or having to conform to the prejudice of their supporters. As has been seen, all were bound by majority decisions, the rule of an exacting unanimity prevailing. All were bound by total obedience to honour Ogboni decisions. Political lines of demarcation in a particularistic sense were obliterated. The common interest of the whole community was paramount. For instance, the rite of initiation into the senior grade was always concluded by a prayer for the whole town, for the well-being of the total community. I quote: "May not the town be spoiled; May no harm come to the king; May no harm come to us ourselves; Nor the world see misfortune; Nor time be cut short." (Morton-Williams 1960b p.368).

Thus even though the Cult is to be seen as a society of institutionalised *communitas*, one concerned with "guiding the community in accordance with Yoruba values", it is politically involved in the government of Oyo. *Communitas* within the Ogboni Cult is oriented towards the highest values of the common weal. The members, in their capacity as guardians of the collectivity stand for the highest values of that collectivity, but in as much as the implementation of such values will necessitate the exercise of power-the control by men over the behaviour of other men-then these exclusive guardians cannot but find themselves in an important controlling position, a position of power. In this case their relationship to the global society speaks of a superordination which rests on moral and ritual imperatives which are focussed in the ideal values of the collectivity.

This can be understood in terms of Duncan's analysis of symbols in society, where he writes of the social order, of the principles of hierarchy on which such an order rests, and of the ultimates which validate this order. The Ogboni, the community guardians, have in their profound philosophical orientation towards death, an ultimate source of validation for the social order. Concerning ultimates, I quote Duncan: "Ultimates are addressed as final courts of appeal in the determination of the social order." (Duncan 1972 p.115). He distinguishes between five types of ultimates. I single out the final one which pertains to "the perfected end or ideal of social order whose immanence infuses social relationships with meaning.....we are in the realm of immanence where what is happening now can only be understood by what will happen then under the name of a deeply believed principle which is 'beyond' the finite (that is, social) mind of man, and yet is communicated to him. The social power of these ultimates is not so much that they are ends which we arrive at finally, but that they infuse every phase of the act-the beginning as well as the end-with their radiance and glory." (Duncan 1972 p.115). The Ogboni preoccupation with what I see as the perennial problem of human existence can be understood as a preoccupation with a transcendent ultimate oriented to what will happen then (i.e. when man eventually becomes an Earth dwelling spirit) but which infuses the social order of the present with what would be equivalent in a Christian sense to an eschatological immanence of ideal values. The Ogboni are then the guardians of these values, the custodians of the ultimate, and as Duncan writes when considering these "god-terms" or ultimates, "It is out of belief in such 'transcendent' ultimates that social offices, as social roles, attain their power over us." (Duncan p.66).

The radiance and glory-evinced in the social power of these ultimates-is seen in the social dramas in which the community guardians stage an authoritative presence. For instance, the rite of initiation, the prayer for the well-being of the total community (which I have already referred to) delineate a context in which, to quote Duncan:-

"The final and most powerful moment in the drama of authority is the invocation of the ultimate power which upholds social order and thus wards off threats to the survival of the community." (Duncan 1972 p.234).

But what is paramount in all this is the principle of hierarchy in the social order, and how this principle is perfected in dramatic action. As noted earlier, "The power of those who control the 'mystery' does not reside in the power of each rank to dominate an inferior rank, but in the acceptance by each rank of the principle of order which governs all." (Duncan p:80). The communications-network of the Ogboni Cult (p.102-103 of this thesis) exemplifies what I am saying here, for there, a hierarchical structure encompassing as it does, orisa-, Alafin-, and Oyo Misi representation, has at its apex the Ogboni Cult, and this Cult legitimizes its power position by recourse to the transcendent ultimate, which empowers the Cult to act on behalf of and through the total global society.

What I have written of the Yako associations concerning their symbolic and ritual activities performed at a funeral, applies in large measure. The Ogboni funeral constitutes a powerful social drama staged by those in authority. There is the exclusive and ritual assertion of a power group, a superordinate one in the global society. From the perspective of internal relations, such a ritual assertion is an exercise in group relegitimation. From the perspective of external relations it is a drama in which the community guardians legitimize their position vis a vis a community audience.

Lucas (1948) gives a picture of the Ogboni in procession on their way to a funeral, all of them wearing a distinctive uniform. Here one is reminded of the fact that the uniform symbolises the public gown of an authoritative office, which invests an incumbent with legitimate power. When a death occurs the Ogboni priests are at once informed and they come to pray over the body before it is prepared for burial. The body is washed and dressed and placed in a grave in the house. After dark, on the second day (the eve of the third day), the cult members assemble for obsequies either in the compound or in an open place nearby. The Ogboni drums are brought and on these are played the Ogboni rhythm. Very late at night, after having eaten well, drunk well and having received gifts of money, the members dance. Dancing and eating may be seen as symbolic techniques which facilitate communion and *communitas*, if not catharsis on the part of the group which has lost a member. Certain titled Ogboni officials shut themselves in the room where the grave is. What they actually do Morton-Williams was unable to discover. After this the dead one's hat and gown are hung on a post over the grave, and there they remain for some days until his *egungun* appears wearing them in a rite that assures his children and widows that he is now an ancestor watching over them. ("Egungun designates the spirit of the deceased with whom intercourse is held at the ancestral shrine. It materialises in a robed figure which is designed specially to give the impression that the deceased is making a temporary reappearance on earth." Idowu 1966 p.193). The Ogboni priests then rejoin their fellows and all sing the farewell song: "We bring him home to become an Earth-dwelling spirit." As it begins to dawn, the designs on the Ogboni drums are covered with a new cloth given by the bereaved. Only cult members may see the emblems on the drums.

These symbolic actions, the treatment of cultural artifacts (i.e. the covering of the drums) betoken an exclusive group diacritically marked off from the rest of the global society. Like Ikpungkara, Ogboni monopolizes the night, and the quotation which I gave from Hertz concerning the ritual activity on the dead body is pertinent here: "The group requires actions that will focus the attention of its members, orientate their imagination in a definite direction, and which will inspire the belief in everybody....." (See p.57 of this thesis, and Hertz 1960 p.83). Commitment to the norms and values of the group, to its aims and interests is relegitimized in this act of ritual assertion.

But this ritual action of an exclusive institution is set in a community context—a context of external relations. Lucas in his brief account of the part the Ogboni play vis a vis the bereaved kin delineates a picture similar to that which obtained for the Yako associations, i.e. a powerful interest group which is the recipient of customary prestations of money and presents. He quotes a song, sung by the relatives of the deceased: "The large amount you have received will some day be paid by your children." This means that the same presents given to the surviving members of the Ogboni society by the deceased members children will have to be paid by the surviving members' children when each of the recipients dies. These acts betoken not just a subordination, but an acceptance by the subordinate of the superordinate's position and claims in the polity. Although the emblems on the drums may only be seen by cult members, and although the act of covering the drums symbolizes an exclusive group diacritically marked off in its power position from the rest of the global society, nonetheless, that which is used to cover the drums, to facilitate this exclusive action, comes from those outside the association. This symbolizes a relationship

of superordination and subordination which is legitimized in the recognition given by the subordinate to the superordinate. In these ritual actions, it is a relationship wherein the guardians of the sacred principles of social order are recognized as authorities in the community. It seems as if the internal relations and the external relations of the group come into a symbiotic conjunction, so to speak, in the symbolic activity involving the drums, for on the one hand there is the exclusive act of covering them, and on the other, the covering of them with a cloth provided by those outside the Cult. The superordinates are thus given their legitimacy.

In this drama of legitimation (which is always a drama of authority), the problem of power differentials is resolved through a process of the mystification of symbolic forms. This is seen in Arnold's words concerning law, though I substitute 'authority' for his 'law':-

"From any objective point of view the escape of 'authority' (law) from reality constitutes not its weakness but its greatest strength."

(Arnold 1969 p.49). And, "'Authority' represents the belief that there must be something behind and above government without which it cannot have permanence or respect." (Arnold 1969 p.48)

The appeal to the ideal (the sacred principles of social order which find their symbolic location in the Ogboni Cult's profound philosophical orientation towards death) does in effect mystify the real in the differentials obtaining in relationships of power between groups in society. Acceptance of the Ogboni as guardians of the sacred principles of social order, as custodians and implementers of the ideal, gives a permanence and respect, a legitimacy to the social order itself. This "behind and above government" is indeed a mystification

through the appeal to ultimates which validate the social order and which oblige all in the society to accept the principles of rank and hierarchy in the social order, and the power differentials that this entails.

Arnold writes, "The abstract ideals of 'authority' (law) require for their public acceptance symbolic conduct of a very definite pattern by a definite institution which can be seen and heard. In this way only, can they achieve the dramatic presentation necessary to make them moving forces in society." (Arnold 1969 p.49). Similarly, Duncan writes, "Beliefs in authority are not abstractions but dramatic rules of conduct." (Duncan 1972 p.204). In this respect I have considered the necessary dramatic and ritual presentation, the social dramas of superordination at funeral ceremonies and mortuary rites both for the Yako and the Yoruba, and the way in which the continuity and stability of governmental interest groups are achieved through the use of ritual symbolic forms which give legitimacy to these associations in the global society. In both cases there is symbolic conduct of a very definite pattern by a definite institution-mortuary institutions which can be seen and heard and which thus render tangible and intelligible relations of imperative co-ordination.

Chapter 1V

Death and the Interest Group-in a period of political change.

- i) The Creoles
- ii) The Merina
- iii) Java

Politics refers as much to the struggle for power in the social system as it does to the distribution and exercise of it. This chapter will concern itself with the struggle for power in a period of political change. This will involve a study of the behaviour of ritual man and political man in the manner I pursued earlier. That is to say, on the one hand there is ritual man, what he does, thinks and feels concerning death. This indicates a dimension of human experience which is independent of the designs of political man. It is in short the dimension and domain of custom-custom as Baldelli understands the term (See p.8 of this thesis). On the other hand there is political man who is concerned with the processes involved in the struggle for power and who thence makes use of custom as an ideological weapon in the political arena. What I consider therefore is the way in which custom is dynamically involved in the political process. The material which I wish to locate in this orientation are the Creoles of Sierre Leone, the Merina of Madagascar, and an example from Java. I consider Cohen's treatment of the material on the Creoles and try to see if this orientation is useful in approaching Bloch's material on the Merina of Madagascar. Both of these will highlight a situation where death ceremonies function to effect the unity of a group, whereas the Javanese case will be seen to reflect disunity among heterogeneous units. All three examples concern a period of political change.

First of all, the Creoles. Cohen reports of these that they have a very active concern with the dead-with the beliefs and rituals connected with them. The dead are believed to be actively concerned in the lives and welfare of the living and are attributed with mystical powers which they use to help their living descendants or they intercede

with the higher mystical domains on their descendants' behalf. They can harm and act vindictively and must then be appeased, or 'kept happy' as the Creoles say.

The Creoles communicate with the dead through dreams and ordinary conversations. They visit the graves and talk to the dead and on set major occasions such as Christmas Day, New Years Day and Easter, members of the family go to weed the graves, whitewash them and decorate them with flowers. They make libations on the grave, which are said "to cool the hearts of the dead". They make speeches addressed to the occupant of the grave and over the grave they pour alcohol, then pass the bottle round, consume its contents and leave it empty at the grave-side. There are also "cooks" for the dead and these, known as awujohs, can take place at times of personal crisis when a special "cook" is arranged in the presence of relatives and friends and is offered to the dead usually by the articulate and experienced among the relatives who are said to "understand their language" best. Weddings, christenings, graduation and the building of a new house are appropriate occasions for a major cook. But there are also cooks on a small scale, held on minor occasions when food and drink are left on the table during the night so that the dead will help themselves to them. No food is offered at the grave, only at the house.

