Magical Practices in African Societies: A Socio- Religious Perspective

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Abstract:

In this paper it was discovered that the practice of magic has been in the midst of Christian societies since ancient time. The Bible recorded evidence of magic both in the old and new testaments. In the Middle Ages there was evidence of magic. Among the early Christians in Africa, magical activities were observed and it is still in practice currently even though Christianity did not approve of it. There are different forms of magic, magic for healing, magic for protection, magic to harm and magic for entertainment. The method adopted in this research is critical analysis.

Keywords: Magic, Christianity, Africa, Healing, Protection

Introduction

Magical practice is a universal phenomenon; it is an attempt by man to control the forces of nature. Magic is the art of controlling events by the pretended use of supernatural forces; witchcraft, primitive superstitious practices (Oxford Dictionary). There are many practices linked with magic such as sorcery, wizardry, enchantment, illusion, trickery and charm which involve magnetism, enchantment- glamour (Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus 2005). Magic makes the practitioners confident in the action they take. The motto of magic is, 'my will be done' while that of religion is 'Thy will be done'. Magic commands, it is an I- It experience while religion is an I- Thou experience (Walter, 1970).

Prayer and sacrifice have been focal aspect of religion since ancient time. In prayer man pours himself out, dependent without reservation, knowing that, incomprehensibly, he acts on God, without exacting from God; for when he no longer covets anything for himself, he beholds his effective activity burning in the supreme flame. And those who sacrifice? The honest servants of the remote past thought that God desired the smell of their burnt sacrifices; they know that one can and should give to God; and that is also known to him who offers his little will to God and encounters him in a great will. "Let your will be done"- is all he says. What distinguishes sacrifice and prayer from all magic? Magic wants to be effective without entering into any relationship and performs its arts in the

void, while sacrifice and prayer step "before the counternance," into the perfection of the sacred basic word that signifies reciprocity (Walter, 1970).

Etymology of Magic

The origin of the term "magic" was from the Latin word magia and the Greek word mageia, derived from the Persian term magos which means "priest". A variety of Greek literary texts associated the magos and his work of mageia with all sorts of questionable figures including beggers and wizards.Mageia was sometimes applied to suspicious and barbaric practices, but still with positive connotations, when practiced by powerful esoteric practitionals (Janowitz 2001). In the first century veneficium were potions that thought among other things magic involve in the use of amulets to ward off disease, some magic to heal, or to cause people to fall in love. Sometimes they were lethal. Hebrews were thought to have access to ancient secrets, sometimes understood to be helpful wisdom and sometimes viewed more negatively as forbidden and perverse magical practices. Magic was prepared from bark of a tree, or an organ from an animal, was used for a variety of physical complaints.

In religious debates during the first three centuries charges of magic were used in numerious ways to draw distinctions between insiders and outsiders, and between proper and improper practices and beliefs. At the simplest level "magic" was the term used for other people's religious rituals (Janowitz 2001). Jews and Christians condemned "pagan" rituals as magic. The authors of Act of the Apostles attributed the success of Simon, a competing Christian proselytizer, to magic. Simon was able to gain followers, according to the author only because he used sorcery and bewitched them (Acts 8:9), Janowitz, 2001:17). The magician effectively uses supernatural forces. Some actions called magic are simply fraudulent. Some acts were effective powered by evil forces. Pagans know how to use songs to heal people, they are based on the work of evil forces.

The Judeo- Christian religion may forbid an action as magic in one case yet in another case permit a similar action. There were lack of evidence to critically analyze Biblical theories of magic. In the case of Moses conflict with the Egyptian magicians were wise men and prophets in Egyptian culture (Janowitz 2001). They were masters of no mean learning and power (Montague, 1973). The magicians were practitioners and prophets who were denounced as operating outside the approved biblical tradition. They operated in the following areas: the one who inquires of the one-who-Returns (Deut. 18:11, and "the knower"; the "augurer" (Deut. 18:10, Exodus, 7:11); the "charmer" Deut. 18:11, Psalm 58:6,); the soothsayer (Deut. 18:10), the "enchanter" (Daniel 1:20, 2:2), the diviner (Deut. 18:10), and the 'whisperer' (Jer. 8:17, Psalm 58:6). Many of these practices were part of

Israeli religion. The Deuteronomic editor did not accept them, they were recast as practices of the Canaanite religion (Janowitz 2001:21).

