THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL LIFE

Ugandan Philosophical Studies, I

Edited by
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THE BACKGROUND

The papers in this collection are the result of a common endeavor by the department of philosophy of Makerere University. As participants in the task of nation building, its staff members wish to offer this collective contribution from their discipline towards a better understanding of the past, an improvement of the present, and a reliable perception of the future, encouraged in this latter objective by the motto of Makerere University, "We build for the future."[1] A substantial role in the fulfillment of this departmental plan was played by the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP), with its continuing seminars on "Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Life."[2] Its timely inspiration from its secretary Prof. George F. McLean coalesced the ideas and energies of the Makerere department of philosophy towards the accomplishment of this task. The theme, "Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Life," encouraged by the Council for RVP re-echoed a fundamental issue in African philosophy with which Makerere philosophers have felt strongly identified.

The realization of the project went through four stages. It began with department planning, when the general theme was appraised and evoked specific topics prompted by the current interests of African thought and life, within the specific context of Uganda; this first stage ended with every participant choosing a specific topic and the general approach to it, aware of the related choice by the other members of staff. The second stage consisted of a period of several weeks for the personal writing of the papers; as each of them was completed, it was made available to every staff member for analysis. The third stage comprised a series of staff seminars during which each paper was discussed for about three hours. The final stage was for the personal editing of the papers by their authors in the light of what had emerged from the seminar discussions.

The papers differ not only in the variety of their specific topics, but also in their approach. Each paper is characterized by a different perspective prompted by a particular branch of philosophy; thus, J.K. Kigongo and E. Wamala's perspective is mainly political and social philosophy, P. Kaboha's metaphysical, S.A. Mwanahewa's logical, Zubairi bin Nasseem's epistemological, A.T. Dalfovo's ethical, E.K.M. Beyaraaza's axiological. The common denominator of philosophy and the general theme bearing on the present life as a point of arrival of the past heritage, merges this topical and methodological variety into unity.

The papers' considerations are both specific and general, as the very nature of philosophy suggests. The specificity of the papers ensues from their being contextual to the Ugandan situation; the experience behind them is the stimulating history of Uganda, the composite heterogeneity of its people, its economic and political structures, its patterns of thought, and a variety of other specific aspects of Ugandan life. At the same time, these particular considerations are not intended as an end in themselves, but extend to vaster issues in an attempt to achieve a full understanding and find their final explanation. Aime Cesaire asserts that, "There are two ways to lose oneself: by segregation walled in the particular or by dilution in the universal."[3] As philosophers do, the authors of these papers try to break down the wall of the particular to avoid being segregated within their specific experiences; at the same time, they

strive to resist being diluted in the general and losing the identity of their issues and arguments. In this attempt at transcending a particular for a general vision of reality, the papers are not divorced from the specific context that prompts them, because philosophical generalizations need to be ever supported by detailed premises and related logical inferences. Thus, even though the papers are rooted in the Ugandan experience that supports their rationalization, several of their conclusions transcend this experience and apply to the African context and to humanity in general. In this way, the authors of these papers attempt to lead the way for all people to meet on the common platform of thought where divisive boundaries are known as prejudices, and as such are not supposed to exist.

Guided by their discipline, the writers of these papers try to bring the events they consider and the results of their analysis into a structured holistic solution. A partial analysis of problems leads to their partial solution of them; as philosophy attempts an integral solution of problems, it strives for a comprehensive approach. Furthermore, the integral approach appears to be demanded by the present trend of analysis. The challenging conditions of Uganda have received qualified and competent attention by several analysts. One may recall, by way of example, some of the latest publications in this connection: *Beyond Crisis, Development Issues in Uganda.* by P.D. Wiebe and C.P. Dodge, 1987;[4] *War, Violence, and Children in Uganda*, by C.P. Dodge and M. Raundalen, 1987;[5] *The Roots of Instability in Uganda*, by S.R. Karugire, in 1988;[6] *Uganda Now*, by H.B. Hansen and M. Twaddle, in 1988;[7] *Conflict Resolution in Uganda*, by K. Rupesinghe, in 1989.[8] These contributions are sustained by the specific interests of the social sciences. Interesting and necessary though this particular type of approach is, it nevertheless needs to be supplemented by an attempt at a holistic vision of the issues involved with a view to contributing toward an integral solution. The demand by many social scientists that solutions to problems be radical needs to be completed by the observation that a solution cannot be radical unless it is also integral, for a solution cannot reach the roots of a problem (as "radical " implies) unless it considers all aspects of it (as "integral" implies).