When a death occurs there is an elaborate and lavish expenditure on food, clothing and funeral ceremonies. Cohen reports that the funeral service is more ritualized and ceremonialized than it has been in the past. In fact over the last ten years there has been

an intensification in the ritual activities concerned with death. A communion is now taken in the morning of the burial day. The introduction of the 'fridge' has facilitated the conservation of the dead body, and with it goes an extensive and costly funeral arrangement, as in the expensive laying out of the body on the morning of the funeral. The body is displayed in an elaborately decorated coffin. The night before the funeral there is a lavish and elaborate wake, and over the years this has become more expensive.

This intensification of rites-in fact the whole panoply of ritual, belief and ceremony concerned with death-is best understood in the context of the political structure of Sierre Leone. By political structure I mean the pattern of relationships of power that obtains between people and groups in society. Firstly therefore I look at political relations, and then at economic relations as they concern the Creoles of Sierre Leone.

The Creoles constitute a privileged minority in Sierre Leone, living in the Freetown Peninsula. The inhabitants of the hinterland are referred to as the Non Creole Natives. Cohen gives figures for 1970 which enable one to locate and assess the strength of the political position of the Creoles in the highest offices of government administration. For example 16 out of 18 permanent secretaries were Creoles. Of the 34 heads of government departments 22 were Creoles, 5 were European, and only 7 were Non Creole Natives. 3 out of 4 members of the Sierre Leone Court of Appeal, and 6 out of 9 of the Supreme Court were Creoles. They monopolize the professions, the judiciary and high governmental and administrative appointments. Their monopoly of such dominant power positions is out of all proportion to their numerical inferiority. This monopoly puts them as

an ethnic bloc in a relationship of dominant power over and against the Non Creole Natives—a dominance in the professions, in the field of education and in the civil service.

The economic position of the Creoles is apparent in the land situation that obtains in the Freetown Peninsula. Land, there, is freehold, which together with housing property is owned extensively by the Creoles. Because it is freehold it can easily pass out of Creole hands to Non Creole Natives from the hinterland who with the wealth they are able to amass from diamond mining are in a financial position to invest in property and land. In the hinterland however (the Former Protectorate) the land belonging to the Natives cannot be so alienated: it is leasehold. This situation works to the potential disadvantage of the Creoles who individually may be offered heavy inducements to sell their land to developers, but as Creoles they are not able to secure freehold land outside the Peninsula, whereas the Natives can secure the freehold of land in the Peninsula.

Thus on both an economic and on a political front the Creoles are in a relationship of power with those who are not Creoles. They have an interest in maintaining and preserving a monopoly in the professions and in high governmental and administrative appointments, and in keeping the land in the Peninsula in Creole hands. I have seen that the Creoles are in a position of numerical inferiority but command a dominance in a political sphere. There is a conflict of interests here, for it is in the political interest of the Non Creole Natives to break this monopoly, and for the Creoles to preserve it. As such the Creoles constitute a political interest group.

If on the one hand the Creoles appear as a corporate bloc with its particular political interest to be protected from those who are not Creoles, yet on the other it is found that the Creoles are internally stratified in terms of class. High status Creoles try to neglect and sever relations with poor relatives, but will always accept invitations to parties given by men of equal status. There are therefore two interest fronts, so to speak: one in terms of class and the other in terms of ethnicity, i.e. the corporate interest of the Creoles as an ethnic bloc in the Sierra Leone polity. These two interests may conflict, for the pursuit by a high status Creole of interests along class lines may work to the detriment of the pursuit of a common, collective Creole concern. From what I have said it is clear that the common, collective concern of all Creoles relates to the land situation in the Peninsula and to the political position of Creoles in government service. These interests override what are in comparison the factional tendencies along class lines.

Cohen points out that the class divisions are counteracted by one major force, the mystical powers of the dead, and that a high status Creole will never refuse an invitation to a "cook" which is given by a poor relative. In their system of cognatic kinship the Creoles have a network of patronage whereby the poor among them are distributed among Creole patrons and the patrons are constrained by the beliefs in the threat of the dead into taking care of their poorer relatives. This link across class divisions is reflected in the radio announcement of a death: where a bereaved family is relatively poor the names of the high status relatives are mentioned first.

In this respect the intensified concern of the Creoles for their dead-for the beliefs, practices and sentiments concerning death-can be fruitfully understood in terms of an 'ideology' for this custom is the one potent symbolic factor which can articulate the political position of the Creoles as a totality. Custom is the province of the ritual dimension. The ritual dimension and the political dimension are independent of one another in that neither one "determines" the other. Rather they are to be seen as conjoined by a process of elective affinity. Following Geertz I see these dimensions as independently variable yet mutually interdependent. (Geertz 1957). Political man here makes use of custom, and the so-called natural vitality of this custom is correlated with the strength of the political motive-in this case, the political motive of the Creoles as a corporate group.

Just as I approached the American Funeral Industry from the perspective of the organizational functions of a corporate group, likewise can I consider the Creoles. They constitute an interest group but unlike the former who were organized on a formal-rational basis, are informally organized (though nonetheless 'rational' for that). This is so because in the structural circumstance of an Independent State (and such is Sierre Leone) it is not wise to foster interests openly and exclusively along ethnic lines for to do this could work against the constitutional idea of a happy nation state where all sections function together and complement one another rather than engage in conflict and competition over the distribution of power.

This is reflected in the ideology which an interest group will manifest. The group has to have a distinctive and distinguishing ideology which gives it an identity in its relationship of power with those who are not of its group and with whom it is in competition and

conflict. Its boundaries are the boundaries crystallized in conflict and the identity it here achieves, is an identity that resides in struggle. An ideology that can be exclusive to that group, one which diacritically distinguishes that group from others in the arena of struggle, is at an advantage over that ideology which opposing sides both rummage for symbolic tags of distinctiveness. The Creoles have such a distinctive symbolization of an identity in their cult of the dead. It is theirs and nobody else's. It has the advantage of being a ritual, normative institution-embodiment of moral and ritual imperatives which relate people one to another in the group. It has the advantages of what Baldelli might call the moral and ritual capital of custom. This is important when one considers the structural circumstance of an ethnic group in an Independent Nation State. In as much as an ethnic group manifests or asserts itself politically along formal-rational lines such as an exclusive political party, it is susceptible to government disapproval and suppression, but in as much as it follows its customs it is less susceptible because its folkways are seen as a cultural heritage, a customary ritual of tradition of one section of the nation. Conversely this seemingly innocuous nature of tradition can constitute the very political strength of custom. (This dilemma of modern nation states is implicit in Lehman's article on the relationship between Burma proper and the minority groups of the Union. (Lehman 1967)). Perhaps I could say that this "customary" ideology has the advantages of manifest and latent functions. The manifest function is the "innocuous" cult of the dead. The latent function is the informal articulation of a corporate political interest.

To be effective in the pursuit of its interests the group has to be kept aware of these interests. Group assumptions constantly need

to be deepened; ideological and political alertness sharpened; the group's position ever legitimized. In this sense I consider the way in which the group protects and preserves its interest in land and politics. Firstly, the land. Among the Creoles the land is protected by the mystical powers of the dead. A symbolic focus for their mystical interest in the affairs of the living is the "family house".

Both the living and the dead are centred in it, and when a man dies his home is not sold. It can be used as a base for all the children and for the widow of the deceased. Even when the children mature and get married and establish their own family house, they still continue to have a spiritual and moral right in the house of the dead parent.

It may happen that the house will be given to one of the children who will or will not pay compensation to the others, or a less successful descendant will live in it and pay rent. Cohen points out that a survey of the housing property of the Creoles in general reveals that at any one time the relatively poorer Creoles live in the house left by the dead, while the wealthier mature men live in the houses they have built themselves.

What I note is that the house is kept in the family: this is a ritual and moral imperative, for the house is not just a geographical location, it is a symbolic anchorage for the norms and values of a Creole way of life, and alienation of the house and land (which it will be remembered, is freehold), is alienation from the norms and values, and ways of that which is Creole. I recall the quotation from Wilson about those things being treated as sacred which are necessary to the survival of the group. (Wilson 1957 p.228). From this it is seen that the interest of the Creoles in land is "sacralized". The political and economic survival of the Creoles as Creoles depends in part on this land.

Now death raises the problem of the disposal of property and would logically highlight the predicament of land as a vital economic resource, and it is at this time that one can see how the ritual emphasis on the norms and values associated with the dead can serve to articulate symbolically the common interest, the collective concern of all the Creoles. (Similarly death for the Yako associations raised problems-those concerned with recruitment. Prospective candidates constituted a vital political resource for the group). Moreover the ritual accentuation of the link between the dead and the land has implicit in it mystical sanctions against alienation of the house and land.

Secondly I consider the way in which the group protects its interest in politics. It is at a house that people gather, can communicate and exchange information. It is there, too, that they "cook" for the dead on the various occasions, major and minor that have already been listed. This not only brings people into a communion with the dead. It brings them into communion with the living, with one another. This not only symbolically recharges the commitment of all to all under a "sacralized" ethos: it also recharges the political network of patronage (especially in as much as the high status Creole will never refuse an invitation to a "cook" from a low status Creole). Similarly the visits to the grave and the libations are experiences of communion which reinforce an awareness of moral duties that one Creole has to others, and which engage the energies, emotions and sentiments evoked by death in an awareness of what it means to be Creole as against Non Creole. But this awareness is the awareness of an ethnic group in a nation state and in that respect is a political awareness and when I consider the significance of customary rites I am considering the political role of culture.

Death is a marginal situation, an experience of liminality and it is here that a spirit of *communitas* is engendered. (Turner 1969).

Communitas obtains when there are "men in their wholeness wholly attending." (Turner 1969 p.128). Quoting Buber, Turner writes:

"Community is the being no longer side by side (and, one might add, above and below) but with one another of a multitude of persons." (p.127)

I take Cohen's use of Kant's terms, apply them here and would therefore see *communitas* as that state where men relate one to another in terms of the categorical imperative rather than the hypothetical imperative, and treat one another as ends rather than as means. (Cohen 1969b p.36-37).

This spirit of *communitas* I see as being the province of ritual man and can be facilitated by various symbolic techniques. I mention two. The first pertains to the funeral service. Cohen reports the effect on him of some particular hymn. The conjunction of words, music and singing on such an occasion as a funeral found a profoundly emotional and aesthetic response. Such a conjunction engaged a flood of feeling. The second of these techniques is drink, and drunkenness as at a wake-an experience symbolically consonant with a marginal situation where the reversal of normal, everyday behaviour is permitted-can be understood as "the liberated experience of *communitas*" (Turner's phrase p.188), which relates one person to another on moral terms, and which would exclude considerations of class divisions and internal stratification. Such a symbolic technique would facilitate the eradication of these latter tendencies and feelings, and foster instead the sort of brotherhood "within" in order to cope with the threat from "without". Any one person is thus made to feel "with one another of a multitude of persons". (Turner p.127).

