



Tying the new pole-shrine (alore) with the rain creeper that once linked heaven and earth, Loronyo, 2012. Photograph by Naoki Naito.

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The Metabolism of Violence and Order: The King's Stomach at Work

Two questions still need a clearer answer. The first one is of a general nature: what is the connection between rainmaking and peacemaking, the two major responsibilities of the sovereign in the polities on the Equatorian east bank of the Nile? Is there a more intimate connection than the potential of rain to dramatise the balance of power between king and people, and the sheer fact that of all disasters, drought is feared most? The second question is more specific: why is the stomach of the Rainmaker cut after his death and why, in the case of Queen Nyiburu, was a 'tasteless' cucumber applied to it? To answer these questions we need a brief excursion into the cosmology of the Equatorian east bank. For this purpose, I would like to examine some aspects of the festival that marks the transition from the cultivation season to the hunting season, from the rainy to the dry season. Because of its diverse names (*Löri* in Bari; Lulubo: *Kajuwaya*; Lokoya: *Odhurak*; Lotuho: *Nalam*; Pari: *Nyalam*), I refer to it as the New Year Festival. Its ritual and symbolism provide a synopsis of the social values and cosmological ideas of these Nilotic communities.

The festival lasts one day. It starts early in the morning and culminates in a dance of the whole community in the afternoon. The following sequences can be distinguished:

- Consecration of the pole-shrine by the responsible Master or guardian, before sunrise;
- Meeting of the *monyomiji* in their meeting place deep in the bush where the previous year is evaluated and measures for the new year are discussed;
- Village-wide divinatory hunt in which all sections co-operate — the hunt is believed to predict the fortunes of the community in the new year;
- Formal welcoming of the *monyomiji* by the women at the meeting ground at the boundary between village and bush;
- Administration of blessings (for food, for a hunt without mishaps, for the birth of children) by the respective Masters of Disaster;
- Re-appropriation of the ceremonial ground by the *monyomiji*, followed by the other members of the community, sometimes on the basis of sectional competition; and
- Joint dance of all the members of the community.

Let us briefly examine each of these sequences.

The New Year festival

The preparations for *Kajuwaya* celebrations of 1986 started with a visit to the diviner (*ozo*).¹ I joined the delegation of the *monyomiji* of Lokiliri. They were worried because in 1985 fighting had broken out during the first preparatory dance. A connection was suspected between that untimely violence and the poor harvest. The diviner threw her stones. Her reading held no special warning: people should be ‘of one heart’ and keep their celebrations sober-in fact the only option considering the situation of famine.

A few days later, before dawn, the Master of the Land and his deputy, the Guardian of the Shrine (*kaciri modi*) and the Speaker of the *monyomiji* congregated at the pole-shrine to pray. After pouring a mixture of beer and oil at the foot of the pole-shrine, all present took a sip from the calabash praying to their ancestors that “that the bodies of the people who were going to celebrate might be cool”.

After the prayer, a fresh liana (Lulubo: *uno*, Bari: *dölöngi*, Lokoya: *odyalang*) was tied around the poles of the shrine. This creeping plant is a variety of the wild vine tree (*Cissus mossambicensis*, Spagnolo, 1960:28), a woody climber used by the Bari as a rope for pulling boats. The lianas are watery inside. It is certainly because of this quality that they play an important symbolic role. Following Buxton in this, I shall refer to this plant as ‘rain creeper’ (1973:116).

At daybreak, more *monyomiji* arrived and started clearing the ceremonial ground of weeds. In the afternoon, when the weeding was finished, the first *ira* of the season was danced and sung. *Ira* is accompanied by songs that commemorate past war feats recalling the names of enemy victims and evoking the circumstances of the victory. Between the opening of the ceremonial ground and the day of *Kajuwaya* — a warming-up period when people dance a few rounds every night — the shrine should be well guarded. In the past, in Ngangala and Ngulere, the guardian of the shrine slept next to it to prevent enemies from performing sacrilegious acts on it to harm the village.

The responsibility for the village shrine and for the New Year’s festival is, in some villages (Kudwo and Edemo), an office in its own right. In others, it rests with the Rainmaker (Ngulere), the Master of the Land (Ngangala, Lokiliri)² or the Master of Bows (Liria; illustration p. 430) .

Before dawn on the day of the New Year’s festival, libations of unfiltered beer and oil are poured at the foot of the shrine. In Kudwo, water is poured in a receptacle which is located in a cavity underneath the poles of the shrine. In Lokiliri, both the Master of the Land and his wife rub oil and spit beer on the ebony poles.

In Liria and Ngulere, the *anggat*, a rectangular structure made of bare branches, placed to the east of the pole-shrine at the outer circle of the ceremonial ground, is

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- 1 *Kajuwaya* is celebrated on a fixed day, 28 January. This date was fixed by the generation of Kwara (1956–1975). They also ruled that *Kajuwaya* should henceforth be danced during daytime and not at night, during the new moon with torches as was the old custom.
 - 2 In Lokiliri, the *opopi kajuwayari* is under a junior lineage of the rain clan which also keeps the drums. Rituals at *Tukure*, the central village shrine, are performed by the *Osi Buri*, the Master of the Land.

the focus of ritual attention at *Odhurak*. The structure represents the community's eco-system in microcosm. It is placed in an east-west direction because the most important rains come from the east. In the middle, some sorghum seeds are sown. When the sorghum is ripe, it will only be used to provide the seeds which will be sown on the same spot for the next harvest.³ In and around it are the *omunu* ('snakes'), sets of wooden pegs planted in the soil, also referred to as *ahabusi* ('queens'), used for thanksgiving after the hunt and the harvest. The catch of the New Year's divinatory hunt is deposited at the shrine (Illustration, p. 428). The *anggat* is renewed on New Year's day, according to strict building prescriptions as to which materials should be used and where these should be collected, every beam having its own name and type of wood. The Rainmaker, the Master of Grain and the Master of Bows jointly consecrate and administer this 'eco-shrine'. On New Year's day, the Master of Bows is in charge (Illustration, p. 430). Since the eco-shrine is susceptible to enemy curses (*elamwön*), it is well guarded during *Odhurak*.⁴

After these ritual preparations, the drums are sounded and the *monyomiji* come for blessings before they go on the hunt. A mixture of roughly ground sorghum flour, oil and water is applied to the head as a blessing. In preparation for the hunt, the spears and arrows are put together on one heap and are touched with a thorny branch (Lulubo: *ropiko*, Lokoya: *akadavi*). The Master of Bows takes red grain and white ashes from a calabash, spits on it and throws the mixture on the weapons saying: "May your hands be red!" — referring to the blood of the animals that will be killed. One arrow is taken out from the heap and sharpened on the stone next to the shrine while a prayer is uttered: "My father, and you my brothers, we ask for food, we look for our stomach, You father, let our spittle blend!" In Lafon, the New Year's blessing of spears is carried out by the Master of the Mountain and his assistants (Illustration, p. 324).

