

# **THE PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF SOCIETY**

**Volume 10**

**Edited by  
Werner Muensterberger  
L. Bryce Boyer  
Simon A. Grolnick**



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OF SOCIETY

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Volume 10



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WERNER MUENSTERBERGER  
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**PART I**  
**ANTHROPOLOGY**



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# 1

## **A Case of “Brain-Fag” Syndrome: Psychotherapy of the Patient Adou A. in the Village of Yosso, Ivory Coast Republic**

PAUL PARIN

*Translated by Patricia Klamerth*

During the course of our ethnopschoanalytical field research among the Anyi of the Ivory Coast Republic, a young man named Adou A. made an appointment to talk with me. My interviews with him, begun in the interests of our study, developed into effective, psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapy. The case report has been published in German (Parin, Morgenthaler, Parin-Matthèy, 1971), but was not included in the American edition of our book (*id.*, 1980).

The disturbances from which Adou A. suffered are typical of many students of high-school and college age in West Africa and frequently compel their victims to give up their studies entirely. The course of psychotherapy sheds light on the genesis and the internal dynamics of the disturbances involved against the background of the culture-specific psychical development of a young man living in an Anyi coffee-growing village located in the rain forest belt of the eastern Ivory Coast. Insofar as possible, the method and the technique of resistance analysis followed the pattern established in Freudian psychoanalysis. No remuneration was requested or offered. The interviews were conducted in French and took place in an open-air tent, furnished with a table, two chairs, and a cot, which I had set up in the shade of a tree on the outskirts of the village of Yosso (approximately 300 inhabitants).

### PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW (1 FEBRUARY 1966)

In a courtyard in Yosso a young man in European dress advances to greet me. He is the grand-nephew of Madame Akouassi, whom I regularly supply with medicines, and whom he addresses as “maman” (mother).

With great politeness he delivers his "first news," explaining that he has come from Abidjan with the village chief of Yosso, Monsieur N., to work for him, and that he will be going out into the rain forest with the foreman, whose job it is to mark the trees to be felled for their precious wood.

He also tells me that he is sick. He has lost his memory and thus has had to abandon his studies. He informs me that two psychiatrists (Dr. Abeh in Bingerville and Dr. Duplessis in Abidjan) had examined him thoroughly because of his complaint—his head, his eyes, blood tests, and EEG—and had found nothing organically wrong. Nevertheless, he insists, there *is* something the matter with him. His mind no longer functions properly, and he is bothered by an itching under the skin (he shows me the inner side of his lower arm).

When I suggest that he come to my medical consultation hour, he replies that today he has to go out into the rain forest, but that he will come without fail tomorrow at nine o'clock.

(Much later, in one of our therapy interviews, Adou asks me what this treatment is called. At my reply, "psychoanalysis," he recalls that one of the two psychiatrists had mentioned that he might be cured by this method, but that there was no one in the Ivory Coast Republic who was able to apply it. He adds: "It's a good thing that I have finally found someone here in Yosso.")

#### FIRST INTERVIEW (2 FEBRUARY 1966)

I arrive in the village at eight o'clock and, with the help of some children, unlace the tent. Then I go down to the road where I meet Adou.

Adou chats with me on our way to the tent, and as soon as he is seated opposite me, he continues the conversation. We are "two intellectuals in a Negro village"; on this basis he is able to identify with me. At the beginning of the hour we are disturbed several times by villagers who want me to treat them. I greet them briefly and ask Adou to interpret for me and explain to them that I will examine them later. Soon he begins to do this independently, calling out to them before they reach the tent and telling them to go back to the village and make appointments with my "assistant" (our interpreter, François) to be examined.

Later on he often comes back to this identificatory response, remarking about how dreadful it is that the people here in the village have no medical care and how sorry he is for them. Things were better in the village in which he grew up; there, at least, they had a medical orderly, and the hospital in Abengourou was only twenty kilometers away. In Yosso, though, when a child gets sick, it simply dies. And this, he feels, is very wrong.

It becomes clear to me later that Adou himself feels like a child who has no one to take care of him and who might simply die. His self-pity is expressed in various forms, such as when he wonders just how I happened to come to Yosso, and pretends to himself that I am being paid by the government as a doctor to help the people here. Actually, the village means little to him; he is not one of its inhabitants. He is a stranger here. And despite the fact that he is in the process of consulting me, this means that I am only here for the villagers and have no intention of helping *him*.

Without any prompting on my part, Adou describes his illness. He has two groups of symptoms which are closely related, one group in his head, and the other in his body. When he speaks of the latter group, he usually points vaguely to the inner side of his arm or occasionally to his chest.

Adou feels a pain in his head, between his spine and the back of his head, and this pain is constant, except when he is asleep. This is the consequence, or perhaps an accompanying phenomenon, or perhaps the reason for his inability to remember anything. Prior to his illness he had only to listen attentively in class and he would remember what the teacher had said. He was good in examinations and was always able to repeat what he had learned, not always by heart, but at least the sense. He had only to read a thing through once to be able to remember it. But since his illness began, he has found it impossible to remember anything, no matter how hard he tries, even when he goes over the lesson several times. And it's not only his lessons—he can't remember "anything at all." He forgets everything people tell him to do, everything he sees, reads, or hears. His head is very sick.

The second group of symptoms, the physical ones, are either the cause of his forgetfulness, or are the result of it, or are connected with it. He can feel something moving around in his body, worms underneath his skin; they leave him no peace, he is already weak and has lost weight, as anyone can see. People can tell from his face, especially from his eyes, that he is sick. (Adou is powerfully built and is obviously well-nourished. His eyes and face are perfectly normal; his expression is somewhat depressive.)

Adou describes his ailment as suddenly appearing "two years ago" when he was attending school in Bassam, and as a result of it was forced to repeat the same class twice without passing. Since that time the ailment has continued unabated, with no sign of remission, let alone improvement. Later on we shall have to reassess and correct all this information.

Adou describes his symptoms in somewhat the same fashion that gravely depressed European patients usually speak of their ailments, though it must be admitted that his mood is far less depressive. Sometimes he seems fearful, like a typical hypochondriac, sometimes

resigned and hopeless; sometimes he bemoans his fate and blames others for it; and sometimes—when he speaks of the worms in his body—one has the impression that he is the victim of physical hallucinations. All in all, his laments are more resigned, more stereotyped, more matter-of-fact, and less demonstrative than those of hysterical European patients.

So far, Adou has been speaking spontaneously, interrupted only by occasional questions from me. Now he begins to repeat himself, telling me again about the two psychiatrists who had examined him and giving me to understand that they had deliberately withheld the proper medicine. Once again he intimates that there is no one who is willing to help him.

When I make no reply to this, he repeats the account of his illness, especially his inability to remember things. At this point I venture my first interpretation, explaining to him that he has experienced some very bad things and that this is why his head refuses to remember anything. At first he accepts my interpretation; he laughs, but then comes right back to the stereotype account of his symptoms.

I interrupt him after a moment and explain to him the basic rules of psychoanalysis, emphasizing that he must talk with me for one hour every day and tell me whatever comes to his mind.<sup>1</sup> I point out that this is the only proper treatment for his illness. He would lie on the cot, completely relaxed, I would sit behind him, and he would tell me his thoughts, just as they came to him. Again, to begin with he is delighted and agrees. But then an objection occurs to him, and he informs me that he will be in Yosso only until Friday. I reply that we can't possibly get very far by Friday, that treatment of this kind requires much longer. Hereupon he says that he could come back to the village after his trip and continue the treatment. He adds: "It would be better, though, if you would give me some medicine. That would be quicker and simpler." My response to his request for medicine is to assure him that I will tell no one anything about what we discuss together and that this discretion is necessary so that he can tell me everything. I promise him that I will always interrupt our conversation if we should be disturbed by visitors.