Where the Creoles are concerned one sees that this ritual dimension of human experience and its full ethical import are capable of encapsulation into an informal political ideology. The symbolic constructions, the collective representations which enable one to understand death-to understand what I have considered as a problem of meaning are capable of a dynamic involvement in a political process as an informal ideology which articulates group purposes and power positions. In this respect I quote Harris: "The debate then should be about purposes, not ideologies, and in being about purposes it must be about the real situations in which people act, the reality of events-the problems people have to face and have to overcome." (Harris 1971 p.227-Felican edition).

Perhaps Turner would disagree with me here, but I would think that that political group whose members relate to one another in terms of the categorical imperative or in terms of *communitas*, may present a more cohesive front against an out-group, than would that group whose members relate to one another merely in terms of the hypothetical imperative. This pertains to what I mentioned earlier about the political strength of custom, and the political exploitation of the ethical experience whereby the ethical capital is converted into political capital.

For Turner the political use of *communitas* might seem a contradiction because he writes, "For me, *communitas* emerges where social structure is not." (p.126). Structure denotes the political concern, boundaries and differentiation, and in the case here would clearly delineate the structural situation of the Creoles as an ethnic group in Sierre Leone. But I think that it is feasible to consider the political serviceability of *communitas* within a group, i.e. an in-group vis a vis an out-group, just as it is reasonable to consider

institutionalized *communitas* or normative *communitas* (which Turner does on p.132) where *communitas* has to be routinized in a viable structure of sorts if it is to have existence over time. I am aware however that for Turner the in-group solidarity is strikingly different from *communitas* as such. For me, on the other hand, *communitas* is not incompatible with an in-group morality. A political in-group can make use of *communitas* to facilitate a cohesion within.

These symbolic techniques therefore facilitate a *communitas* which from an ideological perspective is politically serviceable to the purposes of the group. It is as if there are two sorts of problems which the group has to face, and the understanding of these problems is focussed in one and the same cultural system. On the one hand there is the political problem pertaining to the survival of the group and to the protection of its interests which this involves, and on the other hand there is what I see as the problem of meaning that death of its very nature would seem to raise. For the Creoles the understanding to both of these, the symbolic constructions which cope with these problems are manifest in the cult of the dead. A political and economic interest is therefore seen as 'sacralized'.

To conclude. In the example of the Creoles one sees that an understanding of the problem of death is dynamically involved in the solution to a political problem (how to organize and articulate informally a group interest). The intensification of a customary symbolic form that Cohen reported can be seen as the process of formulation of an ideology in a period of political change. Cohen has written: "...an ethnic group adjusts to the new realities by reorganizing its own traditional customs, or by developing new customs

under traditional symbols, often using traditional norms and ideologies to enhance its distinctiveness within the contemporary situation." (Cohen 1969b p.1).

This so-called reorganization of traditional customs or the development of new customs under traditional symbols is much a product of man's capacity as a bricoleur. Levi-Strauss uses this term to describe one who, with his bits and bobs of cultural remnants, is able to undertake odd-jobs, when the need arises. He can make use of these cultural bits and pieces, so to speak, to tackle new problematic situations. Noteworthy in the Creole case is the fact that this cultural repertoire (if it might be called that without fear of clashing too much with the mundane image that the term bricoleur evokes) need not be designed specifically to answer a political problem. It is not determined per se by the political motive: instead what happens is that the political motive encourages the bricoleur to exploit those resources which he already has in his cultural possession. (See Levi-Strauss 1972 p16-18).

In the sense I am writing here, this cultural possession constitutes an independent dimension of human experience, and only becomes a symbolic armoury when the political bricoleur is able to draw on it to articulate new purposes, new interests. That is to say, the creative potential of the ritual dimension is only an armoury in as much as it is made use of as an ideological weapon in the struggle for power.

This recourse to a symbolic armoury is particularly noticeable in a period of political change. Harris has written: "Men can change the purposes to which they put particular (symbolic) systems, can pursue different purposes while apparently adhering to the same system,

so that the circumstances required to validate the system vary".

(Harris 1971 p.41). In this respect Harris refers to Levi-Strauss on p.35.

What he writes on p.44 is relevant to the situation of the Creoles.

I quote: "...a group discovers a common purpose in seeking to overcome a common problem, and in this process of discovery it creates appropriate theoretical formulations of what it is seeking to do, why it is doing this and what differentiates it from other groups; it creates an ideology." To make the ideology sharper, to deepen its assumptions requires, according to Harris "the continuation of...a major problem, and usually a threat to the existence of the group through great deprivation or sustained hostility by the rest of society."

(Harris p.63). The Creoles are confronted, as has been seen, by a major problem-how to protect their economic and political interest in Sierre Leone when they are confronted by a threat. It is in this context that one can understand the intensified concern with custom-with an ideology which will informally articulate a political interest.

Having depicted the situation of the Creoles I now examine that of the Merina of Madagascar. The orientation which I propose to follow is not necessarily that pursued by Bloch in his book Placing the Dead. What I should like to do is to see to what extent Bloch's material lends itself to an analysis along the lines established by Cohen for the Creoles. Before describing what happens when a death occurs I shall give a brief background to the rites, i.e. what the present day social reality of the Merina is.

Over the course of time the Merina have migrated and dispersed from the traditional area of Old Imerina to develop radiant and satellite villages that comprise non-kin groups, so that nowadays the majority of the Merina live outside the culturally valued kinship localities that constitute the core of ancestral villages of Old Imerina. They live, it seems, in divided and distinguished worlds: the world of the dispersed present, and that of the traditional past. The present day world necessitates values and norms and ways of doing things which seem opposite to what the orthodox canons of the traditional ethos would oblige. Yet paradoxically, it is the ultimate desideratum of the present day Merina to be buried in the valued locality of the ancestral village, to be placed in the tomb of the razana, the ancestors, the dead kin. Dispersed and differentiated today, the Merina see the traditional order as representing an ideal, shared by all and therefore a unifying factor in the face of present day diversity.

This done, I shall consider the Merina funeral, and the famadihana. The former is an initial temporary burial which is followed at least two years later by the famadihana, wherein the dead are removed from the temporary site and buried in the tomb of the

ancestors in the ancestral village of Old Imerina. This is called the return famadihana. (As well as Bloch 1971, see Ruud 1960).

Firstly, the funeral. In virtue of the present day dispersed reality the funeral is more often than not a non-kin affair. When a death occurs the non-kin inhabitants of the village mobilize themselves in the performance of what I would consider services of affliction. The most dramatic demonstration of local solidarity takes place within the fokon'olona, the local community. The women of the neighbouring houses go to fill a pitcher of water from their big storage pots and carry it to the bereaved household. They bring firewood, which they would probably have used themselves for their own evening meal, and set to to prepare the funeral meal in the house of the dead man. They roast and pound coffee, husk, winnow and cook rice, and light fires. Neighbouring men might go out and kill a bull and prepare it for the funeral meal. Bloch writes: "The bereaved family has hardly any decisions to take and seems to be carried by the tide of their neighbours' help. This is characteristic of the whole proceeding." (Bloch 1971 p.141). In the evening-with the men perhaps well-inebriated-there is the boisterous singing of hymns and the meat which has been prepared is eaten, the neighbours blessed and thanked at regular intervals by the head of the bereaved family. Bloch points out that the express purpose of this large gathering of apparently unconcerned people is the fear of witches (who, it is believed, steal corpses, rejoice in death and try to frighten or otherwise harm mourners), and that the prime purpose of this outer ring of neighbours is to protect the inner ring of kinsmen against witches-though throughout the addresses and the thanks, the neighbours are addressed as kinsmen (the extension of kinship terminology to non-kinsmen). (Bloch p.142).

At the actual burial it is the neighbours who dig the grave just as it is they who have spontaneously made the coffin. What I stress is the fact that services of affliction are performed by non-kinsmen, and note the correlation remarked on earlier-namely that between the existence of magical beliefs and the performance of vital services by those outside the bereaved group. There is the mystical rationale behind the neighbours' protection of the kin and the dead body from the power of witches. There is a reliance, so to speak, by those inside on the services performed by those outside. Noteworthy too are the symbolic techniques which facilitate the spirit of *communitas*, namely the eating of the meal prepared by the neighbours, the singing of hymns and the drinking. All these activities constitute the creation of ritual man in the face of death.

Having said this concerning the funeral and the burial, I now turn to the famadihana. This is first and foremost a kinship affair. It is a ceremony of exhumation. Bloch distinguishes a number of different kinds, the most common of which (given the nature of the present day dispersed reality) is by far, the return famadihana, wherein the corpse is taken out of its temporary burial place and then taken to be buried in the tomb belonging to the ancestral village in Old Imerina. Other famadihanas are those where the dead are taken out of the ancestral tomb, "turned over" and replaced after having been wrapped in a new cloth, called a lamba mena; or where the corpse may be removed from an old tomb and placed in a new one. If it is a return famadihana it takes place at least two years after the funeral-during the months of July and September inclusive. Such a time-span gives plenty of scope for the costly and very extensive preparations and for invitations to the dispersed kin of the dead, the zana'drazana as they are called.

At a famadihana the tomb is opened, the skeletons therein wrapped in a fine papyrus mat. They are then placed in the custody of the women who hoist these skeletal bundles onto their backs and start to move dance-fashion. The bodies of the dead are touched by those with the closest and strongest emotional ties with the dead: parents, children and sisters. Women are the recognized vessels of kinship emotion and their emotional attachment is thought to keep the kinship links strong. After the very strong initial fear at touching the body of the recently dead (for whom the famadihana is being performed) there develops a joyous excitement, an often Bacchanalian spirit. After a time the skeletons are laid on the laps of the women, who by this time have sat down on the ground, and a short funeral-like service follows. Then comes a speech from the oldest man of the family, a traditional eulogy on the deceased. He leads the others in offering the new and costly lamba mena cloth which are wrapped around the skeleton. As many as ten or twelve are wrapped round the skeleton which has place of honour, whereas other and lesser categories of skeletons may only warrant several lamba mena and inferior ones at that. This done, the skeletons are then put once more on the backs of the women and a frenzied dancing ensues in which the skeletons are thrown into the air, up and down, bones crushing. Bloch describes this as a ritual sacrilege. (Bloch p.159). Finally they are replaced in the tomb in much the same riotous fashion. The men actually replace them and throw out the fine papyrus mats in which they had wrapped the skeletons when these were first exhumed. The women seize these mats and fight over them, for they are hotly sought after: sleeping on them helps fertility.

The funeral therefore can occur in one place; the return famadihana in another. From Bloch's analysis one is led in part to think of the Merina's love for a symbolic past, the ideology of a

glorious bye-gone era, as a sort of spiritual compensation for the realities forced on them by the practical necessities for present day deviations from the all embracing traditional ideal. Bloch writes: "Both these societies (that of the dispersed reality of the village on the one hand, and that of the ancestors on the other) make incompatible claims on him, and since he cannot be socially in two places at once, he compromises for his departure from the ways and the place of the ancestors by preparing for his ultimate and final reintegration as a corpse. In this way the placing of a corpse in its ancestral tomb is the final act of atonement by at last transforming the social being into an actor in the imaginary society of the ancestors." (Bloch p.216). Elsewhere he writes of the dispersed emigre as identifying in ritual and religious terms ever more closely with the tanindrazana (the valued ancestral locality with its tomb), "which he does in order to compensate for his separation from Malagasy things in everyday life". (Bloch p.36) One is told that the concept "tsiny" (guilt) is very important in this respect. It stems primarily from a failure to fulfil duties towards one's kin, and such a failure is inevitable when a man lives in a non-kin village and is obliged to enter into everyday relationships with neighbours who are not kin. As much as anything, the performance of the famadihana brings "tsodrano" or blessing, and this removes "tsiny" (Bloch p.163 and p.165).