THE PAPERS

Zubairi bin Nasseem's paper, "African Heritage and The Contemporary Life: An Experience of Epistemological Change," attempts to elucidate some epistemological aspects of traditional African philosophy. It also inquires into some epistemological changes that have occurred in the African experience throughout its history up to the present time.

The paper explains how the knowing process in Africa has undergone tremendous changes; at the same time, important aspects of traditional experience have survived into contemporary times. The new and the old exist in some interconnectedness. This "existential" fact calls for interthinking, which is germane to an inter-disciplinary endeavor crucially necessary in "our" contemporary life. Otherwise the "ours" may tend to emphasize the "we," to the detriment of benefitting from the view-point of the "other."

Towards realizing a better understanding of each other and a tolerant coexistence, attention is drawn to the fact that some of the problems of knowledge today arise from the crisis of paradigm. When analyzing the epistemological changes that have occurred in the African heritage, one sees that these are due partly to the fact that the Euro-African meeting is really a collision of a science-paradigm with an intuitive-paradigm. If one adds to these two the revealed-paradigm of Islam which preceded the European intrusion into Africa, one ends with the challenge of "The Triple Heritage."

The paper concludes by stressing the fact of these traditions. Therefore a resolution of this epistemological crisis lies in nurturing the three cultural-philosophical traits into a federation of world-cultures.

E. Wamala's paper, "The Social Political Philosophy of Traditional Buganda Society: Breaks and Continuity into the Present," discusses the issue of continuity and change in the area of social and political philosophy as traditional Buganda society moves into the post-independence era. Much of what is said about Buganda is representative of many African societies in transition.

First, the concept "traditional African society" is analyzed, and it is pointed out that this can refer to African societies as they were in the past (historical perspective) or to contemporary rural communities where ancient social and political values and practices still hold (contemporary perspective). Traditional African societies in this paper has been used in the former sense.

Discussion of the nature of democratic practice in traditional Buganda necessitates elucidation of the structure of its traditional form of government, found to be a limited monarchy with hereditary rulers. It is argued that this institution of hereditary rulers ensures smooth transfer of power and hence stability and political continuity. This social and political fact contrasts very sharply with what the paper terms the "open door policy", where today every citizen by virtue of his citizenship qualifies for the "monarchy," but often comes to this with incongruous political ideologies that result in a "legitimation crisis."

The paper further points out how the idea of consensus was central to the understanding of democracy in the traditional set-up where citizens took part in the discussions whatever their social rank in the political hierarchy. Consensus had to be sought. The remark, "People talked and talked, but they agreed," summarizes the ideal. The consensus so reached became binding as transgression of it was taboo. The author then explains how much of this ideal has been lost largely due to transplanting Western social and political models and practices, particularly the western style political parties which come to Africa with all their inherent problems.

In the area of justice, Wamala argues that was the concern of all citizens. Because of this, any wrong doing was always promptly punished. Justice in the modern period has become legalistic and over institutionalized, with a marked prevalence of lawyers, law courts, police--all law enforcement agencies working at a distance. When present cases of corruption, mob-justice, violence, etc. have to be explained, they will be explained against the background of new and often strange institutions whose employment of "experts" has alienated the masses.

Finally, the break away from the traditional social and political philosophy has an explanation in the effects of colonialism and neocolonialism, in the turbulent economic situation, and in the sheer demands of emerging nationalism.

S.A. Mwanahewa's paper, "African Logical Heritage and Contemporary Life: The Cogency in `Kinyankore Orature', Focusing on Proverbs," analyses the specific philosophical aspect of logic in the cultural heritage of the Banyankore, a people of Uganda. Logic is a branch of philosophy that is fundamental not only to philosophy, but to other disciplines as well; in fact several universities consider logic as a necessary component of all sciences. In African life and centers of learning, logic is equally fundamental, drawing its *raison d'être* from within African culture. S.A. Mwanahewa shows that the roots of logic within an African context are to be found within its cultural heritage; from these roots, the lymph of African logic can pass to vitalize the thought of the rest of humanity.

The paper elaborates on the complementary relation between logic and orature (the skills of listening and speaking) in the sense that not only do both disciplines share methodological characteristics, further, orature also has the capacity to improve the approach of logic as a discipline.

The author then shows how orature portrays the cultural heritage not only pragmatically but also logically. Moreover evidence is brought to prove that while logic uses premises and a conclusion in order to establish the cogency of an argument, an illiterate cultural community obtains the same purpose by using other oral expressions. The two approaches serve the same end and could actually be developed to enrich each other. Hence, there emerges the need to blend logic and orature emerges. This implies the urgent need to attend to the African cultural heritage which is in the process of vanishing with the departure of illiterate elders.