On New Year's day of 1986, before the *monyomiji* left the village for the hunt, the following words were spoken by three village leaders: the Assistant (*jaigo*) of the Master of the Land, the *mukungu* (headman) who is an elder of the rain clan and by a member of the senior age-set of Lomini, the generation in power.

19.1 Invocations before the hunt, Kajuwaya 1986, Lokiliri (live recording)

Jaigo: "Please let there be no misunderstanding. You know there is nothing to eat. But we should not give up. Let us not give others a chance to say: "Those there have surrendered because of hunger." We dance Kajuwaya as usual. This year we ask you, Serafino Okollo, owner of the village: "urinate on our land!" We ask you: "let our land be wet! The coming year when I put my seeds in the ground, please urinate on it.

3 There is an interesting parallel here with the ancient Egyptian Osiris beds. On the festival that opened the cultivation season, effigies in recess of the god Osiris were made and used as nurseries for grain seeds whose germination symbolised the resurrection of the god.

4 The Lulubo also use the peg shrines in their hunting ritual. Informants tended to be evasive about their significance. Seligman comments briefly on the peg shrines of the Lokoya (1932: 343–45) and the Acholi (1925:32–34; 1932: 123–4).

By myself, I have no power (*goa*).⁵ Father, if there is hostility (*tongica*)⁶ in your heart, let it go! Ask your God! Let your children have food this year. When they go to the bush let the grass not cut their feet.”

Mukungu: “Let their face be white!⁷ Let them stay nearby and come back safely and find me here! Let evil vanish from our hearts. Let God see to it. Let food appear!”

All: “Let it come! Let it appear!”

Lomini: “All evil, let it go from your hearts, let it go with its wood!⁸ I want your bodies to be cool!”

Jaigo: “When the boys have come back from the forest, I want them to work hard and clear large plots.”

Lomini: “I only have this to say: let your body be cool!”

All: “It is cool!”

Lomini: “This year all of you will be one body with a good heart; let your body be cool!”

All: “It is cool!”

Jaigo: “Food has come. Wherever God may have gone, let him hear us. Let God accept.”

Mukungu: “Let God hear us. Let God accept! God has accepted your prayers.”

Jaigo (business-like now): “Don’t go to *re* (the assembly point at the boundary of village and bush). We have two tamarind trees here and one mango. They are big enough. Some food will be served there. Now, tell the children to go to the bush.”

That year no guests from outside (government, aid agencies, church) were invited because of the famine, which in the speeches was treated as an enemy to whom the community should not surrender. The significance of the symbolism of urine and spittle, heat and coolness, red and white, will be discussed in a later paragraph of this chapter.

The New Year deliberations

In 1986, the *monyomiji* of Liria and Langabu convened the annual meeting to discuss the state of the community at the fixed meeting ground in the forest. Those

5 *Goa* (from Arabic): power based on secular resources especially on wealth, different from the (sacred) power of office.

6 Word from Bari root *ngisa*, translated by Spagnolo as: ‘to be a foe, to be an adversary, to have anger against, sever any friendly relation with’ (Spagnolo, 1960–224).

7 Standard formula meaning “Good luck!” in an enterprise, especially in hunting.

8 The expression “Let it go with its wood” refers to a ritual in which evil is expelled by throwing a piece of wood (*kwé*), usually of the *itubi* tree (a *Combretum* species), over the fence into the bush.

of Ngangala, Ngulere and Kudwo held their discussions at the outskirts of the village (Lulubo: *re*; Lokoya: *orek*; Bari: *rek*), at their return from the hunt; while the people of Lokiliri exceptionally met in the village, under the tamarind and mango trees as stated in the recorded speech. I was present at all the meetings except that of Liria. The common message of all speeches was to start the New Year with a clean sheet, to settle any unresolved issues that could cause division in the coming year, and not to give in to the famine.

In Ngulere and Langabu, the policies of the *monyomiji* were heavily criticised. In Langabu, *Mura* (the ruling generation) replaced all its appointed officials. A second point on the agenda was the poor attendance of the *monyomiji*. The last matter to be dealt with was the control of bloodshed in the village. The old rule that persons guilty of bloodshed should be raided by the *monyomiji* of the opposite moiety in case they failed to pay the fine imposed on them was reaffirmed and the fine was raised to fifty piasters plus one goat for the purification (*avulyo*) of the two fighting parties. The new rate was implemented the same day (see below).

The speeches at Ngulere escalated into an exchange of accusations between the Rainmaker, the other Masters of Disaster and the retired elders, on one side, and the *Taruba monyomiji*, on the other (Case 9.10).

In Kudwo, the main topic of discussion was the division of the village since an ever larger group of people was moving to the roadside. The majority of the speakers fulminated against this division and compared it to *kokora*, the re-division by the government in Khartoum of the southern Sudan into three regions — one of the immediate causes of the civil war. Most speakers blamed the famine on God.

19.2 *Kajuwaya* speech 1986, Kudwo (live recording)

Hunger has spread to all the villages now. It is not in one village only. So, all we can say is “God is killing us with hunger, let him help us.” As you know, we are cutting trees [for charcoal and cash]. Let the trees help to cool your body. Be cool!

Tell the children to moderate their drinking habits. Let them get wiser. What is the point of fighting? It is bad when you beat your brother and kill him. Taking the number of fights into account, the drought could very well be a punishment of God to all the villages. This year, we hope to live in peace. Our children will help us through as much as they can until the start of the rains. My friend, let hunger go away. Let food come to the village. Let it come. Let my child’s body be cool, let it be cool. This is all I have to say.

The tenor of the speeches in Ngangala was similar, although more bitter in tone because of the severe famine. Only two calabashes of beer were brought to *rek* and these were given to the parish priest and the visiting anthropologist. The speeches in Lokiliri had a tone of resignation.

The New Year hunt and the ‘re-conquest’ of the village

All the *monyomiji* and youngsters participate in the hunt. The way the hunt is conducted and the game killed is considered a prefiguration of the way in which ‘food will come to the village’ in the New Year. Accidents and discord during this hunt are inauspicious. The number and colour of the animals killed is an indication of the fortunes of the next year — a black animal being considered a good omen and a red one being considered a bad omen.



The catch of the New Year’s hunt was deposited at the eco-shrine (anggat) of Ngulere. The catch of this duiker was considered ominous because of its red colour.