This I do not dispute. The activities which I have emphasised do concern the responses of ritual man to the fact of death. There are vital beliefs, sentiments, and ritual actions which enable man to understand the experience of death. But I wonder how far one can understand compensation and atonement as adequate explanations alone.

To think in terms of the sinner of the present atoning in order to become a saint of the past is, of itself, not perhaps a complete explanation. What I hope to demonstrate is that the Merina's adherence to this ideal traditional symbolic form might have a practical and real expediency in the present day political relations in Madagascar. Just as I saw that the Creoles' adherence to and intensification of a traditional symbolic form had a political significance when examined in the context of the Creoles-Non Creole distinction in Sierre Leone, similarly I may be able to envisage the predicament of the Merina in Madagascar.

I wish to offer a sociological explanation for these ritual activities which is in effect similar to that which Cohen established in his study of the Creoles. At the outset I stress that there are, as it were, two levels of interest involved. One is the local level of immediate present day concerns with the practical necessities of a 'dispersed' reality where a man is obliged to enter into relationships with non-kin. The other is the much wider level of political reality-that of the relations between one group and those who are not of that group. It is with this latter level that I wish to start, this which I wish to emphasise-the level of the wider political reality.

A crucial dichotomy in Malagasy politics is the Merina-Non Merina distinction. Thompson and Adloff in their book "The Malagasy Republic" (1965) write of there being a "collective sense of frustration first under the rule of the French and then under that of the coastal peoples" on the part of the Merina. (Thompson and Adloff p.262). Malagasy politics is an affair between ethnic groups and one has to think therefore in terms of the Merina as a group versus those who are not Merina. What one studies is the relationship of power between

these groups and the way in which such a relationship is articulated symbolically.

Historically the Merina were a very powerful people, having an established kingdom in which they held dominion over the subject peoples of the coast, the Cotier. Of all the peoples of Madagascar the Merina were able to advance the most in the fields of education, the professions and the civil service. In this respect they seem to have enjoyed a position not dissimilar to that of the Creoles of Sierre Leone, i.e. a dominance in the administration and the professions. After the revolt in 1947 which was clearly Merina inspired, the French Colonial Government deliberately turned away from the Merina and gave greater power to those who were formerly subject to the Merina, the peoples of the coast, the Cotier. After 1947 the Merina still held many of the most lucrative posts in the country but they had lost all political power. (For an account of the French reaction to the ethnic situation in Madagascar and to the Merina in particular see Thompson and Adloff p.82). Today (the time of Bloch's field study) the present government and its party, the P.S.D. is associated in the minds of many Merina with anti-Merina forces, while the main opposition party in Imerina, the A.K.F.M. draws support more from the Merina and is therefore believed to be traditionally oriented.

I mention these brief instances to underline the fact that what is being dealt with here is the relationship of power between one distinct group and others. What I establish is the political interaction between those who are Merina and those who are not Merina and from whom the Merina stand distinguished. This is the widest level

of political relevance, the Cotier-Merina dichotomy. In as much as one is concerned with relationships between ethnic groups then Cohen's claim is relevant: "All ethnic groups can thus be regarded as informal interest groups and can therefore be regarded as political groupings." (Cohen 1969b p.5). In this respect the ideology of an allembicing ancestral ideal is crucially relevant as a symbolic form which functions to distinguish and distance the Merina as an ethnic bloc from those who are not Merina and with whom the Merina interact in a relationship of power. It gives them distinctiveness. It gives them identity. I would be inclined to say that the Merina do not look to the glories of a historical past out of a sort of pure cultural love per se. Perhaps it is not untrue to say that the Merina are culture vultures only in as much as there is a piece of political carrion in which they have a consuming interest. The Merina have an interest in the allocation of and struggle for power. They did so in the past and they do so now. It is through their existing culture that they come to interpret and understand the political realities in which they find themselves.

Thus it is at this wider level of interest that the 'ideology' is politically functional. If it is seen as 'ideal' then it has a practical and real significance as a symbolic form in the articulation of those political relations evidenced in a Merina-Non Merina reality. This is the problematic reality of power relations in which the Merina find themselves, and as much as anything their adherence to this ancestral 'ideal' enables them to understand such a reality.

I see this as a symbolic response in a period of political change. It is not an act of conservative regression or some form of cultural involution, a retreat into splendid cultural isolation. It

arises out of an interaction in the wider political arena. (Cohen followed this perspective in his analysis of Arab Border Villages in Israel. There, the Arabs when incorporated into the State of Israel responded with an intensification of their kinship institution, the Hamula, where one Hamula was traditionally set against another Hamula and those Hamulas were aligned against an outsider. Prior to this incorporation there had developed a cleavage along class lines and that along Hamula lines had diminished. (Cohen 1965)). It is not culture for culture's sake if by that phrase one implies a cultural isolation. Bloch is aware of this perspective for he comes very close to it when giving a brief survey of Merina history and commenting on Merina rebellions: "Again we have the same elements of rejection of foreign innovations and a turn to the supposed values of the past accompanied..... with a renewal of 'traditional' tomb customs". (Bloch 1971 p.29). What must be stressed is not so much the rejection of foreign innovations etc., but rather the political aspect in terms of which a renewal of traditional tomb customs and a revitalization of the values of the past are seen as constituting a symbolic form which has an articulatory function in the power struggle. It is better to think of these (and this I emphasise) as serving the political readiness of the moment. It is reasonable therefore to locate the maintenance of and adherence to this traditional normative institution, at the wider level of political relevance.

I now turn to the second level of interest, that at the local level where I referred to the development of norms and values and ways of doing things which seemed the opposite of those of the traditional order, in as much as people were obliged to enter into non-kin relations. Differentiation and dispersal have meant that non-kin groups

have come to inhabit the same emigre village. They are obliged to co-operate, and between them there develops an artificial kinship-the extension of kinship terminology, the application of moral categories to those who are essentially non-kin. At this level of interest I think one is seeing the development of an 'ideology', so to speak, appropriate to the new context, as persons and groups use existing cultural resources (perhaps the only ones they know) to understand and articulate interests in the new immediate local situation (for which there may be no pre-existing guide-lines). Regarding the conflict between the local values, norms and interests, and the wider norms and values of the 'ideal' traditional order, this may be no more than an indication of the tension between the utilitarian pragmatism of sectionalised interests, the immediate realization of these in the creation of appropriate norms and values (by drawing on existing cultural resources), and the need for the moral unity of a wider group in the pursuit of its collective political interests at a wider level-i.e. an ethnic in-group vis a vis an out-group at the wider level of political relevance: the need to maintain the moral unity of a Merina distinctiveness in the contemporary political arena. This is possible in the adherence to what is an important traditional normative institution.

There is perhaps a similarity with the Creoles here. I have noted that they are internally stratified, differentiated within along class lines, and evincing perhaps sectional ideologies in consequence. But these are counteracted by and in conflict with the need for a cohesive distinctiveness of the Creoles in their relationship of power to the Non Creole Natives. Then, the sectional interests are subordinate to the collective interests and the struggle of the Creoles

as an ethnic group. This can be summed up by stating that persons and sectional groups can operate on different interest fronts, which may logically conflict with one another. For instance, an ideology of the universal brotherhood of the workers would logically cut across ethnic and exclusively religious lines.

How does Bloch see the problem? I have already referred to "compensation" and "atonement". On page 73 he writes of an "ideal organization" in contradistinction to the "actual organization". On page 74 it is the "ideal society of the past" and the "practical society of the present". Other page references in this respect are pp.30, 36, 105, 216. From Bloch's own account one is almost led along to think in terms of a past ideology which is out of joint with present day social action at the local level. But this of course, Bloch rightly points out, would be a mistaken analysis-though perhaps he does not altogether escape the charge of having set up decoy targets in order to shoot them down. (See in particular his final chapter pp.216-222). He correctly sees two different types of social action. The contrast between the world of the razana, and the world of the village, "is not best treated as a contrast between ideology and action but rather as a contrast between different types of action." (Bloch p.219). In my terms there is action oriented towards the immediate local interests, and that oriented towards the wider concerns of the Merina as an ethnic group. The 'ideology-action' analysis is therefore still very relevant and makes sense when one bears in mind that there are two different levels of interest,-with the actions which crystallize around these, and the respective ideologies which articulate such actions. In part, it is as if Bloch has wrestled with the ideology of one level and the social action of the other level, whereas it is clearer if one thinks in terms of respective interests and respective ideologies.

Having, it seems, reduced the issue to one of a difference in the types of social action involved, Bloch then goes on to consider the time-scales relevant to these different types of social action. Such time-scales, one learns, explain the difference. Traditionally oriented action is imbued with a degree of permanence over time and a sense of moral security, which is finalized in the burial in the tomb of the razana, whereas action in the reality of the present day neighbourhoods and non-kin localities is related to the relationships which are not secure and can easily be broken: they are not characterized as being "of the razana". (Bloch p.219-220). However, this degree of permanence over time, to which Bloch attaches a lot of significance is, if I follow my line of argument, perhaps better understood in the context of the wider level of political action, and hence what I see as the enduring nature of an entrenched political position on the part of the Merina vis a vis those who are not Merina, whether the latter be the subject coastal peoples in traditional times, the Colonial French, or the present day Cotier and the P.S.D. Thus permanence and time-scales are merely epiphenomena: they are but consequent on an entrenched political position over time, and a recourse to them might not have all that much explanatory value.

In present day Malagasy politics, the maintenance of a Merina identity (an identity, which like that of the Creoles, resides in struggle) is achieved by adherence to that symbolic form which denotes an essentially Merina distinctiveness—the traditional ritual concerning the dead. The desire to be buried in the tomb of the ancestors and the correlative fear of not being so are functional in that they give a symbolic apotheosis to the normative order of moral imperatives. These imperatives function in a world of kinship relations. Politicians,

professional people, administrators, farmers and the general poor, be they all kin, inhabit the same moral universe which is held together and periodically relegitimized in the rites concerning the dead, when dispersed kin are brought together at a common point, a common sacred location. Old Imerina, a geographical area, is a symbolic location for all the present day Merina, and their orientation to this area-to their respective ancestral villages-points to the consummate realization of a Merina distinctiveness.

What I wrote earlier concerning the American funeral home and the cemetery is apposite here. I saw these as "focal symbols of.... interest groups" with the ideological function of affording "a distinguishing justification-a warranty" for the group. They were seen as ritually announcing the group to the outside world. (See p.56 of this thesis). Similarly understood would be Old Imerina itself. It is not just a geographical area but stands as the ritual assertion (relevant in Malagasy politics) of an informal political grouping.

This informal political grouping has to be seen in its moral aspect, and here the rites concerning the dead can be said to actuate the categorical imperative for they are both the creation of and creative of the normative impulse which binds people in a group. The ritual of the famadihana is to be seen in the context of a marginal situation which engenders *communitas*. This is evident in the tossing of the skeletons into the air. It is the liberated experience of *communitas*. An initial fear associated with anything concerning death is surmounted in a flood of *communitas*, of which the frenzied dancing is the symbolic realization. *Communitas* is a revitalizing experience and in their ritual activities the participants tap a revitalizing source. They enjoy the moral power of liminality.