This confirmation of my willingness to concern myself with him and to keep his secret has an immediate and extraordinary effect. It appears—not only at this moment, but also during the later course of treatment—that Adou is capable of accepting friendly interest in exchange for the "object withheld," but that his feeling that he is somehow being taken advantage of is not so easy to dispel.

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1. To choose interviews of one hour a day, as with European patients, may or may not be appropriate to other cultural settings. All three members of our team felt this suited our Anyi partner. I would not advise maintaining this setting in other cultures if it seems to provoke resistance or acting out.

Adou starts to relate the story of his life, beginning with the period of poverty and loneliness in Bassam and going on to his childhood, then the later years, with their setbacks and disappointments. The episodes he narrates are not chronologically ordered, but related in keeping with the contrast between the time before his illness—when everything was good—and the period after his illness began—when everything became bad. This turn for the worse is now attributed to the evil machinations of his teachers or of Monsieur N., who favor others over him or withdraw their patronage for selfish reasons and discriminate against him, and now to his poor physical condition. It is significant that Adou's complaints of pains in his head and of his weakened body with its peculiar internal upheavals appear consistently when he is forced to recall sad, lonely periods of his life. His accounts of occasions on which he played a more energetic role, presumably during periods when he did not feel so alone, generally end in a repetition of his suspicions of evil-intentioned persons, suspicions that I would immediately regard as paranoid distortions of memory if they occurred in a European.

The most important events in Adou's life are outlined chronologically below. He contradicted himself several times in his account of his most recent years. His conscious belief that his sickness began while he was attending school in Bassam and that it resulted in the unfortunate dependence on his uncle, Monsieur N., which began immediately thereafter, could not be substantiated. The onset of this illness is the only significant episode in his life which—later on during the course of treatment—I shall have to place at a different point of time. Though all his other memories were subsequently embroidered in great detail, it was possible to confirm them during treatment.

Adou has no idea how old he is—and in this he resembles most Anyi who were born in a village. He gives his age as 19 or 20. The reconstruction of his life story makes it seem more likely that he was about 23 at the time he came to me for treatment.

He was born and raised in a village located some twenty kilometers from Abengourou along the road leading to Agnibilekrou. He is his mother's only child. He reports that from early childhood he was always alone; not only did he have no brothers and sisters, but he was also without playmates. His parents are planters. He makes no mention of whether his mother or father ever had other marriage partners, either before or after his birth. He describes them as simple people who were never very successful in life because neither had important relations of any kind who might have helped them along. They worked their plantations separately, but together they managed to save enough money to be able to send their son (then about 9 or 10 years of age) to a foster father in Agnibilekrou so that he could attend school there. Adou proved to be

such an apt pupil that he was able to pass the examination admitting him to a secondary school ("collège"). He tells me nothing about this foster father, but does mention that he had no friends or playmates during that period and was often alone.

After passing his examinations, he enrolled in the secondary school in Bassam. There he did not live with a foster family, but rented a room of his own, bought food at the market, and cooked for himself. His father had given him 2000 or 3000 francs\*. When his money ran out, he wrote to his father. He often had to go hungry because it took such a long time for his parents to send him money. During the school vacations he was unable to return home (as he had been able to do when he was still in Agnibilekrou).

Apparently he was unable to make any friends in Bassam. He was different from the other young people, he explains, and his clothes were different. When he sees that I do not understand what he means, he says: "Just look, my shirt is all ragged." (And in fact Adou does have on a brightly-colored, extremely tattered shirt of European cut with a pair of blue jeans that are rather the worse for wear.) He complains that his schoolmates, like the people here in Yosso, were unable to understand why he wore a ragged shirt. But he didn't want any other shirt, and in fact he didn't have any others; he was what he was—different from the others.

Apparently Adou was one of the poorest pupils in Bassam and—either at the time or later—had made a virtue out of necessity. He deliberately dissociated himself from his school fellows and voluntarily renounced the prestige that better clothing would have conferred (this presumably made it possible for him to avoid having to reproach his parents, who were unable to do any better for him). On the other hand, Adou developed the fantasy (or formed the opinion) that the teachers in Bassam had been bribed by the parents of other pupils, who were richer than his own parents, to have him removed from school in order to give his place to a wealthier boy. In his mind this unjust discrimination goes hand in hand with the other reason, namely that his sickness prevented him from learning his lessons properly.

Adou's later attempts to complete his secondary education were apparently interrupted by intervals lasting months, or even years, during which he lived in the household of his "uncle," Monsieur N., in Abidjan. His first attempt took him to the vocational high school, which he attended only a few months; later he enrolled in the Naval School in Grand Bassam, where he stayed for nine months. According to one ver-

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\*In 1966 1000 CFA francs was equivalent to U.S. \$4.50.

sion, he did well in this school and passed his examinations at the end of the trial period, but then was dismissed for the same reason as in Bassam; the instructors, all of them whites, were corrupt and sent him away so that they could give his place to a child of wealthy parents. According to a second version, he enjoyed the months at the Naval School, where he did well and never contradicted his teachers, but—again for the reasons already mentioned—failed to graduate. In still a third version, he speaks of his illness—it was the Naval School that referred him to the two psychiatrists—as the reason why he had to give up his studies there.

He tells me that if he could have followed his own inclinations, he would have become a mechanic or a medical orderly. Even now, he says, he could enroll in a two-year course for medical personnel, but he does not intend to do so because he would be handicapped by his illness and only fail again. He would like to have a real profession and earn money so that he could send something to his parents.

Adou's accounts of his various failures create the impression that, presumably for years, he has been so lonely and so depressively inclined that he is no longer capable of studying with any prospect of success. He does not blame his parents for this, but rather his illness, his teachers, and the doctors. This is a conspicuous deviation from the norm, because other Anyi who have failed in school in similar fashion invariably tend to blame their parents; also because we have regularly observed that in other Anyi young people the active renunciation of attractive clothing and of association with comrades is never a permanent character attitude, but at most a temporary form of behavior that can be traced back to an acute affront. In Adou's case (he is capable of actively renouncing things which he passively wishes to obtain), the fact that he seems less depressive than many other Yosso or Bébou young people who are better off than he is may be connected with this achievement of his ego.

For some time now, probably even prior to his attendance at the Naval School, Adou has been living in the household of Monsieur N., for whom he voluntarily performs odd jobs without payment. Adou has frequently accompanied him on business trips as his interpreter, for Monsieur N. has never learned more than a few words of Adou's language. Monsieur N.'s obligations towards his assistant are just as vaguely defined as Adou's tasks. When Monsieur N. needs him, he has him summoned and issues his orders. Adou receives no salary and demands nothing of him, though he does expect Monsieur N.'s mother to look after his needs, at least to see that he is given his meals.

Even in the simplest assignments, says Adou, who has now come to the end of his life story, his forgetfulness is such a handicap that he is not good for anything. He relates that Monsieur N. sent him twice from Abidjan to some village (to Yosso perhaps?) to collect a few cans of

paint. Each time Adou made the trip for nothing because on both occasions he had forgotten his purpose.

Here I present my second interpretation: this kind of forgetfulness is a sign that Adou has something against his employer. Perhaps he does not want to do anything for Monsieur N. because Monsieur N. does not provide for him properly. At first Adou laughs and admits that this is quite possible, but then he adds that it's not exactly the same thing as when one goes into a shop for something and then cannot remember what it was. His mind is simply unable to retain anything at all, it goes completely blank, and there are animals underneath his skin—he looks worriedly at his forearms, as if he expected to see them there—and he can feel the animals all through his body.