The Lirians were happy with the black warthog they killed in the 1986 hunt. The red colour of the duiker killed by Ngulere was problematic. By redefining it as a border case of khaki brown its value as a forecast was played down. Ngangala bagged ten animals and Lokiliri had none.

When the *monyomiji* return from the bush, they first gather at the meeting ground at the outskirts of the village (*orek* in Lokoya, *rek* in Bari, *re* in Lulubo). They sit age-

set by age-set and enjoy the drinks brought to them from the village by the women (Illustration, p. 80).

In Liria, the *monyomiji* are only allowed into the village after the solemn procession of the *Fingers of God*, followed by elders and other officials, has reached the main ceremonial ground. The procession stops at a number of stations where everyone squats down, each person using his right hand to make a small heap from the loose soil beside him on the path, in order to 'make the food of the coming year heavy' (Illustrations, p. 280).



Solemn procession of monyomiji to the ceremonial ground of Ngangala. While singing the songs of warriors coming home from the battlefield, they stop at regular intervals to squat and mould heaps of dry soil in order to promote fertility and abundance, 1986.

In Ngangala, the *monyomiji* themselves make the heaps while marching from *rek* to the ceremonial ground. In Ngangala and Langabu, they sing marching songs, known as *nyakarumo(ng)* which are sung when returning home from the bush (after war, or after the period of seclusion of the newly initiated generation).

In Lokiliri, Liria and Ngulere, the ceremonial ground is reoccupied in a race from the open ground outside the gates of the village (*re* respectively *orek*) In the past, Lokiliri was divided into four competing divisions for that purpose. In Ngulere, the race in 1986 was between the two moieties — the best runners being sent ahead with the sectional flags (Illustrations, p. 25, 198).



The Master of Bows of Liria, next to the eco-shrine (anggat) keeping a pot of ointment warm to bless late-comers to the New Year celebrations.

At the eco-shrine, those who had not received their blessing in the early morning lined up to have a mixture of flour and oil rubbed on their head by the wife or the assistant of the Master of the Land or the Master of Bows. In Kudwo, the calabash that had been used for the blessings before the departure to the hunt, was repeatedly refilled so that late-comers could also be served.

In Langabu, the blessing by the Mistress of the Mountain was scheduled after the return of the *monyomiji* from the bush. She and her aide had positioned themselves near a rock crevice where snakes have their abode. She poured beer to attract the snakes so that they might drink from her calabash. The same container was used for the oil with which she blessed the people. The oil was applied to the chests of those who wanted to receive this blessing of fertility and health (Illustration, p. 285).

The New Year dance

The celebrations culminate in the dance, in which all members of the community participate, including old people who would otherwise not take the trouble to dance, and young boys and girls. While to the east, the choreography of the dance seems to conform to that of the war dance (Lotuhu: *erremoti*; Lokoya: *itholu*), in Ngangala, Ngulere, Kudwo and Lokiliri it has a number of unique features, first of all with respect to the attire of the people during the dance.



The carnivalesque side of the Lulubo New Year celebrations: left: the Catholic parish priest allowing himself to be engaged by a daring young lady in a buttock bumping dance; right: inversion of gender roles, Kudwo, Lulubo.

In Lokiliri and Kudwo, everyone should come dressed in the leaves of the *memele* tree (*Lonchocarpus laxiflorus*) — a species which gets fresh leaves before the start of the new rains; its vivid green contrasts sharply with the surrounding brownish colour of the dead dry season vegetation (Illustrations, p. 267, 431, 432). The *memele* is associated with rainmaking. After the Rainmaker has been ritually washed (Cf. Ch. 14, p. 321), he dips a branch of *memele* in the water and sprinkles it up into the air. The spray is believed to condense into a cloud. The twigs of the *memele* tree are also used to stir the rainstones. The Lokoya Rainmakers keep their stones under a *lokebek* (Lokoya for *memele*) tree.

The Lulubo explain the custom of wearing leaves as a survival from the past when *Kajuwaya* was danced at night at the new moon. Some say the leaves served to protect the bodies of the dancers against sparks falling from the torches. Others say that it was to make people, especially the members of the opposite sex, indistinguishable and that it served as a preliminary to sexual promiscuity. The latter explanation would also clarify why *Kajuwaya* is a ‘bumping’ dance, in which men and women are expected to hit one another with their backsides (Illustration 19.6). Because of the sideways gait that goes with the bumping, the dance is also referred to as ‘the dance of the hyena’.

In Lafon, groups of dancers (age-sets usually) smear themselves with black mud on New Year's Day — the black colour possibly signifying the immunity from danger, or evoking the colour of the clouds in the year to come.



New Year's ('Kajuwaya') dance in Kudwo, Lulubo, 1986. People wear spring leaves and put winnowing trays as head covers. The leaves of the memele tree are the first to sprout, long before the start of the rains.

On their head, the dancers in Lokiliri wear, upside down, a miniature *keti*, a square basket to carry flour, or, increasingly so nowadays, all sorts of headgear which are products of *bricolage* and phantasy (p. 431, photo on the right). In the past, the dancers brought their own beer along to the dancing ground. In Ngulere, Kudwo and Ngangala, a winnowing tray is carried on the head. There, the dance ends in a fast galloping around the pole-shrine, by couples or small groups consisting of a man and one man and one or more of his sisters. The sister(s) hop(s) at the side of her/their brother waving coolness to his face with a cloth. The explanation given for these customs is that they show the prosperity of the family — the sisters constituting its most important source of wealth.⁹ If we compare the dance between brother and sister to the customs observed by their neighbours in Lokiliri, a more fundamental meaning appears: the leaves, the bumping and promiscuity, the drinking of one's own beer and the dance of brother and sister are all activities in which the social obligation to exchange has been abolished or reversed. The dancers enact a return to a pre-cultural state where the straightjacket of marriage and hospitality is taken off. At the same

9 Men without sisters are excluded from this last galloping round.

time, the visible signs on the body of blessings of oil and flour, and the grain baskets and winnowing trays on the head express abundance of food.

To this return to the age of plenty good rains belong as well. During the dance, the Rainmaker and his assistant go around in the crowd with a calabash with water and produce a fine spray over the dancers using branches of the *itubi* tree (Bari: *gwögwötit*, *Combretum undulatum*) shaped into a kind of brush. In Kudwo, the water used is that which has been kept in the cavity underneath the shrine. The *itubi* tree is associated with peace and good health. A stick of *itubi* is thrown between two parties to stop them from fighting. Popular belief holds that whoever will first step over the branch will lose the fight. *Itubi* is further used by the Lulubo to ward off plagues or enemies and to expel evil influences from the house.