In the giving of the costly lamba mena there is the symbolism of a moral renewal, and this, not only of the living in their duties towards the dead, but through the dead, of the living in relation to one another. It keeps them aware of an overall moral universe, a Merina universe as distinct from any other. (Analogously the function of clanship in the Central African Tribes which I considered in connection with ritual services of affliction). Since one body can be wrapped up on as many occasions as the tomb is opened, one cannot see the ceremony as a once and for all rite-de-passage in which the dead finally enter another world. Neither does one see it as a matter of a number of different transitional stages in some spiritual world, each commensurate with the number of different occasions on which lamba mena are given. It is rather a periodic re-legitimation, a moral re-commitment of all to all. In a sense the dead can be seen as constituting the hub of the wheel into which the various dispersed spokes converge, and any one spoke has a relation to the rest only in virtue of a common point of convergence. The dead constitute a moral power house, a revitalizing centre-the symbolic location of a traditional normative system, and it is this source which the living tap, and it is this which is functional in affording the Merina a cohesive moral distinctiveness in the contemporary political universe where they are engaged in relationships of power with other ethnic groups.

In this example of the Merina I note again how the strength of custom is closely correlated with the political factor-the political interest of an ethnic group. This is what I understood where the Creoles were concerned, and further too in the case of the American Funeral Industry where the intensification and creation of custom correlated with the economic interest. In short, political or

economic man makes use of the creations of ritual man. These examples have served to show a situation where the vitality or very life of custom is to be seen in a context of manipulation: the manipulation of ritual symbolic forms for political purposes. The last example, that from Java, will attempt to show how the decline of custom can also be seen as closely correlated with the strength of the political motive. Again, the context is one of manipulation.

The examples of the Creoles and the Merina have indicated the significance for informal political groupings, of traditional symbolic forms in a period of political change. These have both shown an adherence to, if not intensification of such forms to articulate new purposes and interests. Traditional symbolic forms were recharged with situationally relevant significata, and what was situationally relevant was a matter of politics-the particular political circumstances in which the group found itself. In neither case was adherence to such a traditional and 'ideal' form out of joint with 'real' present day social action-not, that is to say, when considered in the relevant perspective of the wider political context. The case from Java, as it were, provides illustration of an opposite process, where a traditional symbolic form no longer finds a legitimate location in a world of radical socio-cultural change. I shall see why this should be so when I come to examine the dynamics of the symbolism involved. The interesting difference between the Javanese example, and that of the Creoles and the Merina, is that the latter two show how death and a funeral effect a unity, whereas the former highlights the predicament wherein death and a funeral reflect disunity among now heterogeneous (but formerly homogeneous) elements. Moreover the latter two point to the vitality and life of custom, whereas the former in contrast points to the opposite.

Geertz presents a case of ritual in a period of socio-cultural change, the change from a traditional rural peasantry to one of an urban differentiated milieu. He begins his analysis with an account of a traditional ritual form, the slametan, in which are located three traces of cultural derivations, syncretically combined into a harmonious construction. The elements are Indian, Islamic and

Indigenous Southeast Asian. In the traditional rural milieu they functioned to articulate peasant social relations without any jarring between the elements, so to speak. The cultural form was not out of joint with peasant social structure. (Geertz American Anthropologist 59. February 1957 pp.32-54).

The slametan is performed on a number of different occasions but the one that concerns me here is the funeral. The slametan is intended to be both an offering to the spirits as well as a commensal mechanism of social integration for the living. A meal of specially prepared dishes, each symbolic of a particular religious concept is cooked by a female member of the household, the male head of which invites the male heads of eight or ten contiguous households to attend. The host explains the spiritual purpose of the feast, there is a short Arabic chant, and each man having taken a few mouthfuls of food, wraps the rest in a banana-leaf basket and returns home to share it with his family.

More specifically, where funeral arrangements are concerned, village religious officials known as the Modins have the duty of conducting the rites. They direct the whole ritual, instruct the mourners in the technical details of burial, lead the chanting from the Koran and read a set speech to the deceased, at the grave-side. Traditional behaviour at a funeral is "not one of hysterical bereavement, unrestrained sobbing or even of formalized cries of grief for the deceased's departure." (Geertz p.40 1957). Instead the affair is quiet and undemonstrative. Tears are frowned upon, and the funeral and post-funeral ritual of commemorative slametans stretching over three years, are supposed to carry one through grief without severe

emotional disturbance. It is said to produce a state of iklas or willed affectlessness, a detached state of 'not-caring'. For the neighbourhood group it is said to produce rukun, communal harmony.

So much for the traditional symbolic form and ritual attitudes. I now turn to consider the period of socio-cultural change and note the differential impact of social, economic and political processes on the peasant social structure, and the new configurations which materialize among the various elements as a result of this impact. There is the development of new economic and political concerns, and the creation or manipulation of symbolic forms to articulate these.

From a traditional rural-peasant scene one is moved to an urban Kampong, with its occupational differentiation, new economic and political opportunities, the materialization of new interests. One sees the proliferation of diverse groups. Where before one could legitimately speak of the homogeneity of a community, one now sees a heterogeneity of interests, the virtual disappearance of the semi-hereditary, traditional village government, the emergence of a multi-class society, forms of modern parliamentary democracy. Significant social groups emerge defined by a number of factors: class, political commitment, occupation, ethnicity, regional origins, religious preference, age and sex as well as residence. There is amidst this heterogeneity, "a careful balance of conflicting forces arising out of diverse contexts: class differences are softened by ideological similarities; ethnic conflicts by economic interests; political opposition by residential intimacy." (Geertz 1957 p.52.).

In this new social order with its new sense of equilibrium new ideologies are sought for. The traditional syncretism is splintered as various social groups appropriate and intensify separated symbolic elements of a traditional ritual sequence so as to formulate their own ideologies in a new problematic reality. The santri-abangan distinction is the case in point. The santri were those who followed a staunch Moslem, anti-syncretic creed, whereas the abangan intensified the nativistic elements, purified them of Islamic features and infused them with Marxism in the creation of a new ideology. The former emerged amongst the economically and sophisticated trading classes (tailors, traders and shopkeepers), while the latter found his genesis among the civil servants and expanding proletariat of the cities (petty artisans and manual labourers). The santri gave his political allegiance to Masjumi, a huge Islam-based political party, whereas the abangan's allegiance was to Permai, a vigorously anti-Moslem politico-religious cult.

What I have said is sufficient to underline the proliferation of diverse elements, politically, economically and socially. I now see what this means for a traditional symbolic form such as the funeral and the slametan. It means that persons and groups with particular and differing interests and perspectives are thrust together in the Kampong environment under the canons of a traditional symbolic ethos, that of the funeral and the slametan. That is to say the funeral and commemorative slametans are the only occasions when people with otherwise diverse interests and concerns are forced to participate in a traditional communal ritual, but this ritual is not equipped, so to speak, to articulate such interests and concerns in a heterogeneous milieu.

In Geertz's example, the majority of the Modins were village Masjumi leaders and had been advised not to officiate at the death of a member of Permai. They were merely to note the name and age of the deceased and then depart. Geertz's case concerned the funeral of a boy, which took place at the home of the boy's uncle who was an ardent member of Permai. The funeral was an occasion of emotional turmoil and ritual confusion. Santris and abangans were clustered in two distinct groups. The Modins at first refused to supervise or conduct any of the rites, and only agreed to play their part when the father of the dead boy specifically requested a completely Islamic funeral. However, at the first of the commemorative slametans which followed three days later, there were no santris present and the occasion was given over to a Permai political oration which drew on the texts of Marx, Sukarno and Nativism. There was a deliberate rejection of Islamic features, i.e. a long Islamic chant for the dead. (Geertz p.46)

Although the traditional symbolic form in its particular configuration of syncretically combined elements failed to articulate diverse interests and new concerns, this does not mean to say that the symbols of the past were thrown over. I have seen that the various groups, through a process of 'elective affinity' appropriated and intensified certain symbolic elements and rejected others. Those selected were infused with new meaning and fused with 'modern' cultural elements such as Marxism and the thoughts of Sukarno, so as to formulate a new overall political ideology in what was a problematic reality. In a traditional context, the funeral and the commemorative slametans had provided a ritual understanding of death. They were symbolic constructions acceptable to a homogeneous collectivity of rural peasants. In a heterogeneous milieu however, the traditional symbolic

form could not provide such an understanding. Instead diverse groups began to seek solutions particular to them. Thus for the abangan the new symbolic construction would have to evince in its understanding of death, a *Weltanschauung* or world-view which embraced Marxist interpretations of reality as well as the thoughts of President Sukarno. What I note here is the breakdown of a traditional custom, and its correlation with the political factor-the political interests of diverse groups such as the santri and abangan, who respectively appropriated symbolic forms to distinguish themselves from one another.

In this understanding of death, selected elements of the traditional symbolic form were recharged with situationally relevant significata but what determined the situational relevance of these significata was, as much as anything, the political factor for the diverse groupings which emerged in the period of socio-cultural change were groupings engaged in the problematic reality of new power relations. Geertz comments on the slametans as a traditional ritual form: "There was no argument over whether the slametan pattern was the correct ritual, whether the neighbours were obligated to attend, or whether the supernatural concepts upon which the ritual is based were valid ones. For both santris and abangans in the kampongs the slametan maintains its force as a genuine sacred symbol; it still provides a meaningful framework for facing death-for most people the only meaningful framework." (Geertz p.49). No doubt the slametan was considered the correct ritual form, but it did not and could not provide a ritual understanding of death which would be commonly accepted by all, because the slametan as such had come to mean different things to different groups, precisely through the process of particularistic intensification of certain elements, infusing their

form with new meaning, and further fusing these with other elements. The symbolic form had in fact been recharged with new situationally relevant significata. Thus what it had come to mean to the santri was something different from what it had come to mean to the abangan.

Chapter V

Conclusion

- i) Death and Identity
- ii) Death and Ideology

Throughout this thesis two terms have been used rather liberally and may now need more precise definition than has hitherto been afforded them. Both of the terms, as far as the particular stress I have given them is concerned, relate to the political dimension of human experience, and are namely, "identity" and "ideology". Firstly I consider the politics of identity.

Much of the material that has been examined so far in this thesis may be understood from the perspective of 'political identity', because what is seen at death ceremonies and mortuary rites is an assertion, a dramatization of such an identity. By way of introduction to this perspective, consider the Tallensi. (Fortes 1945). Among these I read that the assertion of an identity may be ritually expressed at death. Here I refer to the structural cleavage between the Talis and the Namoos, traditional enemies of bye-gone days, the former claiming to be descendants of autochthonous inhabitants of the region, while the latter are generally agreed to be descendants of immigrant Mamprussi. This major cleavage is significantly expressed by the people themselves in regard to their own funeral customs and mortuary rites-those respective of each group. These are the symbolic diacritica of difference and distinctiveness, which are focussed on by the people themselves.

For instance, of the Talis, I read that they, "dress the dead in a loin cloth cover of sheepskin, whereas the Namoos use a goatskin, and that to conclude a funeral they ngma ma'ala with the sacrifice of many fowls, whereas the Namoos ngma woxar, a totally different rite in which weapons and household utensils are offered to the departed spirit." (Fortes 1945 p.20).