My interpretation was evidently premature. I declare today's interview at an end, while Adou, still thinking of his bodily sensations, begins to speak admiringly of how, by treating its inhabitants, I am contributing to the health of Yosso.

The course of this interview was similar to what one can experience with rather lonely, timorous, youthful patients in Europe. Adou's mood fluctuated between a childlike expectation (occasionally developing into a depressive wish fantasy), that the doctor finally was going to find out what was wrong with him and would help him, and a disappointing conviction that nothing could be done for him, that all was hopeless. Sometimes his trouble is other people (his teachers and instructors), and sometimes the sensations he feels in his body. His suspicions are directed only briefly and very vaguely towards me and—consciously at any rate—not at all towards his parents or Monsieur N. Although his attitude towards his illness has paranoid overtones, and although the description of his symptoms is more consistent with a grave disturbance of his body feeling than with hysterical disturbances, he does not go so far as to assert that his mind has been bewitched. His loneliness, his poverty, and his lack of contact with his fellows seem to bother him very little; he sees nothing abnormal or pathological in these conditions, but rather accepts them as a part of his personality.

Adou speaks excellent French. During our talks his emotional involvement is good. What he has to say is expressed much more coherently and clearly than is the case with other Anyi young people. Nevertheless, a good deal of his life story remains obscure, incomprehensible.

At this point, it should be emphasized that during psychoanalytical exploration we deliberately accept the disadvantage of certain gaps so as to not disrupt with our questions the order of narration selected by the patient. For example, throughout the entire course of treatment we learned nothing about the relationship between Adou and the foster-father in Agnibilekrou with whom he lived during the five or six years of his schooling there and in whose home, as we discovered later, the first

symptoms of the boy's illness appeared. On the other hand, by the time the treatment was nearing its end, it had become clear to us that while Adou accepts orders from some authority figures (such as Monsieur N.) without resistance, an over emphasis of his submissive role hems him in and makes him ill. He has no expectations of positive wish fulfillment (care, attention, affection) from such figures. When he is confronted with failure, he feels more persecuted by others than disappointed in himself. There are other authority figures to whom he submits, his parents for example; in this case there *are* wishes involved, some of which he fulfills by means of identification. Conversely, he feels the wish to care for them. Disappointments and other conflicts are warded off primarily through identification. Finally, there is a third type of authority figure from whom Adou expects a great deal. As long as he is able to identify with these authorities, his mood is slightly manic. Originally, these figures were gratifying, good objects, capable of being projected in any direction, as required. These are figures one strives to emulate, not figures to whom one must submit. When they emerge from Adou's fantasy into his real environment, they, too, are often disappointing. Such persons probably partake of the idealized parent images of early childhood. Disappointment in them leads either to a feeling of sadness, to the oral wish to be given something, or as is the case with the first group of figures—to paranoid anxiety.

#### SECOND INTERVIEW (3 FEBRUARY 1966)

When I arrive in Madame Akouassi's courtyard to bring her the promised medicine and to pick up Adou, I find him rocking an infant in his arms. Three small children are dancing around him in delight and playing with him. Madame Akouassi's is standing nearby, watching the scene. Politely, Adou places the infant in his aunt's arms.

On our way to the tent, Adou tells me that he gets along best with children "until they are so big" (he indicates the height of a 10- to 12-year old child). "Children of this age like me and I like them; but when they get old enough that they could be my friends, something always goes wrong." During the session that follows, he interrupts his account of his unhappy fate with a repetition of his remark about how well he understands small children. This leads me to assume that up to that age he enjoyed a happy childhood. It was only after he left his parents and after the onset of puberty that things began to go wrong for him.

Spontaneously, Adou begins to tell me about an affair that had the whole village holding its breath yesterday. A young man, a stranger from Korhogo, had made use of a sly subterfuge to sneak into the bed of a

married woman. The woman's husband heard of what was going on, returned home unexpectedly with some of his friends, and caught the adulterer in flagranti. They gave him a good thrashing and he had to flee to the forest. Adou finds the whole business amusing; he is quite clearly on the side of the husband and morality.

Despite the relaxed, matter-of-fact fashion in which he relates this story, it contains the most important theme of our second session, a matter which is apparently a serious personal problem for Adou himself. He cannot permit himself to be like that young man who wants to sleep with a married woman, the mother; by avoiding aggressive rivalry, by submitting, and by renouncing his own wishes, he stands safely on the side of morality, but is as helpless as a child when it comes to coping with his life.

He continues, assuring me that he does without attractive clothing and thus renounces the society of companions; he is content when he has enough to eat and drink. The only reason he wants to earn money is to be able to build his parents a better house. When I suggest that his renunciation also gives him a feeling of greater independence, he does not understand what I mean. Getting along without attractive clothes, companions of his own age, and girls does not seem to be easy for him, nor can he conceive of wanting to be more independent. All he needs is good health—and he begins once more, as in our first interview, to enumerate his symptoms, asking: "Isn't there some medicine to cure this itching under my skin? Can't they operate on my head?"

These hypochondriacal, imploring pleas are in striking contrast to the energetic and ruthless manner in which Adou chases away village patients who come to consult me during "his" hour.

I explain to him that if he is so ill, he is neither able, nor expected, to assume responsibility for his own life, that it is up to others to care for him as if he were a child, but that these others, myself included, would disappoint him, too, just as he had been disappointed as a child. But all this has no effect on his stereotyped laments, and he goes on to describe a terrible cough from which he suffers. I point out that I have a white colleague in Bébou who also coughs the whole night. Since Adou identifies with me in keeping our interview sessions free of outside interruptions, I expect him to identify as well with my attitude towards illness.

My remark fulfills at least half its intended purpose. He continues to speak of the "misfortunes" that befall him continually, but there is hardly any further mention of his physical ills and none at all of his cough. I interpret for him, saying that all these misfortunes caused by other people—his parents' poverty, the fact that he was unable to find

work in Abidjan, that his teachers discriminated against him in school, that Monsieur N. never pays him for his work, that the young men in Yosso never talk to him but spend their time running after girls—simply mean that there is no point in his even trying to better his lot, since it is always the others who are to blame for his difficulties.

This interpretation elicits an unexpected response. Adou sits up, suddenly pulls off his shirt, kneels beside my chair, and leans over backwards across my knees, so that I am confronted with his bare chest. He places his hand over a thickened cheloidal scar about six centimeters long over the sternum, then seizes my hand and guides it to the scare so that I can feel it. I remain silent. Adou straightens up slowly. "It would be good," he says, "if that scar could be operated on. It's too bad it's not a tropical ulcer, because then a shot of penicillin in the buttocks would cure it. I've shown it to doctors and orderlies several times, but they all say there's nothing they can do. I always do just what they tell me to, buy all the medicines, but I'm still sick. I can't learn anything and that's why I can't go back to school."

Obviously my exhortation to him to be more active has enhanced the transference of passive-homosexual desires, by means of which he hopes to ward off the danger (castration anxiety) inherent in a phallic-competitive attitude. The acting out I have described came impulsively, suddenly; the cheloidal scar had never figured previously in his complaints. I merely assure him that he is a fine fellow, that the scar won't kill him, and that he doesn't need an operation.