While in the past the dance went on for a full night, nowadays only a few tunes (three or four) are played. This restriction of the number of dances is motivated by the fear that violence may break out. Despite the ambience of transgression in the past, there were fewer incidents, informants say, because of the tighter social controls. After the dance, people disperse and continue the celebrations by exchanges of visits at their private homes.

The containment of violence during the New Year festival

The execution of the programme of New Year's day is taken as a prefiguration of the course of events during the year to come. The outbreak of fights is, therefore, the main worry of the organisers. Any breach of peace on this day is believed to have repercussions for the year that has just started. The limitation on the number of dances, the change of the timing of the dance, the abolition of the promiscuous element from the dance, are all measures aimed at avoiding violence. Fights between individuals easily escalate in confrontations between villages, sections, clans and generations.

As in 1985, during the dance following the clearing of the ceremonial ground in Lokiliri, a fight broke out. This year the antagonists were the age-sets of uninitiated young men of two different sections between the non-initiated age-sets of young men of two sections. The whole age-set of the section that had started the fight was arrested by the police of Ngangala where they were kept until the wounds of the man who had been hit by a stone had healed. The fight eventually led to a re-evaluation of the relations between the section of the victim and the other sections of Lokiliri. The section of the victim was offered a *mukungu*-ship of its own so that in the future it could defend its interests better.

During the *Odhurak* of Langabu, no fewer than four violent incidents were brought to the attention of the *monyomiji*. Immediate action was taken. Three people who had been caught fighting — including a married couple — were fined twenty-five Sudanese pounds each. The fourth case was considered more serious since blood had been shed. The man who caused the blood to flow was fined fifty pounds in accordance with the new rate ratified by the *monyomiji* that very morning. In addition the culprit was ordered to kill a goat to purify (*avulyo*) the drums. The man did not accept the charge.

His refusal kept the whole village waiting for the dance could not start without the purification done. Finally, the man gave in and killed the goat. He rubbed some of its stomach contents on the drums, the rest being thrown to the waiting crowd. His wife was seen carrying the carcass around as a sign that her husband had complied with the order of the *monyomiji* and that the dance could begin. During the dance, the dead goat was tied to the pole-shrine in the middle of the dancing crowd. It was later eaten by the retired elders, the only ones who can eat a goat that has expiated blood (*amwödihha*) since they are already on the brink of death.

The pole-shrine

The pole-shrine is the focal point of the New Year celebrations. It is where the festival begins with libations in the early morning and around which it culminates in the dance. Its poles serving as drum posts, the shrine is the pivot around which the community, reduced to a single, undifferentiated mass, rotates, striding, bumping or galloping, throwing up clouds of dust (Illustration p. 432). Because of its central ritual importance, we should have a closer look at it.

In the eastern part of our field of study, the shrine consists of a bunch of between ten and thirty ebony poles. Among the Bari, only a single stake is erected. The bundle of ebony poles stands man-high in the middle of the ceremonial ground. Ebony wood, which is also used for grave posts and palisades, is very durable. *Tukure*, the shrine of the old Lokiliri village up the mountain, which was abandoned in 1936, is still standing firm in the middle of the bush. Ebony gives a prickly smoke when it burns. The smoke is classified as 'bitter' (Lulubo: *angana*; Lokoya/Lotuho: *odwa*; Pari: *kec*; Bari: *pötwör*), a word that in certain contexts is best translated as *sacred*. Ebony is associated with kingship (Case 9.12).



Ebony poles fresh from the forest ready to be erected and bundled as the new shrine of Loronyo, Photograph by Naoki Naito.

When the shrine in Lokiliri is in need of renovation the Guardian of the Shrine brings the poor state of the old poles to the attention of the *monyomiji*. On an appointed day, the *monyomiji* go to the forest to collect new poles. They return singing *nyakarumo* songs, songs that are sung when marching home from war or from the forest after initiation. When arriving at *re*, the Guardian of the Shrine purifies (*bulo*) the *monyomiji* as if they were warriors returning from the battlefield, slaughtering a goat from his own stable. For the ritual fixing of the poles, the *monyomiji* provide their own goat. While the *monyomiji* stand around the hole, each man holding a pole, the goat's stomach is opened and its contents, mixed with blood and oil, are poured into the hole. When the poles have been fixed, the remainder of the stomach contents and the oil is smeared on the poles. The water that the elders have used to wash their hands after the sacrifice is poured in between the poles. Then, a liana of the rain creeper (Lulubo: *uno*; Bari: *dölöngi*; Lokoya: *odyalang*) is brought and tied around the poles. One end of the liana is crushed so that the fibres form a brush, which the assistant of the Rainmaker uses to sprinkle water up into the air. After planting the poles, the inaugural dance starts which may last for several days.

In Liria, when the men who have collected the poles arrive at *orek*, they are welcomed with food and beer. A very strict state of non-violence (*edwar*) is proclaimed. The poles are heavily guarded during the night to prevent any malevolent act. No one is allowed to eat, drink or smoke before the poles have been fixed. All villagers participate in the planting of the poles. The poles are purified (*avulyo*) as in Lokiliri and consecrated (*ajohiyo*) with unfiltered beer, mashed sorghum flour, a broth of beans and blows of tobacco smoke. Water is sprinkled over the participants and *itholu*, the war dance, is danced after the poles have been planted.

Among the Bari who erect single pole shrines the scenario is different. In the past, the Bari buried a girl, a cow-calf or a lamb of the female sex under or next to the shrine of a new ceremonial ground. The Bari word *wore* refers to the shrine as a whole — the ebony pole, the victim buried underneath and the ceremonial ground. The family offering the girl was highly respected “for having offered the blood of the land”. Its male members were exempted from going to war because their family had already shed its blood. I was assured that even today, it made a difference for a family if it had, in this way, contributed to the foundation of the community.

Spagnolo informs us that the victim was selected from among the daughters of the slaves (*dupi*) of the Master of the Land. Two holes were dug — one for the calabash with sesame oil in which the pole would stand and one for the girl. The girl would be tied to the pole with specially manufactured iron bracelets or chains. The sesame oil that was put in the calabash was also applied to the members of the community (Spagnolo, 1933:324). The grave was later covered with black and white stones.

The Bari *wore* was used for war dances (*kore lo mörö*) before going to war. The dance served to boost the morale and offered a clue as to the outcome of the war. According to one informant, if blood appeared on Piateng, the shrine-pole of the *wore* of Darjur

under which a *'dupiet* daughter had once been buried, it was a sign that people would die. If Piateng did not bleed, the victims would be on the side of the enemy.