Quoting a respondent Fortes writes, "Look at the Namoos, don't they (i.e. different sections of the same clan) do different things at funeral ceremonies? But their use of a goat (in mortuary rites) that is all one. We Talis, again using our sheep (in mortuary rites) this is the same for all of us. But as for our ritual we split up and do different things." (Fortes 1945 p.21). Yet elsewhere it is cogently asserted that for a Namoo, the social definition of the Talis is primarily, "...those who gird their dead with a sheepskin loin cover...." (Fortes 1945 p.121; and pp.121-124 in general).

This difference is further instanced in the martial choruses which characterize important funerals. A grand mimic war march, "dee", of the men of the clan takes place. The men, dressed in their finest clothes, weapons in hand, plumed helmets on their heads, blowing whistles and accompanied by drummers, gather in lineage squadrons to march round the settlement. They march irregularly in an unorganized mob, followed by excited children with women dancing on the flanks trilling the shrill kpelemet cry of elation. They chant defiant challenges against their traditional enemies in the wars of former days. (Fortes 1945 p.27).

From this very short account which I have taken from Fortes it is clear that identity is intelligible in terms of two aspects, the political and the symbolic, the former referring to the relationship of power between groups and the latter to the way in which such a relationship is culturally articulated through the media of symbolic forms. Here I hope to say, first what I mean by identity, and secondly the significance that it may have at death. At the outset I distinguish between identity by description, and identity by definition.

Identity by description would seek to list the objective characteristics of a phenomenon, what one might refer to as the internal dynamics of an element, whereas identity by definition, one which would give the element a political location in any particular universe, must have reference to that which that phenomenon was not and from which it stood distinguished but with which it interacted. (I am here trying to understand 'identity' by way of negative reference). By delineating the relationship of an element to that which that element is not and from which it is distinguished, I say that that element is thereby given an identity-an identity definable in an interaction process. For instance it would not be difficult to describe a state of health. Thermometers etc., would all suffice to enable one to record certain descriptive readings of a state of health. This alone however does not give a definition of what health is. It constitutes a mere description, does not afford a defining location for health. To so locate it is to give it an identity, and to give it an identity necessitates reference to that which health is not, namely illness and disease. This is prior to all description. Thus entities or elements in relation mutually define one another, and one element only has an identity in so far as it is engaged in such a mutually defining relationship. In this respect I would say that there is no intrinsic quality in any phenomenon of itself which could enable one to speak of its having an identity. Identity must involve relational considerations-a process of interaction within a mutually familiar and contemporaneous universe of discourse.

Thus in the Tallensi illustration I see the Namoos evincing an identity in terms of that which they are not, and which they know they are not, namely, the Talis. Witness the respondent's

assertion of an identity by way of negative reference, when he speaks of respective customs regarding the sheepskin and the goatskin. Fortes emphasises that such things are not merely emblems. They are symbols-that is to say, they are charged with emotion and affect. They have a moral and intellectual significance for the actors. They engage profound feelings and thoughts, norms and values associated with belonging to a particular group. In the example here, they articulate a moral and political identity, and constitute therefore identificatory symbolic forms of potent import, evincing a twofold function: firstly, they function as diacritical markers in the inside-outside dichotomy; and secondly, they serve as powerful emotive and intellectual factors in intra-group commitment and cohesion. (Fortes 1945 p.123).

This leads me to consider that in understanding an analytical potential of such symbolic diacritica I must see them as having an identificatory significance of distinctiveness only when they are located in a context of political interaction. Thus an account of the constituents of an element, how these are contextually related one to another, the way in which they are held together and organized in that element, will only have an analytical relevance when one has considered the political propensities of that element in its interaction with other elements within a system.

The way in which the constituents are held together in one element would involve the study of symbolic forms and their function to this end. But the further question which has to be asked is why are they thus organized in that element? In terms of the social order such an orientation means that an account of how a group

is organized has little purpose until one has demonstrated why the group is organized, and the question why brings one to the matter of political interaction. Here I reiterate the twofold function of symbolic diacritica, already mentioned. In this respect, my treatment of the Central African Tribes, of the American Funeral Industry, of the Yako, of the Ogboni, of the Creoles, of the Merina, and of the heterogeneous elements in Java, bespeaks the context of interaction. This interaction may be of an alliance nature, of an association in a global society, or simply of struggle. In these examples, the symbolic forms concerned with death evince a twofold function, and these I shall dwell on in a moment. Before that I wish to comment on the Tallensi material.

Traditionally, the structural cleavage between the Namoos and the Talis reflected a relationship of power, and that the sheepskin for the Talis, and the goatskin for the Namoos, symbolized respective identities, which were mutually defined in interaction. These symbols made group members aware of their own group in virtue of the difference between their own group and that other with which their own group interacted. Hence the twofold function of symbolic diacritica. The goatskin has an analytical relevance only because it is not the sheepskin. The sheepskin is, by virtue of that which it is not, and vice versa. Thus the two have a significance because of the situational relevance of the relationship of power between the Namoos and the Talis. The question how, which I earlier referred to, would tell me the way in which a symbolic form functioned to promote a cohesion between the constituents of an element whereas the question why would point definitively to the relationship of power between two or more elements, and the identity thus articulated.

It is obvious from the preceding orientation that I am primarily concerned with relationships of power between elements in a system, and this obliges me to consider the material from the perspective of interest groups in the polity, as such groups interact with others in the struggle for, in the exercise of and in the distribution of power in the social system. In this respect, identity will be interest-based, the interest being power, and such power may be moral, ritual, economic or political in nature, or a combination of these. In this sense I shall understand persons as having an identity only in virtue of their being members of a group. People may identify with group interests and aspirations but the group, as I have said, only has an identity because of its interaction with others in the political universe. Group members in their actions partake of and contribute to this group identity. When I speak of the way in which members identify with the interests, aims and purposes of the groups I am concerned with the how of group organization, but when I speak of the identity of the group, then I consider the context of interaction, namely, the why of group organization.

This is evident from some of the material I have hitherto looked at. Among the Yako for example there were a variety of interest groups involved in the exercise of and distribution of power in the polity. Each association was, so to speak, jealous of its competences in government and sought to mark itself off from other associations, to make itself distinctive from others in its power position-and where its relationship to the kin groups was concerned-to make itself not just distinctive from them but over them as well. In the allocation of power, each association had to be distinguished in its sphere of political operations, to

maintain an exclusive monopoly of its competences against all comers. Hence the necessity to articulate symbolically that distinctiveness, to assert it ritually and legitimize it periodically in social dramas. Those who govern are in their various capacities made distinct from those they govern: each affords the other, in the imperatively co-ordinated relationship a political identity.

Yet in so far as there is a multiplicity of such associations among the Yako, and since as I have noted, Forde's example of Oka, showed a person who had been affiliated to a number of such associations, then one person may have, so to speak, a number of identities, each commensurate with a particular associational interest. A person thus comes to play a varying number of roles and to occupy a number of statuses in the social order.

Where the Ogboni Cult was concerned, I saw a governmental interest group, an association of institutionalized marginality in the Oyo polity. It had an identity distinct from the Oyo Misi and the Alafin, and in the global society as a whole, but with all of these it interacted politically and ritually. It had its own political and ritual competence. Its political identity was dramatically asserted and ritually legitimized in the ceremonies performed at the death of one of its own members. I have seen how, for this society, its concern with death constituted a sort of philosophical *raison d'etre*.

In the Javanese example the struggle for power was reflected and realized in the symbolic forms that santris and abangans espoused at a funeral. Each was a point of negative reference for the other, and each therefore appropriated those symbolic forms from the syncretic system which would function to distinguish and distance each from the other in the struggle for power. This was clearly apparent in the turmoil and disunity at the funeral. Again I note the twofold function of symbolic forms and the way in which they relate to the how and why of group organization. The respective symbolic forms of santris and abangans have an analytical relevance in that they mutually define one another in a process of political interaction.

Concerning the Creoles, the Merina and the Central African Tribes, I have approached these from the perspective of informal interest groups at an ethnic level of political relevance. Death ceremonies, rites and customs serve to legitimize a distinctive political identity which is evidenced in the Creoles-Non Creoles political reality, the Merina-Non Merina dichotomy, and the Central African Tribes in a Colonial context. All these bespeak the context of political interaction and can be understood in terms of the how and why of political organization.

From a consideration of these examples (i.e. the Tallensi, the Yako, the Ogboni, the Creoles, the Merina, and the Central African Tribes) it is not difficult to see why a political identity can have a significance at death, because death is a ripe (if not the ripest) occasion for group legitimation. To die as a member of a group per se is perhaps a cardinal act par excellence of symbolic validation-the validation of group purposes and aims. Death is so to speak

an 'ultimate' event which can be used symbolically by the interest group to articulate its position in society. One can say that death finalises a political identity. It offers, as it were, a political apotheosis. But when one says this, one has to be clear that it is not death of or by itself which acts as a finaliser of an identity. There is no inherent quality in death of itself which would allow one to see it as crystallizing an identity. Durkheim wrote, "By itself, death has no deifying virtue." (Durkheim 1971 p.62) Instead it is the ongoing, living group which, as it were, ascribes this quality to death, or does so in its actions, for death was never directly the affair of the dead: it mattered only to the living.

It is, to use the well-known phrase, martyrs who make the faith. But it is men who make the martyrs, men in relationships of power with other men-men who have a concern for their corporate interests and consequently the symbolic articulation and validation of these. In this respect, what matters is the political aspect of canonization-its effect on the here and now of political relations. I here refer to the twofold function of symbols:-they function as diacritical markers in the inside-outside dichotomy, and secondly they serve as potent emotive and intellectual factors in intra-group cohesion and commitment, this being necessary in the group's effective pursuit of its interest. In this sense the death of any member is an encouragement to the others. Death itself is no evidence of any inherent consummatory power which finalises an identity. It is the political concerns of men that achieve that.

The American Funeral Industry and the example from Java-as they have been treated in this thesis do not fall squarely into the

above line of thought. Admittedly, the American Funeral Industry is an interest group in the global society. In the pursuit of its ritual and economic interest, it interacts with others on whom it depends (the consumer public), and also with those who are opposed to it (Mitford and the Funeral Associations). Its ritual identity is graphically symbolized at a funeral when it appropriates and monopolizes various symbolic forms that mark it up as the distinctive guardian of tradition. As with the Ogboni, its concern with death constitutes its very *raison d'etre*, but unlike the Ogboni and the other examples here considered, the body which it works on, the body which focusses its ritual and economic attention and which orientates the feelings and thoughts of the group, is not necessarily the body of a group member. Anybody's body is economically and ritually relevant.

Lastly, the Javanese example. In all the above instances, (including the example of the American Funeral Industry), death is seen as an occasion which reflects and effects the unity of a single group in a positive way, whereas in the Javanese case, death reflects group identities in a negative way, i.e. conflict at a funeral reflected in the assembly of differing groups—a heterogeneous political milieu. The body used in this case was that of a child, presumably not politically affiliated, whereas it was politically demarcated groups which sought to make use of the body, so to speak, each group attempting to locate death in its particular ideological perspective. At death one is able here to observe the dramatic and ritual assertion of interest groups, whose boundaries are those crystallized in conflict.

In considering the question of ideology I have recourse to the work of Plamenatz (1971). He draws what he sees as a crucial distinction between ideology as such, and the political (and, I add, economic) exploitation of that ideology. This distinction would appear to parallel the one I have followed when I wrote of the autonomous creations of ritual man on the one hand, and the way in which these are made use of by political man, on the other.