Adou resumes his position on the cot. He has overcome his anxiety; I have neither assaulted him sexually nor operated on him. He has become "a fine fellow" and is busy identifying with what I expect of him as such. Admittedly, the term has a meaning for him that is specific to himself and to his milieu. He criticizes the young people of Yosso. They are lazy, he asserts, and have no respect for their elders. When their fathers reprove them, they answer back and call them assholes ("con"), and if the fathers try to beat them, they strike back. They are good for nothing and will never succeed in life. On the other hand, he reveres his parents and has always obeyed them; it is only that they are poor. This is not his father's fault, for he had no uncle. This is one of the disadvantages of the matrilineal inheritance laws, and it is these laws, the system, and fate in general that he criticizes, not his father.

Now that his castration anxiety has been overcome, for the moment anyway, and he has been able to identify with me—in order to ward off a passive-homosexual impulse, he is in a position to adopt independently the "normal" behavior pattern of the Anyi, to submit to authority and to criticize intelligently.

On the other hand, his passive dependency (or its pathological component) has not been overcome by any means.<sup>2</sup> He realizes that he finally ought to learn some trade, or at least complete his treatment with me, but Monsieur N. would never permit him to take up an occupation—out of pure selfishness, so that he can continue to exploit his nephew—and he will surely send him away from Yosso, and that will be the end of the treatment. Today, to be sure, Adou no longer speaks of his employer in such glowing terms as yesterday.

I am tempted to give Adou a letter for Monsieur N., asking him to let his nephew stay in Yosso for a while; this (i.e. the counter-transference it reflects) makes it clear to me just how intensely my patient is appealing to me. On the other hand there would be nothing gained if my interference only served to subject Adou to my authority rather than to that of his uncle. I would simply be helping him to transfer to me the dependency strivings that make him so helpless and unsure of himself.

In the absence of any reaction to his fears on my part, Adou resumes his tirade against the young people of Yosso. “Not one of them is willing to talk with you. I’ll be back tomorrow at eight o’clock.” With these words, he himself for the first time takes the initiative in arranging for continuation of the treatment.

The course of the second interview suggests that the patient’s complaints, though still hypochondriacal and anxious, are hysterical rather than depressive-psychotic. The fear of adopting an active, masculine-competitive attitude seems to correspond to castration anxiety, which is warded off partly by a turning to (anal) passivity and homosexual object choice (in keeping with the negative outcome of the oedipal conflict), and partly by conversion. The peculiar overtones coloring his physical complaints as well as their paranoid character (less pronounced today) suggest that Adou’s anxiety has its origin in pre-oedipal fears. Occasionally he is able to overcome both his passivity and his anxiety through identification. It seems clear that his childlike attitude towards me and

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2. The culture-specific passive dependent attitude of the male Anyi is further discussed subsequently.

I am convinced that the best, or even the only, way to further the art of psychoanalytically oriented interviews with people of non-western cultures (as well as with lower class Europeans) is to make early interpretations of resistance. This way the deepening transference prevents interruption of the sessions with partners who have no (e.g. “research-patients”) or little motivation to continue (as Adou). Of course in this second session I could not be sure how much of Adou’s passive dependency was culture-specific and how much was not. At least I knew that when the scar was exposed his acting out was intense as was my feeling that I should help him against his uncle. To interpret attitudes which are culture-specific does no harm at all, no more than interpretation of normal behavior in our culture. Rather, it facilitates subsequent steps aiming to distinguish idiosyncratic from ordinary traits.

towards his parents, even though it, too, is passive-dependent and masochistic in character, cannot be regarded as truly pathological, primarily because it is accompanied by better ego performance, a reasonable way of looking at things, and a keen intelligence. Adou's comments on the deplorable social and hygienic conditions in Yosso, on his parents, and on the consequences of the (now superseded) traditional law of inheritance through the maternal lineage are alert, well organized, and reflect intelligent interest on his part. When he is confronted with his illness, his unhappy situation, and especially with the problem of whether or not Monsieur N. may make it impossible for him to continue his treatment, he is as helpless as a toddler; even his use of language becomes childish and faltering.

#### THIRD INTERVIEW (4 FEBRUARY 1966)

**Adou:** "There is a certain sickness here, which makes children have fits, once a week or once a month. They act as if they were crazy, but not quite. They're not crazy and they're not normal; they just do whatever they please." (A little boy of about ten, who looks erethistic and somewhat feeble-minded, refuses to be chased away like the other children; he remains standing about ten meters away from the tent, sometimes pulling faces and sometimes smiling slyly.)

**Adou:** (continuing) "These children can't be brought to their senses. It's all the same whether you say something nice to them or threaten them . . . They don't act like normal children. They refuse to obey. They have to be spanked, to feel it on their own skins, then they'll obey. By the next time they've forgotten everything and refuse to obey all over again."

A few moments later he jumps up, grabs a stick, and chases after the feeble-minded boy, but does not strike him. Apparently he wants to show me that this is the proper way to deal with them.

I interpret this as an appeal to me; this is the way Adou would like me to deal with him, then he would be satisfied. He himself is not crazy, of course, but not normal either, because he forgets everything. Yet Adou is utterly frank and confiding with me. I have the impression that he has not warded off the passive-homosexual transference to me. The idea of being beaten serves on the one hand to gratify a desire for punishment; at the same time it emphasizes the distinction—those little boys need a thrashing; I don't, I'll obey when I'm told to. During the course of this

interview I offer a number of interpretations: "You want to keep on being a little boy"; "You don't want to grow up because then you feel alone"; "You think like an adult, but your character is like a small boy's—as long as you were a little boy, you were happy at home. And you were an intelligent little boy, that's why you still want to go back to school, just as you did then."

Adou's reply to the last interpretation is rather surprising: "You can waste a lot of time with girls. The other boys run after them, but I don't even talk to them any more." And this, he says, is the reason why he is never able to get along with boys of his own age, why they refuse to accept him. And he concludes his lengthy speech with the words: "I can't just make up my mind to lead my own life. First I have to get rich and take care of my parents, and then, maybe, I'll be able to think of girls."

I interpret: "You're afraid of girls and you're afraid of male companions of your own age. You want to give up both and continue your schooling. That way you may be able to help your parents. And that's something you're not afraid of."

My patient lies on the cot, completely relaxed. He replies to my interpretation as follows:

**Adou:** "I want to go on working with you, to get to know myself better, and to get well at last. But I don't dare ask Monsieur N. to let me stay here in the village. If you could give me a letter for him, then surely my uncle would allow me to stay here. But I don't know whether that would be good or not."

**Parin:** "I don't believe that would be good. It would make you just as dependent on me as you are now on Monsieur N. and as you used to be on your parents."

Adou looks around at me in horror, sits up on the cot, and then cannot help laughing. On the whole he seems much more relaxed. He has spoken of his illness three times, very briefly—once when he was talking about his school, once in connection with his mention of girls, and now, in response to my last interpretation. He unbuttons his shirt and asks me whether it might not be possible after all to have the scar removed by surgery. This time I reply: "So far you've always gone to see the medical orderly. If you now turn yourself over to me and I cut something out of your body, you hope that it will make you well again. Then you would have submitted to me completely."

He makes no reply to this, but his mood undergoes a change. He sits up on his cot and inquires very objectively about the training of medical orderlies in Switzerland. After a fairly long interval he comes back to his scar and tells me that the orderlies had once removed such a scar from his back. He adds that the result was not at all satisfactory.

Adou continues to relax on his cot till the end of the hour. He talks about how much he enjoys going out into the rain forest alone. He goes fishing and watches the animals. Many human diseases are transmitted by animals that are sick. Once he had even written a letter to the Ministry of Health, suggesting that they set up a veterinary service to deal with this problem, but naturally he had never received any reply. It was always that way whenever anyone suggested something sensible. Towards the end of the hour, a few children appear outside the tent, but—as is usual whenever Adou and I are deeply engaged in conversation—it is no problem to get them to leave. Adou tells me once again that the villagers do not like him, "because he is a 'stranger'" (thus no longer because he is poor or because he dresses differently . . . ).