The discussion in the paper is supported by one specific aspect of orature, namely the Kinyankore proverbial expressions. Such expressions guarantee, among others the authenticity of the language and propositions being logically analyzed. Proverbial expressions are used to show that logic can use the scientific and the artistic approaches to establish the cogency in arguments. The ensuing suggestion is that logic should blend its exclusive "scientific" approach and consider also the artistic contribution in its methodology.

Finally, the relation between orature and logic can support the interaction between illiterate and literate communities in the world at the fundamental level of verbal expression and patterns of thought, thus serving the purpose of unity and understanding among humans. This is a challenge to logicians in particular.

J.K. Kigongo considers "The Concepts of Individuality and Social Cohesion: A Perversion of Two African Cultural Realities." Among the different aspects of human life, political, economic and social, there is a false attempt in contemporary Africa to reclaim some fundamental realities of traditional African thought which have a positive influence so as to allow continuity in the development.

The imposition of colonial rule, particularly its educational aspect, and the emergence of the neo-colonial state, broke Africa, though not totally, from a fundamental reality of social cohesion imbedded in tribal societies and built essentially upon respect for individual human freedom.

In modern Africa, on the other hand, there is a claim among political guardians to build a cohesive harmonious society at the national level. The building is based, however, on measures that are inherently coercive, thus negating human freedom. The claim is mere political propaganda, rather than a real intention; this is a corruption of the thought in traditional society.

This manipulation, however, has provoked a crisis between the state and the subject (the ruled), the latter willing restoration of the *status quo* of the traditional society where social cohesion was voluntary or based on the will of individuals, rather than upon the will of the state.

The paper intends to explain and analyze the revolutionary process and to show the perversion of the two realities, the process involving the traditional society, the colonial stage. Due to this perversion there is lack of continuity.

P. Kaboha's study of "African Metaphysical Heritage and Contemporary Life - A Study of African Contribution to Contemporary Life" considers the role of metaphysical concepts in traditional African life, specifically the fundamental one of integration. The author explains how traditional society in Africa does not consciously separate the various aspects of life and social behavior into compartments or treat them as possible areas of study or contemplation. All areas of life are seen and treated as parts of an integrated whole which also includes nature. Traditionally, the person has an integrated relationship with society and nature through both

experiential and intellectual knowledge by which the person is fully integrated with life and with his own identity. This life experience of one generation is added to that of the preceding generations and handed down as "social wisdom."

In considering whether this integration with nature and the metaphysical intuition arising from it, is of any value to modern man, the paper recalls the artificial environment in which modern man lives, and his artificial relation to it; these create the premises of disaster. Such disastrous premises can already be seen, for instance, in genetic engineering and in the threats to the ecology. Modern man's over-eagerness to dominate has led him into a confused condition of slavery to the very goods he has manufactured, including intellectual goods. The relation of man to himself, to society and to nature is thus disintegrated.

Philosophers have tried to revive the flagging spirit of man against this onslaught, but human cupidity has had the best, penetrating philosophy as well. Metaphysics and ethics went out of fashion in most European and American universities; in many cases, metaphysics and ethics not only were *not* philosophy but they were palpable nonsense. Philosophy became a "Science" of language.

In African terms, this is the crisis of the person who has broken away from his roots and is living a new life supported by artificial systems in a cultural and metaphysical vacuum. What African philosophy suggests to the Western-oriented person is some humility by which to seek himself again and find his place in a integrated ecology of body, mind and spirit. Traditionally, the African does not seek to control or to manipulate nature by establishing his power over it; rather he seeks his best to integrate with it. This is not a condemnation of science, but a statement that development must be integrated; which is like saying that, if man takes a leap technologically, he must take a similar leap morally and spiritually; lest he pursue his own destruction. Modern man must then stop to reconsider why he prefers byproducts to life's essentials.

A.T. Dalfovo's paper on "Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Life, The Moral Continuum" begins from the fact of national heterogeneity and from the experience of colonial coercion. Colonial coercion has marred the nation at its beginning, preventing the formation and development of a national moral consensus. The moral values in national life have been fundamentally those ensuing from traditional societies.

Moral values in the life of an individual or a society may be challenged by some exceptional condition or crisis. Such a crisis needs to be perceived in order to provoke the envisaged reassessment of morality, for without an awareness of the crisis there can be no reaction to it. In Ugandan history a typical instance of such critical experience was colonialism; but the amount of public awareness of the moral crisis provoked by it is not easy to establish; public awareness seems to have been drawn to the political rather than to the moral crisis. There is a need to assess the moral crisis of colonialism.