In the New Testament, the Gospel of Matthew, present the appearance of three Magis who brought gifts to the infant Jesus (Matt. 2:1,11). Their number is deduced from the number of their gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. Legend tells, more over, that the magi were called Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar, and that one of them was black. An oriental (Russian?) legend also tells of a fourth magus, Wo also came from the East, but from much farther away: from Persia (from the Bees to the Roses, Monthly Bulletin of the Convent of St Rita of Cascia, 12 December 1986:6).

Magic in Judeo-Christian Societies

In the ancient world the evidence of magic was observed in many societies. Among the Jews magic was observed as was reported by the Holy Bible both in the old and new Testament. In Gen 30:14-24 was a detailed and striking narrative of sympathetic magic. Jacob took rods of green poplar, hazel, and chestnut, and peeled these rods in alternate stripes of white and bark, and put them in the gutters in the watering-troughs when the flocks came to drink. The animals duly copulated, and "the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle. The poplar in Roman folklore was sacred to Hercules, in the seventeenth century England poplar –leaves were accounted an important ingredient in hell-broths and charms. The hazel has been linked with magic from remotest antiquity. The chestnut- tree and its nuts seem to have been associated with some primitive sexual rites (Montague, 1973).

In Gen 30:14 again was recorded a most interesting and instructive example of the belief in the magic efficacy of plants. And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Leah ate of the mandrake as a charm to induce pregnancy, and no disapproval of such use was expressed. Mandrakes and mallows were potent in all forms of enchantment, there are a lot of legends written about the love apples. In antiquity mandrakes were used as an anesthetic (Montague, 1973).

In Gen. 31:19, 31-35 Rachel stole the teraphim concealed for the purposes of divination. During king Josiah (639- 608BC) orders was given that workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images (teraphim), and idols were to be put away in Jerusalem and Judah (2 kings23:24). In Ezechiel 21:21, Esarhaddon was said to have divined by teraphim as well as by belomancy. In Hosea 3:4 was recorded that divination by teraphim was sometimes permitted. Teraphim has been in practice since the time of Genesis (Gen.31:35).

The allusion in 1 Sam. 19:13 was a deception by Michal on Saul's messengers, when putting one of the teraphim in bed and covering it with quilts she pretended it was David who laid sick. The teraphim were small images or figures (Montague, 1973)use for divination.

Soothsaying has been a method of inquiry and forecasting which seems to have been almost universal, although the exact manner in which the omens were read differed among the several peoples and at various times. It was practiced by Balaam as a prophet in Number22-23. Balaam was a prophet, not of God but a magician. He erected seven altars to represent seven planets. Necromancy is consultation of the dead. One of the most striking episodes in the Old Testament was concerned with necromancy, the appearance of Samuel in the Cave or hut at Endor.