For Plamenatz the essential features which characterize an ideology are i) that it is persuasive and ii) that it is resorted to by a group or community on most or on many occasions of a given kind. He writes: "To be ideological a belief must be one that people resort to on most or on many occasions of a given kind." (Plamenatz 1971 p.72). When he considers such beliefs as being "persuasive", he means those that "serve to justify and encourage behaviour or to condemn and discourage it or to express hopes and other feelings, or to allay fears." (p.70) On page 73 he states, "If the beliefs are accepted largely because they express or inhibit feelings and if they encourage or discourage some type of behaviour not just on a few occasions but on all or most occasions of a given kind, they are 'persuasive'." This is reiterated on page 76: "To be ideological, it must be a set of beliefs to which a community or social group ordinarily resort in situations of a certain kind. They may, of course, resort to it (or to some part of it) to express or relieve their feelings, but it is their resorting to it, that makes it ideological. An ideology, in this sense, is a possession or resource of a social group to be used on appropriate occasions." (p.76)

As far as this thesis is concerned I would state that when groups so resort to any form of symbolic behaviour which is

'persuasive', that behaviour is ideological. In this respect I do not confine the question of ideology merely to explicit beliefs, but apply it to any form of symbolic behaviour so resorted to. This, of course, includes ritual, and on page 29 Flamenatz himself writes: "Rituals and ceremonies are practice rather than theory, and yet the ideas they express or that lend significance to them are ideological. There is a great deal of ceremony in everyday life."

Thus the ritual services of affliction among the Ambo, the LoDagaa and the Central African Tribes are ideological in that they are forms of symbolic behaviour resorted to by groups or communities on most occasions of a given kind, namely death, and have moreover a persuasive function-that is to say, they "express hopes and other feelings (and) allay fears." (Flamenatz p.70). Such symbolic behaviour is concerned with giving expression to and encouraging those feelings and attitudes which denote life in the face of death, order in the face of chaos (the urging of life despite death). The services of affliction, the cathartic activities, those experiences generative of *communitas* constitute the practical wisdom of the community in the event of death and are intended to allay fears, to persuade people out of their misery and encourage them to life. In this respect they are forms of symbolic behaviour which are ideological. Similarly understood are the symbolic activities of the Creoles and the Merina. They constitute ideological actions which enable people to cope with the problem of death.

In the same way the ideas and beliefs propagated by the American Funeral Industry can be understood as ideological. The poetic justification of the Beautiful Memory Picture, the poetic account of cremation, and the 'poetry' of the Memorial Parks (these

I have already mentioned on pages 46, 47, 48 and 49 of this thesis) are forms of symbolic behaviour persuasive in their intent and resorted to in connection with given occasions. They are ideological in that i) they express hopes, arouse feelings and allay fears and ii) they justify the various ritual practices concerning death and the funeral and also encourage them. These forms of symbolic behaviour are not only descriptive and explanatory. They are also persuasive and justificatory in their import.

The justificatory aspect of what constitutes an ideology is important and would concern those forms of symbolic behaviour which are resorted to, either to support and validate the performance of ritual practices, or justify the performance of moral rules and normative obligations obtaining between people in society. For Plamenatz this idea of support is a quintessential characteristic, a sine qua non of what constitutes an ideology. He makes a distinction in the term 'morality' between the actual rules themselves, and the supports of them—such supports as evidenced in beliefs, arguments and symbolic actions used to enforce moral rules or justify claims to a ritual competence. Many sets of beliefs that are ideological are overtly prescriptive, but, as Plamenatz points out, these prescriptive injunctions are supported by assertions that attempt to describe or explain the relevant facts. (Plamenatz p.76). He refers to the idea of a fable which contains both a moral and a tale. The moral on its own is not ideological but it can receive an ideological support from the tale. Thus prescriptive moral injunctions, norms and obligations which bind a group together and afford it a distinctive cohesiveness are not of themselves 'ideological'. They are,

ideologically speaking, 'neutral', but can receive an ideological support when various symbolic forms are resorted to in order to justify the performance of obligations.

Elsewhere in his book Plamenatz distinguishes between various types of ideas (pp.95-97). Firstly, there are what he calls primary ideas, those used "for the most part to make and meet claims, to give orders or to make requests that the givers and the makers feel they are entitled to give and to make." (p.96). Of themselves the ideas involved here are not said to be ideological. Rather it is the secondary ideas, those that are used to justify claims and validate the rules and obligations, which are used ideologically. Recourse to secondary ideas is an ideological act. Plamenatz goes further and identifies a set of tertiary ideas, "a more 'reflective' use of ideas to construct explanations that 'place' the relation or institution in a larger context, for example, in the life of the community or even in the divine scheme of things." (p.96). Both these secondary and tertiary ideas are distinguished from the primary ideas in that they constitute ideological resources to be used in justifying claims and in supporting rules and obligations.

Consider for instance the rationale behind the institution of funeral friendship amongst the Ambo. (See pp.9-10 of this thesis). This is ideological for not only does it describe and explain the reason for this relationship. It also justifies and validates it in the process. Moreover the relationship is normative: it pertains to obligations between people in a society, the moral and ritual claims that one party has on the other. These achieve their symbolic apotheosis, their very

justification in the supporting context of ritual services of affliction. The ultimate morality which I spoke of in connection with the Central African Tribes finds a ritual expression and support on the occasion of a funeral. It is then that an ultimate morality receives a consummate justification, so to speak. Such symbolic activity is ideological.

Similarly the mystical sanctions of the dead against the alienation of the family house and land among the Creoles tell of an ideological justification and support of a moral rule—the rule which relates people one to another in the Creole community. The occasion of a death and funeral provides such rules and obligations with a supporting context of ritual and belief. Likewise the Merina: their belief in 'tsiny' and 'tsodrano' associated as they are with the performance of mortuary rites constitute ideological justifications and support for the obligations that should obtain between kin in the Merina social order. Moreover such forms of symbolic justification encourage certain attitudes and feelings, discourage others and no doubt allay fears concerning death. They are resorted to by the community on specific occasions (i.e. the famadihana) and are eminently persuasive.

The American Funeral Industry has claims to make in respect of its various ritual practices. It had claims to a ritual competence. Its recourse to medical science, to mental welfare, to history and the Bible constitute ideological actions such as would justify and validate its ritual position. I have already noted how the Florists, for instance, justified their ritual competence by recourse to moral and ritual imperatives.

The Funeral Industry sought to legitimize its position of ritual power by presenting itself as the guardian of tradition who stood to serve the community. The arguments used, in as much as they were intended to support a ritual position, can be seen as the use of secondary ideas. The more 'reflective' use of ideas to construct explanations that place the institution in a larger context, such as in the life of the community (Plamenatz p.96) might be seen in the way in which the official historians, the bards of the Industry, described, explained and justified the customary practices concerning the American Way of Death. The placing of such an institution as the Memorial Park, in the life of the community, would certainly appear to be an important consideration in the plans of Hubert Eaton. (See Mitford pp.136-138).

Having explained what Plamenatz meant by ideology as such I now consider what he meant by the political or economic exploitation of that ideology, for it is this aspect that has figured prominently in my thesis. It involves a consideration of the political and economic motive-of the pursuit and defence of political and economic claims and interests. Plamenatz delineates a number of diverse situations which characterize the exploitation of an ideology. There is, for instance, the situation where a leader or group of leaders exploit beliefs. This is explained by Plamenatz thus: "But if he tries to get people to accept beliefs (or to seem to do so) for some purpose which he does not disclose to them, even one that they later come to approve, he is an exploiter of beliefs. He wants to do more than get people to accept what he believes to be true or right, for he has an ulterior motive. It is his having it, and not his lack of faith in what he teaches (for, as we have seen, he may have faith in it) that makes him an exploiter. He is an exploiter, no matter how good his ulterior motive." (Plamenatz p.135).

This description of the exploitation of an ideology delineates the activity of the American Funeral Industry, the situation of this association in the global society. Underlying its propagation and guardianship of a particular ideology and life style concerning death is the ulterior motive-the economic motive. I am not concerned with whether the ulterior motive is good or bad. I stress what Plamenatz emphasises: "He is an exploiter, no matter how good his ulterior motive." (p.135). It does not matter whether the American Funeral Industry believes the sentiments, feelings and thoughts that it propagates, persuades and encourages other people to think and feel. "The exploiter of beliefs may hold the beliefs he exploits or he may not, though to some extent he usually does." (Plamenatz pp.132-133). What is important in this respect is the economic motive for such a propagation. It is not custom for custom's sake, so to speak, but custom in as much as it is serviceable to an economic interest. In this sense the relationship between the American Funeral Industry and the global society is governed by the hypothetical imperative, for the association treats the global society as a means to an end. The means are evident in the manipulation of customary symbolic forms. The end is the economic interest of the Industry itself.

The American Funeral Industry constitutes an interest group distinct from those it serves. When Plamenatz writes of masters and slaves, who stand in an asymmetrical relationship of power to one another, he refers to the ideas that masters use among themselves, "when they talk to one another about their slaves or when they discuss the institution of slavery and what they must do to maintain it." (Plamenatz p.94). The ideas they use here

are secondary ones used ideologically. They function to maintain and justify the institution of slavery. Similarly understood are the ideas, ritual and symbolic forms that the American Funeral Industry employs-as these are embodied in conventions, conferences, magazines and trade journals. These are resorted to when the Industry has its ritual and economic interest to promote and defend.

This relates to the internal relations of the association in the global society-how the association has its own internal 'code of honour', so to speak, which makes it distinctive from those in the global society whom it serves. But as regards the external relations of the association, the American Funeral Industry has to portray itself as the guardian of an ideology of death, which is common to all in the community, for it is clearly to the economic advantage of the Industry if this ritual concern with death, this ideology, is accepted as legitimate by the community. In its very guardianship the Industry has to be seen as acting for the community and with community approval. Only thus does it come to legitimize its position of ritual power.

Another situation which betokens the exploitation of an ideology is characterized by Plamenatz as follows: "Ideology has been exploited politically in our time.....It has been used to bring and hold together a disciplined group able to take quick advantage of changing circumstances to achieve power." (Plamenatz p.143). This would clearly apply to the situation of the Creoles and the Merina. In a period of political change custom can be politically serviceable. The political exploitation of custom here means that the ideological support given to moral rules and obligations is

restricted in its operations to people within what is a politically relevant group. The informal political grouping is a moral in-group. Custom functions in a situational relevance that is politically determined. The fact of a disciplined group implies the use of secondary, and in this case tertiary ideas, embodied in the cult of the dead, to facilitate, sustain and justify a cohesion and order within the group itself. In this situation where the group has a claim to power, the ideology itself is distinctive of that group. The ideas it embodies are not shared by those outside the ethnic group. The group is thereby diacritically marked off, its boundaries demarcated.

Plamenatz does not consider the dynamics of an ideology in a period of radical socio-cultural change or political change. However, Harris does. (Harris 1971). I have already referred to this aspect of the study of symbolic forms in a period of change, when I wrote about the Creoles, the Merina and the example from Java. I recapitulate. Harris (p.41) wrote how men could change the purposes to which they put particular cultural systems while apparently adhering to the same system. Later (p.53) he mentioned how new ideologies could rework the material of the old. I quote: ".....the systems originally formulated to answer one set of problems are recaptured in, no doubt, a radically transformed way, to answer a different and new set of problems." On the one hand there is the problem of death and the ideological response to it. On the other, there is the claim to power in a new problematic reality. Elsewhere (p.62) Harris writes: ".....one can see the beginnings of ideology wherever any social group faces over a more or less extended period of time a common problem, a purpose or the

need for common action." The ideology formulated in response to the problem of death becomes dynamically involved in a political problem.