The moral codes of traditional societies show considerable uniformity in their prescriptive variety. For this uniformity to become consensus, awareness and appropriation are needed. Uniformity in fact indicates the possibility of consensus, but consensus has to be acquired. A foundation of this uniformity appears to lie in the concept of a common humanity; an awareness of this could provide consensus and ultimately the moral continuum from the cultural heritage to contemporary life.

The history of Uganda testifies to the existence of a social heterogeneity coercively impinged upon by a tendency to homogeneity. The pervasiveness of this coercion has not yet been fully realized or assessed; this could be one of the reasons for its persistence to the present.

If the challenge of the moral crisis is met in pluralism and by reference to a common humanity vis-a-vis national characteristics and culture, then contemporary life will link to the cultural heritage through the continuum of a moral consensus.

E.K.M. Beyaraaza considers "Cultural Differences and Value Clashes in African Cities." Though his considerations bear on the African city in general, the initial experience of the author refers to the city in Uganda. Urban centers pose one of the strongest challenges to contemporary life in Africa, particularly because of the cultural differences they bring so close together and hence of the value clashes they precipitate. The city both influences and is influenced by the rural areas where urban dwellers sink their roots. Thus, the city crowns a complex set of dichotomies experienced by the African; this induces the fundamental question of identity: "What sort of people are we as individuals?" (A.L. Bukenya).

The paper explains the problematic role of colonialism in the history of the African city. The author then poses the crucial question concerning what philosophy can contribute in solving the cultural dichotomy synthesized in urban centers. Inspired by the approach of, among others, Chinua Achebe and Kwasi Wiredu, the author avoids the either-or solution, namely total acceptance of one side and total rejection of the other. Instead, the author opts for "selecting values and cultural practices from both sides basing ourselves on the *worth* of what we select." Philosophy plays a fundamental role in this selection. "What philosophy can do for Africans as regards the problems raised in this paper is to help them understand basic issues and resolve their differences, among other problems, through vigorous thinking or reflection." This philosophic exercise concerns all the people, as "any mentally healthy person is capable of philosophizing"; also the contribution of professional philosophers goes to the people, for what they write is not limited to philosophers, but is read in all directions and at various levels of understanding, and thus influences the people.

The African mind has always been at work even under the most trying conditions of slavery and struggle. Today such a situations of coercion would appear to be less conditioning, which motivates a more robust philosophical activity. This note on freedom leads to the conclusion that philosophy needs to be supplemented by a committed leadership for healthy social interaction, within which to solve cultural differences and value clashes.

THE ISSUES

The issues highlighted by the papers are many; attempting to summarize them here probably would lead to an oversimplification resulting in a loss of accuracy. What can be attempted instead is to relate them to what appears to be a common denominator. This is going to lead to some metaphysical considerations, which are not intended to be the only perspective from which these papers and their issues may be reviewed. In fact, each paper has its philosophical and methodological identity; only one of them is identified as metaphysical in its approach. The attempt here is simply to correlate the various issues highlighted by the papers in a comprehensive view, which, in philosophical terms, generally is described as metaphysical.

The theme: cultural heritage and contemporary life prompts the papers to recall a series of crucial dichotomies from general ones like past and present, to specific ones such as urban and rural. Each paper comes to grips with several of them. These dichotomies seem actually to constitute the main challenge in each paper, leading in one way or another to the fundamental metaphysical dualism of being and becoming, of permanence and change.

Past heritage and present life impels one to look back for permanence and stability, and to look forward for change and development. Each paper undertakes its analysis from a different philosophical perspective, but all papers converge more or less explicitly on metaphysical considerations referring to being and becoming, permanence and change.

In "ordinary" circumstances, the relation of permanence and change generally is perceived only by minds that are critically alert; but in the present "extraordinary" conditions of change almost any observer recognizes the lopsided relation of permanence and change. E.K.M. Beyaraaza's appraisal of the people's philosophy is here to the point. Today everybody is under the impression that everything is always changing. Elders in particular find this situation confusing because the tempo of "outer" change does not allow the adaptation of one's "inner" self. It seems that one's mental categories, value judgements, and world vision are ever behind the "outer" context in which one lives: the concept lags behind the experience. Consequently, one with no "inner" leadership and no clear sense of purpose obviously is bewildered and confused.

Hence, the metaphysical issue of being and becoming does not refer only to the "outer" reality, but it also bears on one's "inner" aspect in both one's individual and social dimensions. One wants to be oneself, yet one wants to change; one wants stability, and also development; one wants to be identified with both aspects, which at the same time appear contrasting.