While I have no information whether the eastern multi-pole shrines were ever used for pre-war dances, they are currently used for the postwar celebration, in song and dance, of the victories of the *monyomiji* past and present.

The contrasting ritual practices connected with each type of pole-shrine correspond to the two scenarios of consensual antagonism. The Bari war dance around a single pole that is intimately linked to the sacrifice of one of the community's members follows the scapegoat scenario. The easterners (Lulubo, Lokoya, Pari, Lotuho) who collect substitute victims from a quasi-battlefield and erect them as a shrine of ebony poles in the central ceremonial ground of their community practice an interpretation of the enemy scenario.

The single pole of the Bari shrine expresses the identity of the community and the victim, while the multiple poles of the easterners express the identity of a plurality of enemy victims with the community as a whole. In the Bari scenario, the link between the shrine and the victim is metonymical. The tying of the victim to the pole by an iron chain achieves an unbreakable contiguity while the relationship between the community and the victim is metaphorical — the victim's blood being shed on behalf of the community. This substitutive role is underlined by the rule that the victim's death absolves her brothers from becoming victims of war.

The relationship between multiple poles erected by the easterners and enemy victims is metaphorical and so is the circumspection with which the poles are handled and the purification of the *monyomiji* who collected the poles as if they were enemy victims. The holding of the poles by the *monyomiji* during the planting ceremony establishes the desirable contiguity with the victims.

The inverse symmetry between the sacrifice of the pre-war single victim and the celebration of the postwar multiple enemy victims, underscores the fact that sacrifice and war share a common victimary logic.

The rain creeper

At the inauguration of a new shrine (p. 435) and in the early morning of the New Year festival (p.424), it is custom to tie the bundle of ebony poles of the shrine with fresh lianas of the rain creeper. Why the rain creeper? The watery inside of the liana explains its use in rainmaking. Cut, its fiber shaped into a brush, dipped in water and swung into the air, the rain creeper produces a fine sprinkling that resembles rainfall. The lianas of the rain creeper are also used to tie the branches of a high tree to wooden pegs fixed in the ground like anchors. When clouds suddenly approach and there is no time to prepare the rainstones, the ropes are pulled in such a way that the branches sway in the direction one wishes the rain to fall (Spire, 1905b:18; Spagnolo, 1933:299).

In 1861, when Peney and DeBono were the guests of Muludyang, the Bekat Rainmaker of Darjur, they slept under a tamarind tree that was used for this

rainmaking procedure. Under the tree was a basket with earth and ‘pebbles’ (These must have been the rainstones.) in which three lianas were planted that went all the way up to the top of the tamarind tree. Muludyang claimed to be the inventor of this particular rainmaking device which he said was very effective (Malté-Brun, 1863:43–44). The rain creeper is also used in fertility and healing rituals. In Aru, people are made to pass under a rain creeper liana which has been tied between two poles before receiving the oil from the Master of the Land.

To understand the full significance of the use of the creeper in rain rituals, we should look at the Nilotic myth of the separation of heaven and earth. The basic plot of this widespread story is well known:

19.3 *The separation of heaven and earth* (basic plot of the Nilotic myth)

Long ago, people from heaven and earth had regular intercourse. They intermarried and danced together. There was plenty of food and women only needed to grind one seed of sorghum to give the household a full meal. Due to greed, over-diligence or the intervention of an animal hostile to man, the rope along which people travelled up and down was cut or broken and the present regime of scarcity and death commenced.



The Guardian of the community shrine of Kuduwo has finished the New Year oiling of the implant of the poles and is devotedly holding the rain creeper that keeps the shrine, and the community, together in peace

In the translated recordings of the various versions of the myth, the nature of the rope is usually not specified.¹⁰ In the Nyangbara and Kuku versions I collected, the

10 Spagnolo, 1933:271, Crazzolaro, 1953:68; Evans-Pritchard, 1956:10; Buxton, 1963:19–26, 1973:2; Lienhardt, 1961:33–4; Zanen & Van den Hoek, 1987:170–197. In the Didinga version

rope between heaven and earth is explicitly identified as a *dölöngi* liana, that is, the rain creeper.

19.4 *The separation of heaven and earth* (Nyangbara–Kuku version of the myth)

The Nyangbara say the rain creeper grew on top of Mount Luli (1318 m., in the north of Yei River District). There had been a big feast in heaven and meat and bones were left near the rain creeper (*dölöngi*) that was fixed between heaven and earth. The lion found the meat and started eating it. He did not pay attention to the liana in between the heap of bones and accidentally bit it. At that moment heaven jumped up beyond reach. Forever.

We can now understand why the Bari and Lulubo Rainmakers tie the branches of high trees. By so doing, they restore the connection between heaven and earth and call forth the conditions of plenty that characterised life before their separation. It should cause no surprise that another Nyangbara myth tells how the ‘rain hoes’, which, in Nyangbara, take the place of rainstones, were brought from heaven by a man who descended along a rain creeper. It is to be anticipated that further research will confirm that the Bari Rainmakers who, according to a tradition recorded by Haddon (1911: 147) used to go up and down to heaven, must also have used the rain creeper as a ladder.

There is a negative counterpart to the rain creeper. The Bari and Lulubo believe that the rainbow is a reddish snake that from time to time emerges from a cave or an anthill. When it leaves its hole, drought follows and the rainbow becomes visible. While the rain creeper connects heaven and earth, the rainbow separates the two. The Lotuho version of the end of the age of abundance confirms this opposition between the rain creeper and the snake:

19.5 *The end of the age of plenty* (Lotuho myth)

In the past, not very long ago, the earth was covered with water and mud, and, therefore, uninhabitable. Only the highest peaks of the mountains were inhabited and that is where the first people lived. They were happy. There was no suffering and working was not necessary. For their living, they only had to pick the ripe fruits off the trees. One day, a huge snake (*namunu ajok*, the snake of god in his evil transfiguration) swallowed all the water and vomited it out in the north so that only a little water was left in the rivers and streams. On that day, man lost his primeval happiness and started to cultivate and suffer (Molinaro, 1940/41:181).

While in the Bari myth the celestial waters were once accessible to the people living on earth via the rain creeper, in the Lotuho myth the people, who once lived in a kind of heaven, lost access to the terrestrial waters as a result of the intervention of the god-snake. When on New Year’s Day the pole-shrine is tied with the rain creeper, the act evokes not only the unity of the people but also that of heaven and earth. Water, the unifying substance transmitted by the creeper, not only mediates between

recorded by Kronenberg (1972:132), the connection between heaven and earth is specified as being a liana. In the Didinga story, the liana was bitten by a hyena after the first people had descended from heaven.

heaven and earth, but also between the different divisions of the community and between communities divided by war. Cosmologically speaking, there is a great deal of overlap between rainmaking and peacemaking so that the king's role as a mediator between heaven and earth effortlessly merges with his work as a peacemaker between the sections of his kingdom as well as with enemies.