My interpretation of his wish to be a small child again brings us to his rejection of the opposite sex. And here he expresses his desire for dependency more directly. I am to protect him from Monsieur N. At the conclusion of our interview I interpret for him the passive desires he projects to me, as evidenced by his wish to have me operate on him. As in the previous interview, this results in his identifying with me and at the same time in an enhancement of his self-esteem and in an improved functioning of the self as a whole. I make the following entry in my records: good therapeutic success through interpretation of passive-homosexual desires; reinforced identificatory transference.

#### FOURTH INTERVIEW (10 FEBRUARY 1966)

Adou has gone to Abidjan with his employer, leaving me a message to the effect that he would be back in a few days. This was six days ago. When Adou returned after three days' absence, I happened to be away. Yesterday he drove to Bébou to look for me with the white foreman hired by Monsieur N.

In other respects as well, Adou is now taking a more active part than before our interviews were interrupted. It is possible that my interpretation of his passive submissiveness may have had some effect, or perhaps, now that he has been "compelled" to submit to Monsieur N., he feels surer of himself in his relationship with me. N. is a violating, evil figure, a split off father-imago, while I represent the good, nurturing aspect of the father-imago. The latter assumption is substantiated by Adou's passiveness in allowing me to lead him to the tent, despite the fact that he had been looking forward to our interview and had been waiting for me. Back on his cot, he complains about the people in the village, saying that they wouldn't even give him a place to sleep. He had had to spend the entire night in a deck chair. He also complains about his employer—if Monsieur N. refuses to pay him for his work with the lumber crew, then

he'll look for another job. N. is not the only employer in the world. He brusquely sends his great-aunt away when she comes into the tent to consult me.

When Adou once more adopts his "altruistic" pose, when he begins to stress his own modest way of living and to emphasize how sorry he is for the poor, suffering, ignorant people of Yosso, I make it clear to him that he is trying to think in the way he believes I think, and that he is thinking for others in order to avoid having to think about his own problems.

And—predictably—he starts to speak of the problems connected with his schooling. His memory is simply too poor, he complains. I assure him that I have never noticed it, and he admits that his head no longer bothers him quite so much as it used to. But it's not just because of his memory, he continues, he ought to look for a better job. He'll never get anywhere with the few thousand francs that Monsieur N. pays him (so N. does pay him for his work; apparently his feeling that N. is exploiting him is somewhat exaggerated). "I've got to have a profession and earn some money. The entire village is living on Monsieur N.'s eternal promises, which he never keeps. I'm going to look for another job."

Adou is no longer bothered by his inability to finish his schooling or by his mental trouble. Nor does he ever mention the other, physical symptoms any more. He has achieved identification with me and, once I have made this clear to him, is able to make use of some of the activity potential and aggression inherent in him. The "evil" Monsieur N., who had forced him to interrupt his treatment, is no longer an omnipotent pursuer, but merely an unsatisfactory employer. The difficulties now lie outside, no longer inside Adou himself.

Girls and women are mentioned only briefly. Adou feels that the ones here in the village tend to marry men who are too young and not yet able to provide for their children. In fact, he says, when a child gets sick, the only hope is that kind-hearted whites may turn up on the scene and treat it free of charge; otherwise it would be doomed to a sorry death. Adou himself is the poor abandoned child who is brought to me to be cured; he imagines himself at my side as I treat my patients, and he links this positive and identificatory transference with his own personal problem, namely that he is unwilling or—as I suspect—unable to develop any relationship with a woman.

#### FIFTH INTERVIEW (11 FEBRUARY 1966)

Adou is in a cheerful and friendly mood. He finds ample opportunity to identify with me when he speaks about the dreadful conditions in the village. He has no job at the moment, and goes fishing a lot; he intends to go today, too, though it is so hot that the fish certainly won't be

biting. He speaks with great interest of my car. He seems much healthier now, like a rather childish young man.

About halfway through the hour, I decide to seize the initiative; I say that he is talking about "the general interest" when he means only his own. When he fails to respond, I interrupt him several times, pointing out that he is talking only about things we have in common, never about things we do not share.

He begins immediately to rail at Monsieur N., accusing him of being not only a halfbreed, but also a skirt-chaser. Right after he arrived in the village, he forced a young woman to sleep with him and got her pregnant, and now the same thing has happened again. He's constantly deceiving his wife in Abidjan. He lets his aged mother do all the work. Even in the capital he had treated her like a common servant, so that she finally decided to move back to the village in spite of the lack of conveniences here. And here in Yosso, Monsieur N. goes right on being inconsiderate and fathering children right and left. His old mother is expected to cook for his concubines. The villagers are sadly mistaken if they believe that a halfbreed like him, interested only in his own profit and pleasure, will bring them work.

When he senses that the hour is coming to an end, Adou resumes his gentle mood and once again becomes the "good little boy" whose only aim is to take care of his parents and—he mentions this in passing, as it were—perhaps to go back to school again after all.

Adou's tirade against Monsieur N. reveals envy, homosexual admiration, and submissiveness. His interest in chemistry, medicine, and disease—an interest shared with me—probably also represents an attempt to cope with his hypochondriacal anxieties.

#### SIXTH INTERVIEW (12 FEBRUARY 1966)

I have the impression that Adou, who seems even more childlike and more gentle than during the previous interview, is struggling to maintain his precarious psychological balance. A plump, healthy-looking little boy dressed in an extremely skimpy shirt who dares to approach our tent all by himself fills Adou with delight. "He's so sweet and round, so nice and strong, really more like a baby, even though he's older. What I like most about little children is that they're still so awkward." He identifies himself with the little boy, who is awkward and alone, and also with the mother who cares for him. Abruptly he informs me that he has to leave Yosso. He cannot ask anyone to give him a place to sleep, and he expresses his pity, not for himself (at least not in so many words), but—altruistically—for the other poor inhabitants of the village.

When I explain that what he really wants is to be taken care of himself, he comes back to his inability to remember anything.

**Adou:** “For instance, I can never remember the number of our mailbox or the license number of Monsieur N.’s car, though I’ve seen them both often enough.”

**Parin:** “You’re mad at him, that’s all.”

**Adou:** “That’s right, I am. I’m going to look for another job. I’ll stay here a few days more and then go fishing along the Comoë (River). And then I’ll go to Abidjan and try to find a real job, so that I’ll have something to fall back on when I finish my treatment here. But my memory is still not so good as it should be.”

**Parin:** “People are very likely to forget things they find unpleasant, especially things from childhood.”

**Adou:** “I was very happy as a child . . . Our village was not so backward as Yosso. But those people who have forgotten things just don’t want to admit to the doctor that they have venereal disease; then the doctor makes a wrong diagnosis and can’t cure them. It’s impossible for a European to know about all the diseases that occur in Africa. My own mother has venereal disease. She can’t have any more children. Two days before her period is due, she has pains down there. If I had enough money, I would take her to a specialist in Abidjan. She ought to have an examination. She’s still young, and she could easily have more children. That would be the best thing for her.”

**Parin:** “You’re ashamed to talk about your own sexual difficulties. That’s why you want to help your mother.”

**Adou:** “There are people who go out into the rain forest, suddenly keel over and are dead. Sometimes it’s their own fault.”<sup>3</sup> (Because they go into the forest on a day when it is forbidden.)