The problem ultimately is one of identity with metaphysical roots. The dual challenge of being and becoming, permanence and change surfaces most critically in any problem of identity, whether personal or communal. African writers have elaborated on it quite extensively. "The sense of being `double', `a split personality', of being `half', is probably felt by most Africans, for they are a people of `two cultures', `two morals', `two value systems', and `two worlds'."[9] This (present) split is between a (past) memory of tradition and a (future) perspective of modernity; between adhesion to "traditional" stability and opening to "modern" change; between being (past-present) and becoming (present-future).

Personal identity "in philosophy is the unity of the person projected in time and, therefore, the persisting of the person itself, with unmistakable characteristics, in the vicissitudes of experience."[10] Within this understanding, the person constitutes a unity that lasts in time, a being that continues as such in his temporal becoming. This description does not allude to the social aspect of identity, even though this may be perceived implicitly. The contemporary problem of personal identity in Uganda, as anywhere else, demands explicit attention to the social or communal identity, because the problem of identity seems to be above all in the person-group relation.[11] Personal identity cannot be solved without reference to a specific group; one needs to know which group one belongs to in order to know who he is. "Identity is lasting inner sameness and continuity, as well as a lasting participation in certain specific group character traits; it therefore included a reciprocal relation between the core of the individual and membership of a group."[12]

J.K. Kigongo's paper offers a clear contribution to the relation between individual and society in the African context, against any perversion that may arise either from outside as typified by colonialism, or from inside as exemplified by political manipulation.

Personal identity demands that the dichotomy past-present merge into one expression of individual and social life. The need for this merger is elaborated by all papers; they try to establish and to analyze the continuum in the life of the community and of the individual, proposing ways by which the past and the present can be merged rather than merely combined. This continuity is variously considered by the papers: for p. Kaboha it is to be found in

metaphysical integration, for E. Wamala in political blending, for J.K. Kigongo in genuine heritage, for A.T. Dalfovo in the ethical continuum, for Zubairi bin Nasseem in epistemological ecumenism, for E.K.M. Beyaraaza in a selective axiology, for S.A. Mwanahewa in a logical relation.

The role of metaphysics in all this needs to be assessed against the two attitudes to metaphysics present in Uganda as in other societies. One attitude ensues from the contemporary trend, particularly evident in British philosophy, by which metaphysics is irrelevant. In Uganda, this attitude seems to be found rather in those whose philosophical interests are secondary to their professional activity. The other attitude derives from the Ugandan heritage, within which there are no difficulties in dealing with the transcendent aspect of metaphysics and in addressing oneself to the ultimate foundation of reality. This attitude is generally in those Ugandans whose primary field of interest is philosophy. P. Kaboha's paper stresses this latter attitude, elaborating on the African world-view which postulates an integrated vision of reality. Several other thinkers have expanded on this metaphysical foundation of African philosophy. Pobee, for instance, lists three principles that govern the African vision of the world: the unity between the visible and the invisible worlds; the essentially harmonic relation with others; the existence of hidden forces, and the consciousness of one's own limits before them.[13] For the African, "all opposites form one living, unitary and inseparable reality."[14] He does not eliminate contrasting elements in his search for unity, but views them in harmony.

This vision allows all issues envisaged by the papers to be duly considered, without prejudice or favor; this comprehensive possibility is particularly important when one is faced with a variety of contrasting dualisms that seem to be tearing apart every aspect of existence, splitting the very identity of the person. The integrated vision from African metaphysics allows the person and the community to build a cohesive entity where freedom and coercion, unity and diversity, past and present, and every other dichotomous aspect is duly considered and harmoniously placed vis-a-vis the rest of reality. Nation building would thus result in a society that is integrated in its logical, epistemological, axiological, and political aspects from its metaphysical foundations to its ethical expressions, as the papers in this collection emphasize. S.A. Mwanahewa adds that considerations of reason and logic would actually allow this integration to extend to the entire globe.

A major difficulty in this task devolves from the complexity of the field in which it needs to be fulfilled. As all papers have explained, the present situation of Uganda draws not only from her inner cultural heritage, but also from outer international influences. These inner and outer components of contemporary life are intermingled in some more or less successful and accepted synthesis. This predicament affects philosophy as well and in assessing it one needs to appraise all sides with fairness; but the point being made here is to focus on the problematic aspect of outer influences vis-a-vis philosophical trends from the inner heritage. In this connection, the outer component in the philosophical field in Uganda manifests the ascendancy of positivism, the influence of the analytic approach, the mystification of scientific methodology, the material concept of development, the secondary importance of humanities, and a relativism in ethics. With philosophy as unimportant and metaphysics as irrelevant, and with morality as privatized and epistemology as relative, the solution to the present problems is along a reductionist and fragmented line.