The incident was reported during the reign of king Saul, on the eve of a tremendous battle with the Philistines, was much dismayed and almost gives away to a complete nervous collapse as he saw the overwhelming forces of the ruthless foe. To add to this panic, when he consulted the divine oracles, no answer was returned, "neither by dreams, nor by urim, nor by prophets" (1 Sam. 28:8-25). Saul was against witchcraft and familiar spirits as a ruler but under pressure he went to consult one after disguising himself. At first the Medium refused, since some years before the laws had been stringently enforced and the penalty of death awaited all sorcerers and magicians. The concealed king persuaded her and swore not to harm her. The medium brought the spirit of Samuel through her temporary obsession. Samuel was evoked by incantation and magic spells (Montague, 1973). The evocation of the dead was extensively and continuously practiced in the most clandestine and secret manner in the Old Testament time. The Mosaic law denounces such arts "Go not aside after wizards, neither ask anything of soothsayers, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 19: 31, 20:6, Deut. 18:10-12). Necromancy persisted even during the reign of Manasses, Thirteenth king of Juda (692-638 BC), It was at this time not lurked in dark corners and obscene hiding –holes, but was flaunted in the courts of the palace and at noon before the eyes of the superstitious capital. In the days of this monarch divination was openly used, omens observed, pythons publicly appointed, whilst soothsayers multiplied (2 kings XX1.6), Montague 1973:181.Manasses shed also very much innocent blood. He was more of a secular king, involving himself with murders, ruthless rapes and ravishments.

Divination through hydromantia (hydromancy): this was linked with Joseph's cup left in Benjamin sack, a silver cup (Gen XLIV.5). The servants of Joseph accused them of the theft of the cup. The steward regarded the cup as a vessel of special value and has mysterious properties. The cup was used for divination, known as hydromantia, a practice almost

universal in antiquity. It was water gazing or mirror gazing sought of divination (Montague,1973:184). The Greeks call it, Necromancy, it was practiced in Persia by king Numa and Pythagoras. Magic mirror is used for divination in many counties.

Simon Magus was a sorcerer and heresiarch who practiced magic around AD37. Simon came to Rome during the reign of emperor Claudius, and by his sorceries won many followers. He was the chief antagonist of St. Peter. He almost won the Emperor Nero by his spell but had challenges from the apostles intercession. The fame of Simon Magus as a wizard has been swallowed up in his ill repute as a heretic; so early do heresy and magic go hand in hand. He was the first Gnostic, whose disciples the Simonians, an Antinomian sect of the second century, indulged the sickest fantasies (Montague, 1973:193 see Acts 8,9,19-24).

At Paphos the Apostles were opposed by a magician, a Jewish false prophet, named Bar-Jesus, also called Elymas. He was a sorcerer Acts 13:6-11. In Philippi a medium, " a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination" followed Paul along the streets crying out and naming him as "a servant of the most high God," until he exorcized the spirit Acts 16:16-18. Acts 19:13, 19 Paul converted many diviners and witches, some burned their conjuring books, Corinth was a hotbed of sorcery and superstition. Witchcraft was ranked by St. Paul with murder, sedition, hatred, and heresy (Gal. 5:20-21). The reality of witchcraft was maintained by New Testament writers (Montague,1973:194).

Magic in Europe between 13th -17th centuries:- The priest prostrate humbly in the presence of the divine The magician has arrogant demeanour towards the higher powers. The priest professed to be the proper medium, the true intercessor between God and man. He sees the magician as rival practitioner, who preached a surer and smoother road to fortune then the rugged and slippery path of divine favour observed by the priest (keith, 1980:253).

The Christian Church had campaigned against the resort of the laity to magic and magicians. The clergy forbade soothsaying, charming and love philtries, along with such survivals of paganism as the worship of wells and trees, and the making of sacrifices to heathen divinities. The magician practiced sorcery for recovering lost goods and foretelling the future, he conjured spirits or made use of stones and mirrors, as at 1311 in England (keith, 1980:254). As at that time, there was no objection to attempts to heal the sick or foretell the future by purely natural means. The Church never discouraged the use of medicine, for example, or the attempt to predict the weather on the basis of observable natural phenomena. But any claim to have achieved some effect greater than that which could be shown to have arisen from known natural causes was immediately suspected.

The Church did not deny that supernatural action was possible, but it stressed that it could emanate from only two possible sources: God or the Devil.