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3. A reader of this paper objected that id-analysis would be in place here; e.g. one should have interpreted the dangerous rain forest as a wet vagina. I may add that id-analysis could have been easily justified with Adou as with other Anyi informants. It certainly would provide data about sexual practices within the cultural context. However, we felt that a more or less strict adherence to ego-analysis provides a better understanding and a less confused picture of psychic structure, while the provoked irruption of sexual

Adou relaxes on the cot and, undeterred by my questions, discourses fluently on deadly enchantments until the end of the hour. He himself has witnessed cases in his own village. A young girl, for example, had met sudden death in this fashion. Sometimes it happens to old people, then again to young persons. Despite my attempt to link these tales with his recently expressed fear of venereal disease, he continues to speak in general terms: "You have to ask the shamans; if the reason was not sickness, they just know. I know nothing about it myself."

Before he leaves, Adou informs me that he wants to interrupt his treatment for two days. Tomorrow he intends to go fishing, even though the fish aren't biting right now, and the day after tomorrow is Sunday.

Even though the positive relationship with me and the identification with me as a European, a doctor, and a stranger in the village have brought about some improvement, Adou still does not dare to speak of his sexual anxieties. It is striking that he speaks so frankly about his mother's venereal disease. This is certainly not due to any uninhibited sexual interest in his mother, such as a non-repressed oedipal passion or anything of that kind. In the first place, the Anyi see nothing shameful in speaking openly about the sexual functions of the female, and in the second place, as a result of Adou's renunciation of the male role, that is, his desire to remain the "good little boy" (negative outcome of the oedipal conflict), his relationship to his mother has been desexualized and remains relatively accessible. In terms of transference: I am not supposed to heal his own sexuality, for that would give rise to anxiety (castration anxiety) in him. Instead, I am to heal his mother so that she can have more children. I am even to help her become pregnant so that he will no longer have to fear her, but can remain a child himself and can gratify (with me) his passive and (with his siblings) his active female-maternal desires.

My assumption (confirmed by later interviews) that Adou feels himself sexually disturbed might well imply that it was his shame at the inadequacy of his maleness, and not his anxiety, that prevented him from talking about his own sexuality. Yet neither his gestures nor his behavior indicated any feeling of shame whatsoever, and he was always able (prior to this time and afterwards) to speak about sexual matters without the least embarrassment. The renunciation of male sexuality is a matter of personal pride for him, for it brings him into harmony with the ego ideal of the "good little boy." The assumption that my treatment had mobilized not shame, but castration anxiety, can be regarded as confirmed. Initially this castration anxiety is warded off by repression and by the

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strivings tends to obscure the whole relationship unless a longer series of interviews is feasible (see "Jean-Pierre" in Parin et al., 1980; pp. 248-305). About Adou's sexual life, see pages 192-204.

cathexis of a displacement substitute (I am not the one who is sick; my mother is). When I expose this defense by interpreting it, it is replaced by another one.

Adou is no longer afraid. His thinking is coherent, and his behavior towards me is characterized by self-confidence. He is talking about the deadly influence exerted by witches and shamans. Judging from the content of the dangers he mentions, a regression from the phallic to the oral phase seems to have taken place; he speaks of being poisoned, devoured, annihilated instead of being sexually injured. His defense mechanism is now projection instead of the previous repression and displacement to a different object. Accordingly, we can assume a regression to a more primitive form of defense. Inasmuch as he shows a general improved functioning, that is, there has been a trend towards the restitution of various ego functions, we can surmise that the regression described above took place "in the service of the ego." Oral (aggressive and libidinal) desires evoke less anxiety in Adou than phallic (and anal) ones. The projection to witches and shamans is in keeping with the animistic beliefs of his people. This means that the discrepancy between the ego ideal (whose individual shaping conforms to the ideals of the subject's environment) and the ego itself becomes smaller. The objects to which aggressive and dangerous libidinal tendencies are attributed have not merely been projected outside; they have been conjured away in the form of definable spirits and shamans. (The animistic religion espoused by the Anyi can be viewed as a successful attempt to localize threatening objects outside instead of inside, in the self.) And finally, this form of defense permits its user to cope better with reality. For spirits can be conjured away, and shamans can be bribed; it is possible to evade these "external" dangers by resorting to a form of behavior similar to that of our phobic patients. The process of consulting the magicians had taken the place of the anxiety-filled thoughts of sexual injury that the individual is unable to banish; for it is the function of the magicians to provide the means with which danger can be met.

We have given detailed consideration to an example of "normal" behavior on Adou's part because it offers a chance to derive the functioning of a defense mechanism from the event (warding off castration anxiety) that gave rise to it and then to describe the psychology of the resultant behavior with some degree of exactness. The projective-animistic attitude is typical of all our Anyi subjects. The situations in which such behavior is appropriate are many and varied; the need to ward off castration anxiety is only one of them.

Identification with me has not given Adou adequate protection against his castration anxiety. He has to interrupt the treatment a second time, thus, in effect, abandoning me. There is a good deal of passive defiance

in this, as there is in his illness as well, and also a certain anticipatory defense—it is he who abandons me, so that I cannot abandon him, which would be tantamount to a punishment of sorts. For he also loves me, and is not only passively submissive to me as he is to Monsieur N. As long as he identifies with me, he can take part in the most satisfying conversations, his thinking is logical and ordered, and he enjoys a high degree of self-esteem.

In a European youth as well, the narcissistic gain to be derived from such an "ideal" relationship would be a predictable development and a useful aid in the process of treatment. It seems to me, however, that Anyi men *must* have an identificatory relationship to a phallic-active or even aggressive authority figure if they are to function well. For one thing, they cannot overcome their castration anxiety any other way, and for another, their own identification with the female is so strong that this is the only way they are able to acquire masculine character traits, not to mention a phallic-oriented behavior pattern.

#### SEVENTH INTERVIEW (25 FEBRUARY 1966)

##### *(Resumption of the Talks Interrupted 13 Days Before)*

Yesterday (on the 24th) I happened to meet Adou on the street. He greeted me in friendly fashion, but his expression was rather sad. He told me that he had been back for several days, but that now he was leaving for good, for Abidjan—tomorrow or the day after—in order to look for a decent job. He says that he is fed up with Monsieur N. and that there is no point in wasting his time here any longer. And he says goodbye to me. (I know that there is a car leaving for Abidjan tomorrow.)

I suspect that Adou is disappointed in me because I had to be away for two days just when he returned. But he seems so determined to leave that I have no opportunity to test this hypothesis. I can only request him to go to Goldy (Parin), who is in Yosso this morning, to take a Rohrschach test. He offers a number of rather lame excuses, which I refuse to accept, saying: "No. You have to take the test in any case, and it might just as well be right now." Whereupon he agrees.

(No interpreter is needed for Adou during the test. He gives numerous answers, some of them highly original, enters into the spirit of the game, and—in the end—is well satisfied with his own performance. He experiences the request to interpret the shapes as a kind of school examination, which he passes with flying colors.)

Following the test, Adou's attitude undergoes a complete change. He told Goldy that he intended to remain here for a long time and to con-

tinue his treatment with me. In reply to my query whether we should schedule more interview sessions, he answers, by all means, whenever I like. He gives me precise instructions as to where I am to pick him up—smiling broadly the while.

It is conceivable that the transference significance of the test may have calmed his castration anxiety—the father had sent him to the mother, he had been permitted to impress the mother as an intelligent son, and the father had no objections. In other words, I had made up for his disappointment at my not being available when he first came by undertaking something on his behalf. Quite probably it was my firmness in insisting that he had to take the test that brought about the change in his mood. His passive defiance, his spoilsport mood, and his intention of fleeing (akin to his earlier flight into illness) were overcome by the “gratifying” compulsion exerted by loving parents and gave way to joyful compliance.