On the other hand, and as mentioned above, the inner component of philosophy, drawing from the heritage of the nation contributes a vision that accepts the whole spectrum of philosophy from metaphysics to ethics. It privileges harmony rather than contrasts, and what

integrates rather than what excludes. The strong humanitarian aspect of African philosophy encourages a central position for the person, and thus a primary role for ethics. The African philosopher seeks an authentic expression of his thought from the inner component of his reality; at the same time he cannot avoid the challenge of outer influences. With regard to the Ugandan context in particular, one may notice how the endurance of the country's problems that appear to defy solutions challenges an increasing number of intellectuals to consider issues from a comprehensive and deeper point of view, drawing from their own heritage. This latent search for philosophical answers that could lead, in E. Wamala's projection, to a new culture resulting from a blend of old and new.

Notwithstanding the above intricate philosophical field, specifically its outer component, philosophers in Uganda are not on a guided tour of issues and arguments, either from within or from without. The papers in this collection are a humble but clear testimony to the autonomy of thought their authors pursue. The issues that characterize African philosophy are freely discussed within an independent intellectual framework indicating how philosophical arguments must lead to what is logically necessary, and not to what may be in any other way expedient. To some readers, these papers may recall ancient Greek philosophy, when the simplicity of truth disturbed the complexity of appearance, and when the arguments of reason confronted the interests of ignorance. African philosophy continues, in Zubairi bin Nasseem's words, between the "flux of ontological dialectics" and the "demand for axiological peace."

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NOTES

1. From the Latin *Pro Futuro Aedificamus* that the University originally used.
2. Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP), the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. 20064, USA.
3. A.J. Smet, (ed.), *Philosophie Africaine*, Textes Choisis II, (Kinshasa: Presses Universitaires du Zaire, Kinshasa, 1975), p. 411.
4. P.D. Wiebe, and C.P. Dodge, *Beyond Crisis, Development Issues in Uganda*, (Kampala: MISR, Makerere University, 1987.
5. C.P. Dodge, and M. Raundalen, (eds.), *War, Violence and Children in Uganda* (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, Oslo, 1987.
6. S.R. Karugire, *The Roots of Instability in Uganda* (Kampala: The New Vision Printing and Publishing Corporation, 1988).
7. H.R. Hansen, and M. Twaddle, (eds.), *Uganda Now, Between Decay and Development*, (Nairobi, Heinemann, 1988).
8. K. Rupesinghe, ed., *Conflict Resolution in Uganda.* (International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, in association with James Currey (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989).
9. C.M. Mwikamba, "A Search for an African Identity?", First International Regional Conference, Mombasa, 23-27 May 1988, p. 1. The `falling apart' in this quotation echoes Nigerian Chinua Achebe's book, *Things Fall Apart*, published in 1958.
10. *Enciclopedia Filosofica*, (Gallarate: Edipem 1979), s.v. "Identita Personale" (by M.L. Falorni).

11. "Erikson regards the search for identity as the major problem of the contemporary west. The majority of patients who come for psychoanalytic treatment are sick in a way unknown to the founders of psycho-analysis. . . . Patients of the early analysis were men who had no fundamental doubts about their proper place in society. . . . They belonged to coherent groups which endorsed their inner convictions and expectations." F.B. Welbourn, *Religion and Politics in Uganda*, (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1985), p. 49.

12. B. Stoeckle, *Concise Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, (London: Burns and Oates, 1979), s.v. "Identity" by L. Fleisher, p. 138.

13. J.S. Pobee, *Towards an African Theology*, (Nashville: Abingdom, 197)9, pp. 43-45.

14. E.A. Ruch and K.C. Anyanwu, *African Philosophy*, (Roma: Officium Libri Catholici, 1984), p. 87.

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CHAPTER I

AFRICAN HERITAGE AND CONTEMPORARY LIFE:
An Experience of Epistemological Change

ZUBAIRI `b. NASSEEM

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The purpose of this paper is firstly to elucidate some epistemological aspects of the African heritage; secondly, to examine some epistemological changes that have occurred in the African experience through the passage of time, from the classical to the contemporary; and thirdly, to suggest tentatively though, how some of the aspects of this epistemological African heritage may be nurtured for fusion with other contributions of non-African heritages. This fusion of philosophical traditions is envisaged in light of acculturation and enculturation in sociological conditions of diversities. The paper sees such a philosophic synthesis as necessary for liberating some of the modern minds from the contemporary philosophy of ethnocentrism.