I linked this orientation to the more sophisticated dynamic explored by Cohen (Cohen 1969b pp.175-176) where I understood the way in which an old symbolic form is recharged with new significata that are situationally relevant in a new empirical experience: in this case a new political experience. It is an experience in which political claims are made and justified. As noted, Harris referred to Levi-Strauss and his use of the term "bricoleur" in delineating this process. (Harris p.35). In this context I wrote specifically of a 'political' bricoleur. Harris did not go into such a penetrating analysis of the dynamics of cultural traces as does Cohen (1969b) who develops further the work of Turner on symbols (Turner 1965).

In passing one can perhaps dispute somewhat the concept 'cultural involution' which is used by Geertz and which he takes from Goldenweiser whom he quotes at length. (See Geertz 1963 p.81). Contrary to what Goldenweiser had to say I do not see the employment of a past cultural form as an act that connotes an inventive originality which is exhausted. Maybe the opposite. For such a perspective overlooks that other which allows for the dynamic involvement of custom that serves the political readiness of the moment.

In the example from Java I saw how santris and abangans in a period of political change made use of death and the funeral as an occasion on which to make a ritual assertion of a political identity. Their use of death and the funeral denoted the

political exploitation of a traditional symbolic form or ideology- as its various syncretically combined elements were splintered and appropriated by respective political groups, and these traditional elements were recharged with new significata which had a situational relevance in the empirical experience of a new political reality.

Plamenatz's depiction of an ideology, i.e. its persuasive import, which seeks to allay fears and express hopes etc., would certainly apply to the traditional slametan pattern, as this is summed up in the terms iklas (willed affectlessness) and rukun (communal harmony). However the emotional turmoil and ritual confusion on this one occasion would, it seems, preclude such an application to the contemporary situation. Whether santris and abangans would continue to confront one another on such occasions is, at least theoretically, debatable, for from Geertz's account the reader senses that each group would much rather conduct funerals on its own as occasions in which the other group played no part. It is as if each group would rather locate death in its own particularistic but comprehensive Weltanschauung, which embraced its own religion and its own politics.

Whenever groups or persons seek to make political, moral or ritual claims and justify these, that action is ideological. The example of the Yako considered the claims of a superordinate over a subordinate-the political claims of authority. In Plamenatz's terms I would see the ritual activities of the associations as the political exploitation of death-the motive (whether good or bad is irrelevant) being political, i.e. the ritual justification and

legitimation of authority. Death is an occasion which authoritative associations had recourse to, resorted to in order to stake out and justify their political claims. In short to legitimize them.

(There is also the sense in which such ritual activities vis a vis death and recruitment are "sacralized" in that they pertain to matters necessary to the survival of the group.)

In the example of the Yako the reader does not encounter the use of tertiary ideas, the more reflective use of ideas or a comprehensive Weltanschauung which I earlier referred to, but concurring with Flamenatz in his assertion about ritual (p.161 of this thesis; Flamenatz p.29) I would here see the physical embodiment in ritual of secondary ideas used ideologically to legitimize and support authority in the internal and external relations of the governmental associations. Perhaps I could speak in terms of there being a ritual enactment of implicit 'ultimates'. (I use the word 'ultimate' with reference to Duncan, and how he sees the social order as legitimized). The problem of overcoming recruitment difficulties is therefore firmly located in an ideological context. Maquet's "moral being" (Maquet 1971 p.223) which of itself is ideologically neutral is given a supporting justification in the use of secondary ideas implicit in a ritual process.

There is the politically persuasive aspect of ritual activity, for such activity justifies and encourages behaviour regarding authority-respect for it, the fulfillment of obligations. The various competences in the administration and distribution of power, which I earlier detailed are, at death, given a justification in an ideological context of ritual and ceremony. But all this

is concerned with the associations as a whole. No doubt, each association would have its own particularistic and distinctive political ideology (embodied for instance in the group's cultural artifacts), which would distinguish it from other associations. A number of separate interest groups may have a common focus, a common ideological focal point in respect of recruitment problems and relations with the kinship groups, but each may have its own particularistic ideological standpoint thereafter.

Where the Yoruba were concerned I considered the position of the Ogboni Cult of Oyo and saw the Cult as an organized interest group, a society of routinized *communitas*, of institutionalized marginality, and noted the way in which it met the organizational functions of the corporate group. It had a claim to a moral competence (guiding the community in accordance with Yoruba values) and this claim I saw as being ideologically justified in its profound philosophical orientation towards death. This orientation would indicate the more reflective use of ideas which, to quote Plamenatz, "'place'.....the institution in a larger context, for example, in the life of the community or even in the divine scheme of things." (Plamenatz p.96). But the association had also an important political claim in the Oyo polity, and in as much as its ideological concern with death-its worship of the Earth to which all the dead will eventually return-was exclusively its own, then such can be seen as an ideological resource capable of being exploited for a political purpose. As I have seen, it constituted a sort of transcendental ultimate which legitimized a political position in the community.

In the notion of 'clanship amongst the Central African Tribes I saw great emphasis on the ritual services of affliction performed at a funeral. These I understand as the ritual embodiment of secondary ideas, which are used ideologically to support an ultimate morality. This ultimate morality was intelligible in the political context of a Colonial situation, and would relate to the question of the political exploitation of an ideology. This need not imply that the clans and the tribe were intensely aware of the political significance of these ritual actions. I agree with Harris when he writes: "Ideology is for the group what consciousness is for the individual, and as the individual will not know the full meaning and origin of what he himself believes (it has been forgotten not by him, for he probably never knew, but by his group or by mankind), so a group will not know the significance that we, outsiders from the group situation, might attribute to its beliefs." (Harris 1971 p.45). Death then, is an occasion resorted to, to justify an ultimate morality which is serviceable in a political context.

Lastly, the Tallensi. The symbols which I saw as distinguishing a political identity, are likewise to be understood as ideological. The funeral is made use of to mark up a claim to political difference from the enemies of former days. The symbolic diacritica whose intellectual and emotional import I have commented on, constitute an ideological justification of those values and norms which are concerned with belonging to one's own group as opposed to other groups. These symbols are dynamically involved in an ideological justification of political distinction.

In this way they are persuasive in as much as they encourage feelings, thoughts and behaviour as to what it means to be a Tale or a Namoo respectively. Again, I see death as an occasion which is resorted to in order to assert and justify in ritual a political identity. Fortes's account, taken from his respondents, showed people who justified a political identity by negative reference to the ritual behaviour of those they were not and from whom they were distinguished in a political relationship. In this instance, however, there is not a comprehensive belief system involved in the articulation of a political identity.

Nonetheless the Tallensi were certainly not without such a comprehensive and explicit belief system. They evinced a system of ancestor worship. This I see as an ideological resource which while having no relevance in articulating the Tale-Namoo distinction, did have a relevance in the justification of political claims concerning internal authority relations. This aspect has been fully explored by Scheinfeld (1960) who saw death and the funeral as an occasion that people resorted to, to manipulate symbolic forms in order to justify rights and claims over others, the rights and claims of power. Similarly, the cult of the dead among the Lugbara: I do not intend to explore this here but merely note in passing how the Lugbara evinced a political ideology of the status quo as well as an ideology of rebellion. (Middleton 1960). The former concerned the cult of the dead which legitimized claims to established political authority. The latter concerned witchcraft which was used as an ideological weapon to establish rival claims to power. The Lugbara instance an interesting example of ideologies in a period of cyclical change.

Harris has written (and this I have already referred to):-

"The debate then should be about purposes, not ideologies, and in being about purposes it must be about real situations in which people act, the reality of events-the problems people face and have to overcome." (Harris 1971 p.227). All our examples have, in their own way, related to the political purposes of groups, whether this be the constitution of a political alliance, the struggle for power, the promotion of an economic or political interest, or the legitimation of authority. These political purposes I have seen as being ideologically justified at death. In this sense death has been subject to a political exploitation, made use of for the purposes of power.

Appendix A

An interesting example of the politics of feasting, of commensality practiced during mortuary rites, and which, as with the Yako, is concerned with the authority structure of the polity, is clearly detailed by Bradbury in his account of Edo mortuary rites. (Bradbury 1966). I do not propose to go into the elaborate detail that he gives, but refer in particular to just one part, namely, the movement of yams in the igbizu rite.

Briefly I list the structural characteristics of Edo society. There are three age-grades: the iroghae, the ighele, and the edion, which are respectively, the fetching and carrying grade, the warrior and executive grade, and the grade of elderhood. The elders exercise the highest authority, and on the death of an elder, the senior son takes a place in the grade of elderhood, when he goes through the ritual obligation of burying and planting his father. As his dead father, through this rite, is enabled to take a lawful place in the world of the dead, so the senior son takes a lawful place in the world of the living, in the grade of elderhood. In this rite the senior son has to rely on the assistance of the edion and also on the co-operation of the ighele who, so to speak, help clear the way for the deceased on his journey to the world of the dead. The edion have their counterpart in that world: they are the incorporated dead, those who have been planted and buried. Likewise the ighele have a place but it is that of the unincorporated dead, nameless, amoral and vindictive spirits who have to be bought off since

for one reason or another they have died without being buried and planted.

At the rite of igbizu, the movement of yams, the household heads of the village present three yams each to the sons-in-law of the deceased elder. The bulk of these yams is then presented by the sons-in-law to the dead man's heir, the senior son. Bradbury points out that these yams are a token of the esteem of the sons-in-law, of the gratitude to the father for conferring his daughters upon them, and of recognition that the child-bearing capacities of these women are still the concern of their own patrilineal ancestors. A large number of these yams, the heir hands over to the leaders of the ighele, the ikaighele, who pass them to the iroghae, who in turn redistribute them to all households in the village. The women of the households cook them and the iroghae go round pounding them into 'fufu'. In the evening the iroghae carry the fufu to the front of the deceased elder's house, where the assembled elders, junior to the deceased feast on them with soup and meat provided by the heir. This feasting lasts from two to seven days. During the same period the ighele of the village also come together each night outside the same house where they remain eating, singing and sleeping till morning. On a fire made by the iroghae (who have collected the wood from the bush,) the ighele roast yams and cook a simple soup of palm oil, pepper and salt. The meal consists of roast yams and meatless soup-the sort of offering that is made to the nameless, amoral spirits, the ighele of the world of the dead.

In the example of the igbizu rite, the movement of yams at a funeral reflects symbolically the political structure of authority in the village, the patterns of superordination and subordination, of status and deference. Respective groupings are brought together in one place around respective meals, for not only does the movement of the yams reflect the distribution of power in society-together with the pattern of obligations that this entails-but the differential treatment afforded the yams also has this effect. For the elders there are pounded yams and meat soup. For the executive and warrior grade there are roast yams and meatless soup. The iroghae do the fetching and carrying.

Igbizu, therefore, is a social drama which reflects the distribution of power in the social order and articulates the relations between superiors, inferiors and equals. The social order is itself legitimized in the ultimate acceptance by respective groupings of their respective meals.

In terms of the politics of identity which I considered in the last chapter of the thesis, each group can be seen to have an identity in virtue of the type of political interaction which it experiences with other groups. This identity is symbolized at a funeral when respective groups gather round respectively appropriate meals. But above all, acceptance of these meals is an acceptance of the social order itself as an ongoing concern of all groups.

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