During this interview, Adou makes no mention of his “illness” or of his schooling. He is now supervising—without pay, he says—the work going on at the house Monsieur N. is having built in Yosso.

Without any preamble, he suddenly asks me whether I have a remedy for “clap,” adding that he has suffered from it ever since he was five years old. I encourage him to give me more details about his sickness. It turns out that since his fifth or sixth year he has had the feeling that there is something wrong with his genitals. He has noticed hardly any physical symptoms, except that about once a year he feels a slight burning sensation in his urethra for a few minutes after urinating. He is convinced that this must be a very grave illness.

I explain that this sickness, like the sickness in his head, is caused by his anxiety, and that this anxiety must be connected somehow with his sex life. Right away Adou loses interest in his own illness. He starts to tell me of his desire to become a doctor and says he would like to come to Switzerland with me for this purpose. He wants to be able to help people, as I do, etc., etc. I try to make it clear to him that the reason he wants to come with me and learn how to help people is that he himself needs help in connection with his sexual anxieties and does not dare to speak about them.

EIGHTH AND NINTH INTERVIEWS  
(26 AND 27 FEBRUARY 1966)

Once Adou happens to make mention of his “sexual disease,” he takes refuge in a relaxed identification with me. He would like to be like me. In addition he would like to be with me and stay with me. He experiences

my interpretations as rejections. Nevertheless he is not offended; in fact he takes pleasure in the fact that I correct him, and shows intelligence and eagerness in his efforts to become more like me and to learn from me. At this stage I probably represent the "good father," who also has maternal qualities and who takes an active interest in his son. The women have been eliminated; there is no longer any motivation for aggressions, and anxiety is evaded.

Adou would like to have my address, he would like to be as I am. When I try to show him that he is making an ideal figure out of me and that he would like to become what he imagines me to be, he visualizes himself in the role of a learned man, a scholar whose mission is to live and work for all mankind and not just for his own family.

During the next hour he asks me whether I wouldn't like to go fishing with him. He tells me that there are prehistoric settlements in the rain forest that he would like to show me—I could do some research there, or collect insects, like a professor from America whom he once assisted.

Since his speech is becoming more and more perfunctory and beginning to falter, I try repeatedly to make it clear to him that he is simply attempting to evade his personal problems and his anxiety. This only serves to make him more "European"; he speaks disapprovingly of the African "evolués" who migrate to the cities and let their villages go to rack and ruin because they are afraid of the devils out in the bush. Next, he takes up the topic of diseases, even including those that afflict European children, leaving them mentally deficient so that they fail in school because they are unable to remember anything. It is obvious that he wants me to correct him, to instruct him. Finally he is completely relaxed. He gives me his views on the conflict between the Russians and the Americans and then talks about my car. I make a note to show him during the next interview that the more alien, and thus uncanny, I seem to him, the more he must try to adjust.

#### TENTH INTERVIEW (1 MARCH 1966)

Adou opens the conversation with the topic of money, declaring that one ought to work and earn money as long as one is still young. Then, in the manner of an agent from one of the development aid organizations, he outlines a number of proposals for ways to help the young people in Yosso to earn more. I try to show him how alien I am to him, and suggest that this is the reason why he feels it necessary to act so "European." I tell him that he is afraid of me and that when he is here talking with me, he is no longer sure just where he belongs—with his family or with me.

This inspires him to relate a story he has heard recently. A Djoula had

kidnapped two small children and had sold them for 200,000 CFA francs. The children were old enough that they could talk, and they insisted that they came from here, from Yosso. But the village had not reported any children missing. Finally, everyone accepted the explanation that these must be children from Yosso who had died long ago and now wanted to come back. Adou becomes thoughtful, and says: "I don't know whether this is a true story or one that people have made up. It's the children I'm thinking of. The whole business is strange. In a village the size of Yosso, the people must know whether or not a child is missing."

Adou's tale proves that my assumption is correct; he really does not know where he belongs. He has transferred his "family romance" to me. But he has come to realize more clearly where *I* belong.

My patient's eyes follow the flight of a pretty butterfly that has found its way into the tent as he muses: "The blacks say that when the butterflies gather in large flocks and rise from the grass like a blue cloud, it is time to get out the 'dabas' (picks) and go out into the bush to plant the cassava. That's what they say, and they do it, too. The plants that grow here are so different from the ones that grow where you live. You have no way of knowing how things are here."

Outside the tent a woman goes by, carrying a baby on her back. She stops and points at me, obviously trying to frighten the child. She is probably saying something like "Look, that's the evil white man," or "If you don't obey, the white man will get you!" She laughs as she speaks, and the baby laughs, too.

**Adou:** "The children are afraid. As long as they don't see anything bad, they have no reason to be frightened. But their mothers show them bad things deliberately." (He sits up and changes the subject.) "Here they don't have any marketplaces; the people sell their wares along the edge of the road. You should see the marketplace in Katiola, every Friday—you should see the pottery they sell, spread out over hundreds of meters. You'd like that. If you ever come back to Africa, you ought to make Katiola your headquarters."

Before I have a chance to reply, we are interrupted by Benoit, a Mossi whom I have treated and who has just recovered from a bout with pneumonia. He enters the tent thoroughly inebriated, sits down on the cot beside Adou, and stammers something totally incomprehensible in French. I stand up, shake hands with him, and maneuver him gently out

of the tent. He departs with a friendly farewell. Presumably this was a thank you visit to show his appreciation for my having treated him successfully.

**Adou:** “He’s completely drunk. People start drinking early in the morning, and then they don’t know what they’re saying. There’s no way to stop them. Benoit goes out to get palmwine before he even has breakfast. By midday he’s drunk as a lord and has no idea what he’s talking about.”

**Parin:** “Maybe you, too, are afraid of not knowing what you are talking about—like the woman who tells lies, or like Benoit. You were just telling me that I ought to go to Katiola. But right now I’m here, and there’s nothing you can do to get rid of me.”

**Adou:** (laughs, pauses for a moment, then goes on): “When I sleep well, I don’t have any dreams. It’s the dreams that always deceive me. In my dreams I see myself living in luxury. I am in a beautiful house, where there’s everything I could possibly wish for. Yes, that’s the truth—when I dream, I deceive myself.”

**Parin:** “Have you had any dreams lately?”

**Adou:** “Yes, I have. The day before yesterday. I dreamed about a huge shop—like the ones the Syrians have in the downtown section of Abidjan. It had all sorts of things for sale. It was beautiful to look at.

Sometimes I dream that I am in a car. I’m steering it—I know how to drive. Either I’m driving the car first, or I’m repairing it. Something is wrong with it and it won’t go. I fix it and drive off again.”

**Parin:** “These dreams of yours fulfill wishes.”

**Adou:** “Exactly. But whenever I dream of a young girl, even when she’s extremely young, it brings me bad luck. And that’s not good at all. A dream of that kind lasts all night. All I do is talk with the girl, and it goes on and on. It’s nice, and the girl is sweet, and I keep on talking with her. But it brings bad luck. I’ve learned that from experience.”

Because these dreams upset him, Adou had bought a book on the interpretation of dreams, and the book also said that dreams like his brought bad luck.

**Adou:** “The day I was sent away from school I had a dream like that.”

He tells me that he dreamed of the young girl three times, and that was a sign that something bad would happen to him at school.

**Adou:** “When I dream that I am driving a car, or that I’m sitting in a pirogue, that’s good. Then I can do anything I want; when I’m talking with girls, I can’t.”