The Church legitimacy of any magical ritual depended upon the official view taken of it by the Church authorities. For example, the theologians permitted the use of holy water. The church's view of any technique depend upon its prior assumption about what was or was not 'natural' (keith, 1980:255). Any device which seemed to produce miraculous effects for no discernible natural reason was immediately suspect. Even the tricks performed for entertainment by conjurers and jugglers were sometimes suspected to involve diabolical aid (keith, 1980:256). For those Protestants who believed that the age of Christian miracles was over, all supernatural effects necessarily sprang from either fraudulent illusion or the workings of the Devil(keith,1980:256). The cunning man was guilty of blatant lie by seeking to achieve supernatural results without God's aid. In the ecclesiastical courts such terms as 'witch', 'sorcerer,' 'charmer' and 'blesser' were used almost interchangeably (keith,1980:257). The types of magic most commonly mentioned included the detection of stolen goods, the use of charms to heal men and animals, the prediction of men's destinies, and the use of unlawful prayers or invocations (keith,1980: 258). The magicians were referred to as cunning men. The teaching of the seventeenth century church was, if prayer was of no avail it was wicked to turn to spells and charms as a substitute, for if satan healed the body he would certainly capture the soul (keith,1980:263). In trouble, sickness or loss, men flew not to God, but to witches. This was the burden of the clergy's complaint, and it was but another way of saying that the cunning man threatened to usurp some of their own most important functions (keith,1980:264). Some magicians like John Dee, handed over cases of hysterical illness to the ministrations of godly preachers (keith, 1980:158).

Magic in African Societies

There are elements of magical practices in divination, magic and divination belong to hidden things or occult. The occult can only be known about indirectly by its effects, by its apparent arbitrary interventions in routine existence. The occult powers, forces, agencies, relations are hypostatized in ritual and not believed to behave in conformity with material relations (Fortes, 1987:1,4).

Divination or magic is a technique, the practitioners will be judged by standards of proficiency. This predisposes the attitude of the patrons. The magician must be well versed in the knowledge of the occult and the knowledge of the profane. There should not be deception in the trade. Hence divinatory verdicts are tested by posing the same questions in alternative forms, and by the well-tried method of seeking a second and a third independent opinion and by ordeals which use the logic of chance (Fortes,1987:11).

It is an essential aspect of divination that its revelations should be objectively verifiable. The verdicts must be seen and agreed to by right. It is a common rule that legitimate divination must be public and formal, but secret divination is not accepted as decisive. It will be suspected of being partisan and calculated to advance private interests. Provision is thus made on different lines to circumvent fraud and deception in divination. There are loopholes in a system of divination which enable the mistakes of its practitioners to be explained (Fortes, 1987:11).

Diviners are ordinary folk practicing part-time, their main source of livelihood being farming, like everybody else's. But they are diviners by virtue of special qualifications. Only men can be diviners, since only men have the customary right and ritual status to officiate in ritual. A man becomes a diviner by virtue of having in his possession a particular kind of ancestor shrine (Fortes, 1987:12). Fortes writes about Ghana society. A diviner cannot divine for himself.

Oedipus theory in African Context

The term Oedipus was coined by Sigmund Freud to denote the situation in which sexual identity first began to emerge in the third and final stages of the psycho-sexual developmental process in childhood. Characterized by feelings of marked ambivalence towards the parents, and particularly the parent of the same sex. Freud argued that male children choose their own mother as their first external object of sexual desire and that this brings them into a situation of conflict in which the continuing affection felt for the father becomes complicated by hostility directed against him as a sexual rival and by fear of his superior strength (Freud, S. 1920, General Introduction to Psychoanalysis, in Macquarrie, 1967).

In Rotimi (2008), "The gods are not to blame," he began by saying tradition has it that parent's of every new child must know the destiny of the child. To know the destiny, they invited Ogun priest who tells them the wishes of Ifa oracle. The baby born to a king, the chief character as revealed by oracle in this drama was predicted to be the son who will kill his father and marry his mother later on in life. The family did not welcome the prediction, so the child was to be killed. The king sent some guards to kill the child in the forest. The people did not actually kill the child but gave him to a hunter from another village. When this child became a youth, he became a hunter and one day he killed a man in the forest. This man unfortunately was the father. When the people were accusing him of killing somebody he ran away from that village to the one he originally came from. He was a strong young man so the people decided to make him king.