In fact most of the contemporary problems of human, inter-state, inter-racial and inter-national relations arise due to either ignorance of or unsympathetic regard for the views of the "Other." Ofelia Schuttle puts the point in its right perspective by asserting:

> If philosophy is the love of wisdom, then its function cannot be merely to reproduce the discourse and assumptions of the established powers. On the contrary, its function is to penetrate through to the other side and to create favorable conditions for the Other to come forward and express concerns, cares, disquietudes, and aspirations. In this process of recognizing and respecting the oppressed Other, the legitimacy of the Other's discourse must first be established.[1]

Classical Background

Archaeological (particularly paleontological) studies have suggested that the origin of man may have been in Africa. While these conclusions are not absolute assertions, Africa may, in the light of the available evidence, be regarded as the mother habitat of the humans. Africa may be the paleontologist's (earthly) "Garden of Eden." Though this "Garden of Eden is in disrepair, much of the natural beauty is still there . . . but the scars of the original sin are in evidence."[2]

On this continent, the humans have gone through a long history of evolution. The march through the several millennia of its existence has been characterized by a lot of thinking, a lot of doing, hence a lot of reflection and self-reflection. Consequently much experience has been transmitted from one generation to another. Generally many achievements and failures "have, however, been preserved through the remains of bones, tools, weapons, and later customs, languages, oral tradition, rock-paintings, the art of writing and so on."[3]

These material and non-material achievements and failures have constituted the heritage of Africa. This is a heritage that has always defied mental abstraction and so as a concrete reality, it ". . . forms a long line which links African forefathers with their descendants . . ."[4] The link has been more than just a chronological continuity. Apart from being a historical cord, the heritage as in the traditional past, was an intra-societal connective along both the horizontal and vertical dimensions. It was the media-culture in which members of the same society related to one another. It was the social medium in which various societies interacted either peacefully in agriculture and trade, hunting and gathering, marriage and divorce, birth and death ceremonies,

or violently in executing collective policies of the armed kinsmen. These were policies for nation-building but at times they were policies for military aggrandizement, plunder and raid.

These different and sometimes contradictory forms of interaction produced a heritage expressing all dimensions of human existence. The heritage is Africa's grand contribution to the contemporary sea of humanity's existence and his struggle for survival and perfection. The variegated aspects of this contribution (heritage) range 1) from art's aesthetic to its value as information brochure, 2) from political experiences of evolution and revolution to economic stability and problems of resource allocation, 3) from the historical tension between social philosophers' demand for collectivity to the retreating self of the artist, and 4) from reason's perennial stubbornness to seek explanation to the heart's deep-seated trust for the stable. Put together, all these contributions elicited an explanation and further inquiry from the African.

Explanation and inquiry presuppose knowing or assuming certain preliminary premises. Hence some of the fundamental questions that confronted the contemporary student of African heritage are: How did the African know? What did he think he could know? How did he think he could know? Strictly, these questions really belong to the domain of epistemology.[5]

THE PHENOMENAL CHARACTER

In the introduction, an allusion was made to the sociological diversities and therefore cultural pluralism in Africa. Nevertheless a multiplicity of the phenomenal does not inhibit an epistemology. We still can speak of "African epistemology." Such a univocal term draws from the ontological unity beneath the phenomenal. Therefore a cultural thematic approach, rather than phenomenological approach may elucidate relatively similar epistemological experiences in traditional Africa. This relative similarity arises from the metaphysical oneness of the classical African past.

The discussion in this paper may appear rather contradictory, namely an ontological unity in spite of diversities. As a matter of fact resolution of such a philosophical conflict in African heritage does not call for a resort to "reductio ad absurdum," for it is not a logical contradiction. The issue is really one of different stages.

Hence, whereas, ontologically we admit of unity, both phenomenologically and by cultural thematics, it is admissible, as John S. Pobee has observed:

> that *homo Africanus* is a multi-headed hydra, displaying varieties not only vis-a-vis the non-African but also vis-a-vis other species of homo Africanus.[6]

Consequently, the same author goes ahead to state:

> The number of distinct languages is well above eight hundred . . . There are at least four major stocks of languages in Africa: Afroasiatic, Niger-Congo (formerly known as West Sudanic), Sudanic and Click. There are at least three cultural groups: Caucasoids, Negroids and Hamites.[7]

These diverse cultural linguistic features have evolved through time, greatly conditioned by the "shrinking of the world" due to improved communication. since the change of a heritage is a slow process, some relics of the traditional epistemology still persist. But what characterizes this traditional aspect of thought? And from where does it (African epistemology) start?