A cosmology of violence and peace

Having established the relationship between peace and rain, we now examine some of the other cosmological notions employed in the New Year ritual. First, there is the already familiar notion of blood as a correlate of violence and the opposite of rain. The empirical evidence of blood is an important criterion in judging the seriousness of a fight, as the four cases of violence during *Odhurak* in Langabu demonstrated. Blood, including the blood spilt in giving birth, endangers the rainfall. Even if a homicide has occurred in the bush, the *monyomiji* may order for a purificatory sacrifice on the spot of the violence. Blood is highly contaminating. Encounters that may lead to violence must, therefore, as much as possible, be planned outside the village. In the escalation of tension around Queen Nyiburu of the Pari, the meetings of the *monyomiji* with the queen were held at increasingly remote spots in the bush. The discussions of the *monyomiji* on New Year's Day should ideally be held at a spot well away from the village. Only the *monyomiji* of Liria and Langabu observed this custom in 1986. Those of Liria went to a place more than an hour's walk away from the village and those of Langabu stayed relatively near.

The bush is the location of violence. Among the Lotuho and the Lokoya, the corpses of men who have been killed are left in the bush. If the body is taken home (for example, if death occurred on the way) it should be buried outside the fence, to avoid *aret*, the repetition of death in the family. The grave of the war victim is covered with *akadavi*, the thorny bush, also used by the Master of Bows to make weapons 'hook', to block the inauspicious emanations from a victim of war. Before the rains begin, a brother of the dead man is expected to purify the path along which the body was carried into the village, otherwise drought may follow. The same procedure is followed when men are killed in hunting. To avoid *aret*, one should avoid shaking hands with persons who have been speared and who are still living (or rather: still dying), and also with persons who have just successfully speared a person. The latter should stay outside the house, at the *obali*, for three days, and be purified (*avulyo*) either using his own hands or with the help of a brother.

It is, therefore, appropriate that the homicide should phrase his wish to be given asylum by the Rainmaker as a request for water (Case 10.1). It is also appropriate that the Rainmaker should first demand a goat to prevent his rainstones from being affected by the violence the asylum-seeker is associated with (*idem*).

The settlement of cases of bloodshed is also marked with the splashing of water. After the transfer of bloodwealth, the party of the victim and that of the victimiser perform the reconciliation ritual (Bari, Lulubo: *tomora*; Lotuho, Lokoya: *emwara*).

Each of the participants takes a sip of water from a calabash; rinses his mouth; and spits the mixture of spittle and water back into the calabash. When everyone has had his turn, the water is poured over the feet of the participants who are then considered reconciled. Meetings of the *monyomiji* in which conflicts in the community have been discussed are normally concluded with a ritual 'to unite the bodies' (Lulubo: *runi omiya*) by mixing and applying water and spittle in the same way.

The fundamental opposition between violence and order that finds expression in the elemental symbolism of water as the antidote to drought and violent division is replicated in other symbolic domains: in colour symbolism, sonic symbolism, somato-sensory symbolism, in the symbolism of body liquids, and in the classification of animals and plants. Finally, we shall see that in conceptualising the conversion from a state of violence to one of peaceful order, the people in our area of study make use of digestive and gustatory symbolism.

Colour symbolism

The standard blessing of the Master of Bows for the *monyomiji* who go to the bush to hunt or to confront the enemy is "Let your hands be red; let your face be white!" The colour red alludes to the blood of the hoped-for victims while white refers to the absence of obstacles in one's undertakings. Black, the third colour of the colour triangle, symbolises the obstacles that should prevent the enemy from reaching his goals. Black lines are drawn on the ground with charcoal to stop predatory animals, plagues or enemies from entering the village. Charcoal is also chewed to avert evil (Case 18.4). Black and white are two sides of the same beneficial action (Case 19.4).

In divinatory hunts, the most favourable omen for the rains is a black animal. Participants justify their preference for a black victim by the resemblance between the animal and dark clouds. Black is also the colour that averts influences that might impede the rain. There is a belief that Rainmakers have a darker complexion than others (Kronenberg, 1972:139). Bari Rainmakers used to blacken their faces with charcoal,¹¹ and many Rainmakers perform their sacrifices and say their prayers for rain in the darkness of the night.¹²

Rainstones may be white, black or green, and the stone that the Master of the Land dips into oil and presses on the stomachs of his people in time of famine, is black. During the New Year celebration (*Nyalam*) in Lafon, the junior age-sets rub black mud onto their bodies. I observed the same practice in Lulubo where it is done on an individual basis. Finally, we noted above that the stones used to close the grave of the slave-girl buried under the Bari pole-shrine were black and white.

11 On his march from Gondokoro southwards, Baker was guided by a Rainmaker whose face had been blackened with charcoal (1874, Vol. I: 45).

12 The son of Pitia Lugör told me that his father performed the rain sacrifice at night and in deep silence. The Rainmaker of Lafon makes his annual invocation for rain at night, the spear of Ocudo pointed upwards. King Okong of Tirangore confided that he used to pray for the new seasonal rains in the night of the 12th of March.

Somato-sensory and sonic symbolism

In the rhetoric of peace and rain, the opposition of 'hot' and 'cool', plays an important role. A 'cool heart' or a 'cool body' is a disposition free of envy, hatred and violence. A 'hot'-tempered Rainmaker is a danger for the community. The Rainmaker's body should be thoroughly cool, and indeed informants assured me that the handshake of the Rainmaker could be remarkably cold.

Victims are classified as 'hot' and 'cool'. A cool victim is cooperative. Its immolation does not cause violence, before or after the sacrifice. A female victim is 'cooler' than a male one. This was the justification given for the choice of a girl, bovine calf or female lamb as victim to be sacrificed under the Bari pole-shrine (*wore*). My suggestion that a male slave (*dupiet*) could be taken instead, was brushed from the table, since a slave was a particularly 'hot' victim. Being involved in the cooking in the house, he, or his associates, could concoct a particularly violent revenge. Between the he-goat and the ram, the latter is the cooler animal and preferred for rain sacrifices.

The opposition between noise and silence is homologous to that between hot and cool. When the state of non-violence has been proclaimed (*edwar*), no unnecessary noise should be made. Drumming is forbidden and people who shout their praise-names (*mamare*) are fined. This silence is observed from the moment the crops are knee-high up to the time of the first harvest in July. The end of *edwar* is celebrated with a massive outburst of noise, people beating iron utensils against one another, drumming and shouting. Above, we quoted Jennings-Bramly's observation on how the Bari made rain by a sudden conversion of noise into silence (Case 16.14).