Having become king, he inherited the wife of the former king. After some years the seer came to tell the people he was a murderer of the former king and he doesn't have right to be king. That was the beginning of his downfall as many other allegations were brought against him. Through soothsaying, investigation, interrogation among the community members, it was discovered this new king was the killer of the father and he also married his mother, meaning that what the Ogun priest predicted through Ifa oracle was true. It was the custom: what the gods command, people must obey (Rotimi, 2008). In the ancient time people accepted soothsaying. In the case of Ola Rotimi's work, the village was an institution with its customs and the people have feelings, emotions, hatred and pains. A community is built upon a living, reciprocal relationship, the people have feelings for each other (Walter, 1970). In this paper the issue is that oracle, soothsayer, and seer was consulted, the truth or falsity of what they revealed is not part of the theory here but that consulting soothsayer and oracle is magical.

In Fortes view, Oedipal conflict may be understood in terms of customs, the rule that first-born son may not wear his father's clothes or use his tools. The Tallensi explanation is that their 'body dirt must not mix, if this happened one would die. Brothers by contrast may borrow each other's clothes and tools. 'Body dirt' refers to sweat, bodily odour and other such exudations. It is, in Tallensi thought, uniquely representative for the individual himself and is particularly associated with adult sexuality (Fortes, 1987:199). In magic, sorcery and witchcraft things said and things done have commonly borne an evidence of symbolic significance where concealment was upheld (Firth, 1975:121). This author also discovered that Oedipus is a myth with structures associated with religion or the supernatural (Kirk 1971:11).

The case of barrenness and two women married to one man: the first four years before the second, both did not conceive after some time. The two came together and discuss the problem, they both find out they have visited the medical doctor to find the solution but the tests said there was not problem that they were capable of conception. After different tests they became suspicious, that one person in the family might be using charm on them because of hatred. They suspected the elder brother of their husband, he spends money on charm- making and had had land dispute with their husband (Oguejiofor, 2005 :3-4). One of them claimed, she saw him in her dream. The next action they took was to consult a soothsayer to find out the cause of the problem. The first soothsayer they went to consult was not working very much with his intuition but chant incantation and trick.

The second one divine through element of telepathy and investigation. When the women went to him, he want them to tell him their reason for coming, they refuse to tell him. He

entertained them, while he was doing that, a boy in his house identify them. He booked another appointment for them. Before then, he sent the boy to enquire if there was any problem in the women house. When they came next, he opened his divining box, and went through the formalities and then told them exactly what the boy found out. They were satisfied and he requested them to pay the fine (Oguejiofor,2005). There is element of prank.

Magic to control unchaste women: this was observed in Ogun area of Nigeria, a charm is enclosed in a leather case similar to a necklace. If this is stretched in the doorway to the bedroom, and the wife crosses it, it is said that, if the woman commits adultery with another man, the man, not the woman, will die instantaneously. This charm is sometimes used in an iron ring, and if the woman crosses it, it will have a similar result. If the woman is chaste- that is to say the suspicion of the husband is unfounded- there have been cases to the knowledge of when the husband died as a result of this trap (Delano 1937:90). He said, a police man died suddenly of this secret poison. The husband of the woman set a trap and pretended he was going to a distant place. He was so sure of the unlawful association of his wife and the policeman that he returned in few hours, and the trap had caught the pray intended (Delano, 1937:95).