**Parin:** “You’re afraid that something bad is going to happen, that you’re going to be dismissed from school. Then you dream of something pleasant, something you want to happen—like talking with a pretty girl, for example. But that’s something you’re not allowed to do. You mustn’t even do it when you’re awake, you’re afraid to. What happens at school is your punishment for having dared to talk with the girl.”

**Adou:** “Exactly the same thing happened in Agnibilekrou. I saw a young girl who was all alone. She was very young, and we spent the whole night together, talking. And the next day I got a failing mark on my essay. Before I knew it, I was two months behind in school, and I got further and further behind, and they told me I wouldn’t be allowed to continue. That all happened because of those dreams.”

**Parin:** “What can you tell me about this girl?”

**Adou:** “I just imagined her. I didn’t know her. She was very young, younger than I was at the time. But it brought me bad luck. I got a failing grade and was expelled from school. That dream went on the whole night, and the next day I failed on my essay.”

**Parin:** “It could easily be that your desire to have a girlfriend interfered with your schoolwork.”

**Adou:** “Swiss watches are very good. There are very thin ones—I’ve seen them in the shops. Yours is not so thin.”

**Parin:** "I understand. The conversation is beginning to embarrass you, and you think that since I am fortunate enough to possess such a good watch, I ought to take a look at it and stop talking. As a matter of fact, we've been at it for 55 minutes. Let's stop."

**Adou** (laughs): "See you tomorrow!"

Once I have finally succeeded in interpreting Adou's "European" identification, now clearly recognizable as a form of resistance, he shows me—with his tale about the children who were sold by their kidnapers—how alone and abandoned he himself feels. He is afraid of losing his self-control here with me (like that woman, or like the drunkard, Benoit) and is able to admit that I, as a white man, am incapable of understanding him, and that, since no understanding is possible, he wishes I would go away. Here it is impossible to decide whether it is my alien status—as a white—or the fears Adou has transferred to me that have contributed more to the development of his resistance.

Once he is able to express with impunity the "aggressive" wish that I should go away, he confides his dreams to me, i.e., a part of his life over which he has no control. He begins with the wish-fulfillment dreams (corresponding to the Freudian "childhood dreams") that compensate for his sad lot in life, and recognizes them for what they are. Probably he interprets my comment to the effect that these dreams express his wishes as permission to confide in me even more. Anxieties that are latent in his dreams can be overcome by means of dream-work; for example he is able to repair the car.

The dreams about "talking with a girl" which he tells me subsequently are clearly subject to a number of distortions. I restrict my interpretation to only one distortion—the fact that he views the dreams as portents and the misfortune that follows, i.e. his failure in school, as a magical consequence of the ill-omened dreams; I define the conflict that exists between his sexual desires and his duty to do well in his studies, and explain to him that his academic failure is a self-inflicted punishment for his forbidden desires.

The latent content of "we spent the whole night together, talking" may well be sexual. The "very young girls," whom he "does not know" could very well represent an older woman of his acquaintance, his mother, for instance, whom he longs for and whose sexual disturbances (with which he identifies) preoccupy his mind. But what I have learned thus far about Adou's personality makes it seem more likely that the "very young girl whom he does not know" stands for a "young boy whom he knows very well," and that "talking together" represents a

compromise between his fondness for younger children, his desire for companions of his own sex, and the anxiety-evoking homosexual desires that he has defended against.

It is impossible to decide which of these desires are reflected in his dreams. The fact that Adou takes the initiative to end the interview tells me that his resistance is increasing again.

During the interview reported here Adou has revealed something more—or rather corrected previous statements—of the story of his life and his illness. His academic failure did not begin in Bassam, where he probably did not attend a secondary school (“collège”) at all, but much earlier, in Agnibilekrou, when he was living with his foster father and failed to pass the final examination in the primary school. In fact, in Bassam he was presumably trying to complete his primary education. I assume that the fact that he first told me that he had graduated from primary school and had encountered his first difficulties at the “collège” in Bassam—in other words, that he had lied to me—reinforced his fear and thus contributed to the development of his resistance. Thus his failure in school and the onset of his illness (at the same time or later) took place at a time when he was not yet living far away from home and could still visit his parents. Since he attended school in Agnibilekrou until he was about fifteen or sixteen, his academic difficulties may have begun with puberty. It is not improbable that his foster father, parents, or teachers may have warned him against going with girls because it might interfere with his studies.

#### ELEVENTH INTERVIEW (2 MARCH 1966)

At the beginning of the hour, for the first time, Adou is in a state of confusion, something which happens repeatedly to other subjects (Jean-Pierre and Elisa, for example) when they talk with us. Though he articulates normally, his speech is incomprehensible, exhibiting the total disregard for grammar and syntax characteristic of “word salad.” His ability to comprehend is presumably reduced as well. He mentions that he has just come from Monsieur N.’s house. I do not understand which house he means, the one that is now under construction, or the house of Monsieur N.’s mother. He becomes confused and begins to stammer, like someone who has been caught in a lie. He mutters something about meals. As if to calm him, I inquire whether he does his own cooking or whether he has someone to cook for him. He replies: “That depends on you.”

After a few minutes Adou’s confusion subsides and he is able to speak normally once more. He remains tense, however, more nervous than I have ever known him to be before.

There is a good deal of excitement in the village today—the female shamans are going to dance. While we are talking in the tent, we can hear the sound of drums and excited conversation. A woman passes by, on her way out to the bush. Adou calls out to her: "You're going out to the bush today?" (It is a Wednesday, the day the spirits forbid people to work out in the bush.) She replies: "I couldn't care less. I'm a Christian." Adou turns to me: "The Attié," (normally Adou finds this neighboring people anything but congenial) ". . . they have no magicians. They pay no attention to that sort of thing. They're better off than we are." He pauses, then goes on: "Yesterday it almost rained. We get some very bad thunderstorms here. One time the wind blew off the tin roof of a house. The wind often comes during the night, and then it kills people; the houses are no protection . . . And what people eat here is not good, either; it can kill you . . ." In sentences that are barely coherent, he describes the uncanny and dangerous things that one is exposed to in Yosso.

On our way to the tent, Adou felt the urge to hug and kiss a child about one and a half years old. He explains: "Its mother neglected it. It was still crawling on its hands and knees. I taught it to walk."

The other, older children are getting on his nerves today. The feeble-minded boy is there; there is also a saucy five-year-old girl, and three other children. They tease him and he threatens them, rushing out of the tent as if to grab them. The children act as if they thought he was playing tag with them. He picks up a stick and shakes it at them, takes off his sandals, and pretends to throw them at them. The children scream: "You can't catch us! You can't run because you have feet that point backwards, like the spirits in the forest!"

Obviously it is Adou himself, with his nervousness and his anger, who is making the children so excited that they refuse to go away. The feeble-minded boy stands balancing on one leg; he has wound his scarf around his throat and masturbates, grinning fixedly at Adou.

Some 40 minutes later, we have still not succeeded in getting a sensible conversation started. I tell Adou that he is responsible for provoking the children and that he is using his anger to keep them here because he doesn't feel like talking with me—all to no effect. Suddenly he leaps to his feet and holds out a coin to the feeble-minded boy. The boy approaches and is about to take the money when Adou grabs him by the arm and drags him into the tent. He lays him across his knees and spansks him as hard as he can. He releases the little boy, who holds his smarting rear and asks me for some medicine for it, then departs. Adou, now calm and relaxed, lies down comfortably on the cot. He is silent.

Finally, I ask him what he is thinking about. He replies that he had gone fishing the day before with a small friend, evidently a boy of about five or six. They didn't go fishing on the Manzan River, or on the even