Sacrifices for rain should ideally be bloodless and noiseless. The suffocation and strangulation of the victim is frequently justified as a method to circumvent the gurgling noise of the dying animal. The same concern to surround the sacrificial animal with the least possible violence underlies the prescription that the animal should be roasted in its skin and that its bones should not be broken (Table U).

Blood is a body liquid that is bound to transmit harm if it is outside the body. It is the medium for curses. A man may invoke his own blood in pronouncing a curse over others: "Let my blood finish them!" Spittle fulfils the opposite role. It is the conductor of benign sensations between people. The spittle of the Rainmaker is considered particularly potent. It is sometimes used to bless the rainstones.¹³ The first travellers were amazed about the eagerness with which people competed for drops of the king's spittle as was Powell-Cotton:

...when Limoroo [Lomoro] wished to spit, many eager hands would be thrust out competing for the favour of being used as a spittoon, and the lucky one would rub it into his leg with every sign of satisfaction (Powell-Cotton, 1903:463).

The Verona fathers who travelled in the area as part of an exploratory mission in 1920 were also struck by the custom. The spittle of Ikuma, Queen of the Lomiya,

13 The present (at the time of the study) Lotuho Queen in Hiyala told me that she used to rub the stones with spittle.

was collected every time she spat, by a person in her following who rubbed it on the ground (Pedrana, 1921:110). This intentional application of spittle to the ground is the diametrical opposite of the bloodying of the soil by violence. The same opposition is found between the rituals of reconciliation in which spittle and water are shared from mouth to mouth and the avoidance of a handshake with a person — victim or victimiser — who has been in contact with violence.

The cosmological notions that have been passed in review can be summarised in the following list of homologous oppositions:

X. Fundamental cosmological oppositions

drought	rain
heaven and earth separated	heaven and earth connected
rainbow/snake	rain creeper
hunger	food
hot	cool
red	black/white
noise	silence
blood	spittle
bush	village
predatory animals	domestic animals

All oppositions ultimately express the opposition between violence and peace. The king is identified with the qualities listed in the right-hand column. He should not go hungry and should be kept away from bloodshed and noise. In some areas, he should not go to war and the sight of blood is strictly taboo to him. When the *monyomiji* of Liria return from war and bring their booty to the king for redistribution, both the *monyomiji* and the king need to undergo a purification ritual. On the west bank of the Nile, this avoidance of violence was even more marked and Rainmakers were not expected to attend funerals.

The king has an intimate relationship with water. Some Rainmakers are said to have been able to produce water in their hands by merely closing and opening them; others are said to suffer from permanent perspiration. Pitia Yeng-ko-Piyong, as a baby, survived in a pool of water and needed a sacrifice before he became 'normal' and accepted the milk of his mother's breast. When King Oyalala was a cowherd, he only had to tap the earth with his staff for a pool of water to appear, even in the middle of the dry season when the land was parched.

While the Bari Rainmakers were associated with the heavenly waters to which they were believed to have access via the rain rope, the ancestors of the Lotuho and the Pari rain dynasties, Asang and Ocudo, emerged from terrestrial waters.

All dynastic ancestors are associated with cattle: Asang emerged from the water because he was attracted to their milk. The Bekat and Kursak introduced cattle to those who later became their subjects. And Ocudo created cattle to solve the conflict with the parents of the girl he had made pregnant. In the role cattle play in marriage,

they represent the 'cool' alternative to the 'hot' conflicts caused by the contradiction between the rights of the husband and those of the father and brothers of the bride.

The bitter stomach of the king

With an understanding of the principal categories used by the participants to conceptualise order and violence, a last question is: how is the transformation conceived from one state of being to the other? What are the images used to define and interpret the conversion from drought and hunger to a state of prosperity, from a state marked by heat, redness and noise to a 'cool' state?

The principal metaphor used in our field of study to understand and articulate this transformation is the digestive process. The organs involved in human and animal metabolism, their functions and the different stages in the processing of that which has passed the mouth are used as signifiers.

In the course of this study, I have repeatedly touched on the stomach and on stomach contents (also 'rumen' or 'chyme') as ritual elements — the stomach contents of goats and cows being one of the most frequently employed ritual substances. When questioned on the reasons why the content of the animal's stomach was selected for purification, informants could never give me a satisfactory explanation except for the repeated statement that they were used to make things 'cool'.

I think a meaningful explanation is possible when we take the transitory character of the rumen as its ritually relevant quality. The rumen in its half-digested form is a substance undergoing transformation. It is still recognisable as grass but at the same time it is already on its way to be partly absorbed by the body, partly transformed into dung. It may be worth mentioning that the dung of domestic animals has many practical uses: as plaster in housebuilding, to close and cover wounds, as fuel and as manure. It is collected and exchanged or traded and not just thrown away. The 'trans-substantial' quality of rumen makes it particularly appropriate as a metaphor of a process of conversion from one state of being into another.

The circumstance that the stomach contents are taken out while the animal is still alive confirms this interpretation: if what people think to take out is 'processual' rather than substantial, it is better to remove it when the metabolic process of the animal is still intact. After its stomach has been emptied of its contents, the sacrificial goat is sometimes left walking about with its stomach open to die a slow death.

After the rumen has been processed by the successive stomachs of the sacrificial animal, it reaches the small intestines where it forms a milky fluid technically called 'chyle' (Lul.: *kele*). Chyle is used as the ritual vehicle of positive blessings, for example to boost a healing process. Chyme and chyle are metaphors of different stages of transformation. While the acidic chyme is used for the elimination of impurity, the chyle, product of a more advanced stage of digestion, is a catalyst of a process of positive transformation. The contrast in the sacrificial uses of chyme and chyle is homologous to that between the use of the watery juice squeezed from the wild cucumber (Bari, Lul.: *loroso*; Lok. Lot.: *orese*) in cleansing rituals and the use of vegetal oils used in

blessing rituals.¹⁴ At this point of the demonstration there is no need to emphasise that the master recipe of all these ritual operations is provided by the successive stages of negative and positive transference postulated by the scapegoat mechanism (Table 1.1)

Not only the substances processed by the alimentary tract are used in ritual, but also the organs of digestion. In Edemo, to make rain, the Panyangiri Rainmakers keep 'Ngulere', their leading rainstone, overnight inside the stomach of the animal sacrificed for the occasion. The intestines are used in, at least, two different ways. In rain divination, the position of the bowels give an indication of the blend of 'hot' and 'cool' forces at work at any particular moment. During the village *Nefira* of the Lotuho, the intestines of the sacrificed animals are made into rings and hung around the necks of newly initiated *monyomiji*. Their usage as an attribute and catalyst in the social transformation the initiates undergo confirms my interpretation that the ritual significance of the alimentary tract lies in its capacity to symbolise processes of transformation from a state of relative disorder to a state of order.