Another magic is "sigidi" common among the Yorubas. "Sigidi" is made with clay in the form of a man, about a foot and a half high. The image or object is sent by those gifted in the knowledge of magic to their foes. In the case narrated by (Delano, 1937:99) a young man had seduced a young and beautiful wife from her husband. The husband was a man blessed with the good things of this world, and much older and better placed and recognized in the town. It was therefore a matter of grave concern to him to have been robbed of his wife by a younger man of lower status. On the other hand, the younger man regarded it as a matter of pride. He knew what he had meant to do; but he had trusted in charms, being a son of a powerful hunter and politician. Both of them boasted what they could do, in attack and defense. On one occasion the young man had a narrow escape from a falling tree on his farm, one calm, bright afternoon. On another occasion snakes were found under his pillow, but they did not bite him.

One morning about six o'clock, the first woman who came out of the house raised an alarm. All the inmates and neighbours rushed out to see what was the matter. A "Sigidi" was standing there with a short black cudgel in its hand. The young man in reply said, I saw it (Delalo, 1937:99). This show magic has been a common practice in these societies.

Magic Secret, like attracts like

The need to avoid many negative thoughts was emphasized by Rhonda Byrne, she said, persistent negative thinking brings something negative into one's life. Each person need always to always think good thoughts, negative thoughts are weak, while good thoughts are powerful. One should be master of his thoughts, one's whole life is a manifestation of the thoughts that go on in one's head. One's life is a mirror of the dominant thoughts he think. 'Whatever an individual sow, that he reap'. One's thoughts are seeds, and the harvest one reap will depend on the seeds he/she plant (Rhonda Byrne,2006).The magic presented by Rhonda Byrne 2012 and 2006, the secret are at verbal level, gratitude, thank you, grateful, trust and believe, and have faith, do not complain, 'like attracts like'- many negative thoughts and persistent negative thinking brings something negative into one's life, therefore one should decide to do right things always, and think only good thoughts. Individual's life is a manifestation of the thoughts that go on in each one's head. Human mind can discern one's thoughts. Each one should use his free will to choose his thoughts (Rhonda B. 2012).

The magic of transference of spirit by association, many members of white garment sects have problem with religious and water spirits. This is as a result of transference of spirit by association, they have spirit of prophecy, prediction and vision transfer. The supposed holy spirit got from the sect may not be genuine spirit of god (Chigbundu,1993:26, 27, 30,31). Transference of spirits through parents, those possessing demonic or witchcraft spirit, by association to children. There is an expression that 'only a witch can make a witch' (Ly Warren 1987:124).

Transference of spirit through laying on of hands. Negative spirits have be transferred to people through laying on of hands, by false prophets. When a false prophet or pastor lays hands on an individual during prayers, the spirit in him will be transferred to the person (Chigbundu, 1993). Transference of spirits is a part and parcel of man's life. It is when a stronger power or spirit gradually or forcefully influences a lesser spirit with a view to dominating, and controlling it that there is transfer of power into the weaker. It also means when a spirit residing in a particular place, location or family is transferred to a person, because he resides in that area or comes from such a family (Chigbundu, 1993:8). There are positive and negative transference of spirits. In the Bible (1 Cor. 15:33) the passage says, "evil communication corrupts good manners". Every parent instinctively knows about transference of spirits. This is the reason parents do not want their children to associate with rebellious and disobedient children (Chigbundu, 1993:8).

The following is much like the above, 'apostolic' or 'spiritual' Christian communities lead by self- appointed 'prophets' have drawn converts from established Christian churches and from the shrine cults, they multiply every day. They brought revolt against the joylessness of what Missionaries call 'the atmosphere of Christian worship' and the extortionate money- making of the shrines (Field, 1969). The spiritual Christian communities claim that their worship is in the manner of the Christian communities described in the Acts of the Apostles and that they are possessed, and moved by the same spirit in the same way and in the same large numbers (Acts,2), Field, 1969.

But occasional possession by 'The Holy Ghost' is not new to Africa. Even since Christianity came to West Africa converts have embraced it from a variety of motives, some faced with some problems. Then one Sunday in church 'something' would 'come to him' and he would be possessed. Then arose the questions. Was this the Holy Ghost? Or was it, in Missionary idiom, 'the power of the devil'? Or was it a native deity 'calling' the convert back from his mistaken allegiance? Often he would visit a soothsayer who would only prescribe a sheep/ goat to propitiate the deity. Then perhaps the same scene in church would occur again and the same sacrifice required. It may be decided that the deity had called the convert back to be a special servant. He would then accept his calling, go and train as a medium. Any layman can be casually possessed at an exciting dance (Field, 1969:9-10). The above show that one can be possessed by the Holy Spirit or another Spirit, there are 'the moving, dynamic, burning forces in life' (John Lake,2009:115)

This also is close to the above, at Johannesburg, someone accused Rev. John G. Lake of practicing hypnotism in his evangelistic campaign, trying to demonstrate the power of the Holy Spirit over demonic forces. He said, one night, God demonstrated through him the falsity of the accusation. The power that is within the true Christian is the power of the living Christ (1 Jn. 4:4). He illustrated the encounter in his personal ministry. In the Johannesburg evangelism, God instantly healed a lame girl. She had been suffering for three- and – a half years from a case of rheumatism or the first stage of hip disease. She was not able to get up the steps without assistance when she came to the platform to be prayed for. Medical doctors had treated her without success. A hypnotist had treated her for a year. The Church ministers laid hands on her and prayed, and instantly the Lord delivered her, and she walked up and down the platform to demonstrate to the audience that she was well.

The hypnotist came to challenge the evangelists, he asked if the man was the one hypnotizing the woman, he agreed he was the person. Rev. John Lake then said, "in the name of Jesus Christ, he will never hypnotize anybody again". He was also moved in the

spirit to bring the hypnotist to the platform, grasped his collar with the hand and slapped him on his back. He repeated again, in the name of Jesus Christ, the son of God, you come out of him. He lost his power of hypnotizing immediately, he tried to perform in another engagement at the theatre where he was billed to give exhibitions, he could not perform, therefore he cancelled it. He then decided to take up appointment in a mine to earn an honest living (Liardon, 2009: 125-126).

Magic and Medicine

Man employs the use of magic and medicine to conquer the evil forces existing within his environment. It is believed that they can be used to achieve what they could not achieve in the ordinary way. It is also feared that magic and medicine are capable of being used negatively, that is, they can be used for evil if occasion demands it. They are also used to usher in good things (Pivotal Teacher Training Programme for Universal Basic Education course book on Christian Religious Studies, National Teachers Institute, Kaduna, p.175). An act which has beneficial results is not magic, healing rituals are for example. Magic harms or disrupts the power of the divine, that is, the good supernatural forces which surround the deity. Magic are "charms, mascots, incantations amulets, talismans use for protection". Taking an oath or ordeal as "making juju" is black magic (Parrinder, 1962:17).

Magic acts depend upon the belief in the utilization of invisible powers. The occult power is believed to dwell in the countless charms which people wear on their bodies. Magic, or dynamism is a part of the belief in a spiritual world which is found all over Africa. Magical charms are made for teething troubles (Parrinder,1962:25-26). Dr. Edwin Smith suggested the term dynamism in place of magic. The efficacy of magical practices does not merely reside in things done or said, but in the employment of a supernatural agency, a psychic power (Parrinder, 1962). The kings magic was of the greatest importance in tribal crises (Parrinder, 1962). Magical practices common in Greco- Roman world was putting amulets on horses, wearing special haircuts, inserting objects into the walls of houses (Janowitz, 2001:23). This means using magic substance to prevent horses and goats from disappearing.

Magic is taught in an academy of magical arts, it is also taught informally by an expert magician and there are secret tutors in matters magical. Deryni's children practice how to use wards (Deryni or members of the royal family). Some magical systems equate the ward components with the elemental Lords (or spirits), Kurtz (.1986). Wards are a type of magical protection or defense, they eventually learn to use it in conjunction with working other spells.