We can now answer the question why the stomach of a Rainmaker who has been killed for causing drought is slit open and why the Bari wait for the stomach of the dead Rainmaker to burst. If we take the stomach of the Rainmaker as the organ that converts social 'heat' into 'coolness', the community has an interest not to interrupt the process prematurely. The conversion process that takes place in the stomach is believed to continue after the moment of death — the bloating of the stomach providing empirical proof of this. It is, therefore, logical that the Bari should wait for the stomach to burst and consider the liquid dropping from it as a beneficial substance, a blessing ointment, since it is the final product of the 'cooling work' of the king. If the king dies in a state of anger, as when he is killed by his subjects for causing drought, his stomach that had already stopped fulfilling its expected cooling function, is assumed to work in reverse, converting coolness into heat. Hence, it is necessary to interrupt its ominous operation. Slitting the stomach open is one method of disabling its posthumous effectiveness.

The belief in the capacity of the stomach to work in reverse is also manifest in witchcraft beliefs. In a person of a peaceful disposition, the operation of the stomach neutralises 'hot' emotional states, 'cooling' them. But in an anti-social, resentful person the stomach is believed to be full of blood. The Lulubo say a wizard has blood (and also a snake) in the stomach and red eyes. The quantity of blood in his body is said to be larger than in normal people and he is said to dispense his blood in different places in order to harm his fellow human beings.

There are, however, situations when a 'hot' temper is socially desirable, when there is an imperative need to mobilise and exploit the raw violent energies. War is such a

14 A similar distinction in the ritual use of the two semi-fluid substances resulting from different stages of the metabolic process is made not only by the Eastern Sudanic Nuer (Evans-Pritchard, 1956:212) and by the Central Sudanic Lugbara (Middleton (1960: 96, 110), but also in Bantu sacrifice (De Heusch, 1985:201).

situation. An effective warrior is driven by anger and should not suppress his violent impulses. When the *monyomiji* of the Kworijik moiety of Lokiliri go to war, they perform a ritual that lowers the moral inhibition to the use of violence. They invoke the power called *Pirigaga*. *Pirigaga* was given to them by a Bari wizard who threw up blood from his stomach which was collected in a calabash and mixed with beer. The mixture was then swallowed by the men of Kworijik. When they tried its power out by touching a thorn tree, the thorns just became limp and the tree fell over. In the story of the acquisition of *Pirigaga*, the desirable ‘cooling’ function of the stomach had been inverted, the inversion being manifest by the vomiting of blood.

Before she was left behind in the bush, Queen Nyiburu’s open cut in the stomach was rubbed with the fruit of the cucumber variety called *akaraja* by the Pari. The Pari classify the fruit as *böth*, “tasteless”, which is the opposite of *kec* (“bitter”). Kurimoto’s informants told him that the fruit was applied to neutralise the effects of *cien*, the posthumous anger of the queen (Kurimoto, 1992).

‘Bitter’ (Lotuho and Lokoya: *odwa*, Bari: *pötwör*, Lulubo: *angana*) and ‘tasteless’ are gustatory signifiers. ‘Bitter’ is one of the words most frequently used in referring to the power of the king. Contrary to European usage, the Nilotic concept ‘bitter’ refers to a quality of both the food as it is tasted and the organs signalling the taste. The core meaning seems to refer to a condition in which both food and body interact such that the effectiveness of the digestive process is maximised.

It is no coincidence that Rainmakers who have been cursed are often said to die as a result of dysentery. Dysentery is a condition in which the alimentary track has lost its grip on the ingested food, a state that is the opposite of ‘bitterness’. It is therefore to be expected that the curse of a wizard intent on maximising the damage to a royal victim will target his stomach, the organ that transforms heat into coolness—the core function of the operation of royal power.

It is clear now why ‘bitter’ is a term applied to the power of the king. A king is bitter when he comes to grips with the problems of his subjects; when he contains the potential violence in his realm. His word ‘bites’ (using the etymology of the English word) if it breaks a deadlock in negotiations; arrests a process of escalating violence and gives new directions in a situation of confusion. The imagery used in the invocation at the installation of the Rainmaker of Ngangala: “we give the bitterness in our stomachs to you” (Ch. 18, p. 400) now also makes sense.

Conclusions

The New Year celebrations among the peoples of the Equatorial east bank of the Nile are no different from annual feasts of renewal in other parts of the world in that they stage a recreation of social order. The basic scenario is a sequence of unifying confrontations with evil forces outside, aimed at procuring victims, followed by a sequence of celebration of social unity focused on a positively transfigured victim-substitute.

In the bush, all issues that caused division in the previous year and that might occasion conflict in the year to come are settled and left where they were discussed. The new spirit of unity is tested in the hunt. The animal victims acquire a special significance in relation to the way in which the boundary between inside and outside will be maintained in the coming year.

The homecoming from the hunt is staged as a return to the age of undivided abundance. After the distribution of welcoming gifts by the women and blessings by the Masters of Disaster, the community dissolves into an indistinct mass joyfully gyrating around the community shrine, enjoying the beer of the new harvest and the company of the opposite sex, unhindered by the rules of property and exchange.

The central value expressed in the speeches and prayers is that of 'coolness of heart' — a state of non-violent togetherness undisturbed by hunger and disease. Coolness is not only a moral disposition in individuals but also a social and cosmological state of being. Rain is the principal cosmic signifier of coolness and the king is its main agent. The desirability of coolness and rain in the New Year finds expression in the tying of the village shrine with the rain creeper and in the spraying of water on the dancing crowd. The application of watery elements also helps in averting any upsurge of violence.

In the transformation from violence to order, from 'heat' to 'coolness', every member of the society has a role to play. 'Heat' is conceived as a primary condition which is transformed to 'coolness' by the digestive process. If the digestive process is inverted, violence and disorder will result. A wizard is defined by his inverted metabolism.

The effectiveness of this digestive process, whether for good or for evil, constitutes the 'bitterness' of a person — what one could call his 'sacred power'.

In the generation of coolness for the community as a whole, the king plays a central role, so that the bitterness of his stomach — and the anxious question whether it functions for good or for evil — is a public concern.

In terms of the metabolic imagery used here, the fundamental moral imperative of the societies in question can be summarised as: *do not upset the normal process of digestion of heat into coolness and of blood into water.*