Medicine: This aspect concerns the use of material medical means of healing. The use of plants, leaves, bark of wood, and roots of trees to prepare traditional medicine. There were certain plants known for curative purposes in different societies. In Southern Nigeria there are special trees that spirits can inhabit, such as the Yoruba Akoko (also called by the Igbo 'Ogilisi' or 'Ogirisi') is a sacred tree (Ogbenika, 2011:34). Among Edo people the bark of Ogwega tree is believe to cure all types of diseases, mental as well as physical. The seeds of this tree can be broken into two parts, put on strings as an instrument for divining. The botanical name of ogwega is' detaruimsenegalense. The iroko tree leaves are used for bathing to drive away evil spirits (Otasowie, M.O. in Readings in Religions).

The use of herbs, barks, leaves, roots of trees in itself does not involve magic. The element of magic comes in with rituals or incantations, performed by herbalists as they invite their familiar spirits. They are 'medicines which talk', by this it means the spirits in them talk (Evans-Pritchard, 1956). The medicines are purchased for personal aggrandizement, they may also be inherited.

Conclusion

A magician is a person credited with special powers over nature, they are referred to as cunning men. They can perform divination work, and tell a man if he can find his lost cow, have success in business or journey. They can perform rite to make the herdsman inattentive, then his animal can be stolen. They perform rite to treat barren women, impotent men and sick calves.

Magic al act can be an illusion or real, performed to fool an unsuspecting person who took what he saw at face value and did not realize, as a specialist would, that no material change in the cosmos had taken place. The technical term for illusion is "tricking the eye". Among Melanesia studied by Fortune the practice of black magic was common, the people engaged in making magic to induce productivity in their garden. Exchange of products from the farm is not acceptable because of secrecy involved in harvesting the products. Their polite phrase at the acceptance of a gift is, 'And if you now poison me, how shall I repay you this present?' Their preoccupation with poisoning is constant; no woman ever leaves her cooking pot for a moment untended (Benedict, 1978).

Witches can be found almost any where and are distinguished only by those who know what to look for-laughter and unashamed passion for living, anger at unjust laws against both humankind and nature; they are, however, usually recognized by their own kind by either the amulet they wear or by certain phrases that are meaningful only amongst themselves. The primary deity of the Witch is the Goddess, She is known by many names

and almost every culture. The full Moon is the most productive part of the month to work magic, to invoke forces of a benevolent nature (Ly Warren 1987:63,65). The worshipper of the goddess, develop psychic talents and many leave the mundane work-force. They offer their gifts in such fields as divination, numerology, astrology and some grow herbs, others are gifted in healing arts, some make talismans, amulets and help those in need (Ly Warren 1987: 134). The Witch belong to the forces of the Elementals upon the plant. Witches have trained will to effect changes and they are initiated into witch club. There are traditionally initiated witch, witches met at coven or in a solitary place. They are associated with the religions that has rites to High God and gods of the Earth, the religions of balance to both the forces of the Elementals upon this plant and the forces of the Universe(Ly Warren 1987:135). Finally, there are illusionary and mysterious things in magic, for example human being changing into other creatures, using magic to tie the womb of a woman having frequent miscarriage. Using magic to " tie up" the life of the man seriously sick from dying, though the person will died later but magic kept him for some days (Delano, 1937).

Magical practices is common with the population in rural communities, some of the authors whose work appear in this paper published their material in the 1960s or before. Their work was based in rural communities. In the cities modernization and Christianity has reduced the rate at which people patronize magical items. The Marsi were known as "snake-charmers" with special cures for snakebites. Magic was used to catch fish, control goat and horses. It was to cause people to fall in love in the first centuries C.E. and some of these acts continue to thrive today (Janowitz, 2001:12,13). In this contemporary time goats are kept in pens in towns. People now have fish pounds where they embark on commercial fishing. Wealth now counts in love making rather than strenght or charm. Magic is now common in theatrical shows.

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