The Starting-point

The starting-point of an epistemology is a controversial issue in the history of philosophy. Without digressing too much, we wish to briefly point out that in the contemporary European philosophy epistemology is said to have started from the rationalist Descartes' postulate, "cogito ergo sum" - "I think, therefore I am." Later European epistemologists took up their arguments from this dictum, either by affirmation (in the case of rationalists) or by denial (in the case of empiricists). Most recently we have philosophers of Western existentialist tradition. For them epistemology starts from the postulate, "I rebel, therefore I am."[8] But according to Senghor, Negro-African epistemology starts from the premise, "I *feel*, therefore I am."[9]The poet-philosopher holds the view that the African "does not realize that he thinks; he feels that he feels, he feels his *existence*, he feels himself."[10] Regrettably Senghor's views are really a reflection of his European scholarship. His philosophy of the emotive self is typical of French romanticism that has for long not only dominated French art, literature and philosophy but also captured the heart of the colonized African intellectuals.[11]

The starting-point of African epistemology, traditionally speaking should be the premise, "We are, therefore I am." The African philosophy is a collective mind and for the African, "I" pre-supposes a "We," in fact "I" is contingent upon "We." This starting-point of African epistemology is rooted in the ontology. The link between epistemology and ontology in the African heritage is not unique. Such a link is not only essential to the subject but also necessary in so far as

> metaphysics is necessary for art, morality, religion, economics, sociology; for the abstract sciences, as well as for every branch of human endeavor considered from one practical angle. It is the foundation upon which one builds one's career consciously and unconsciously; it is the guide; the author of the human's interests; upon its truth or falsity depends what type of man you may develop into.[12]

In the words of an African philosopher can he found "the singular and unique importance of African ontology in the overall treatment and understanding of African philosophy."[13]

Therefore the epistemological view of the traditional African is consonant with his metaphysics. Whereas for the western thinker "being" is "that which is" or "the thing insofar as it is," for the African "being" is "that which is force" or "the thing insofar as it is force." Hence being is inconceivable without it being force or inherently endowed with force. There is thus in-built motion. Of course the Supreme Force, the Supreme Agent of motion here is God.

Therefore the view adopted by African epistemology is that knowledge is (the) understanding of the nature of forces and their (cosmic) interaction. True wisdom, hence knowledge, "lies in ontological knowledge; it is the intelligence of forces, of their hierarchy, their cohesion and their interaction."[14] Just as we had noted that God is the Supreme Force, the Supreme Agent of motion, He

> is also wisdom in that He knows all forces, their ordering, their dependence, their potential and their mutual interaction. A person is said to know or have wisdom in as much as he approaches divine wisdom. One approaches divine knowledge when one's flesh becomes less fleshy . . . i.e., the older a person gets, the more wisdom he has.[15]

This is the metaphysical rationale for the authority of the aged in African epistemology. It may serve to explain what Kwasi Wiredu has charged as "authoritarianism." Authoritarianism may be anachronistic in political and broad cultural sense. In the case of epistemology it is a feature that seems to predominate even the contemporary institutions of learning. In the modern parlance, it is often rationalized by the term "experience" in its stead. Otherwise, traditionally the authoritarianism of the old or the aged provided the solidity, which solidity today comes about as a result of having seen more than one has read.[16]

To justify the case for epistemological authoritarianism, we may ironically revert to Kwasi Wiredu. He has rightly observed the concept in its historical perspective, bearing in mind the contemporaneous nature of the term:

> Traditional society was founded on a community of shared beliefs in the wisdom of age, the sanctity of chieftaincy and the binding force of the customs and usages of our ancestor. It cannot be assumed, therefore, that traditional systems of authority, both formal and informal, must have been felt to be authoritarian within the traditional milieu itself.[17]

Change in the contemporary milieu calls for a reassessment of the epistemological status of this authoritarianism. After all, for the traditional and modern African the knowledge-process has undergone tremendous changes through history, while some relics of traditional experience have survived. Old and the new modes of thought have influenced one another both in method and value. The interconnectedness of the new and old requires a logical and rational scrutiny of the evermore complex problems of the contemporary man. This task requires what I will call "interthinking."

Here we should clarify two key terms: "interconnectedness" and "interthinking." The former is the relation between ontology and epistemology (and in the case of this paper it is especially in philosophy); the latter is the conscious realization of this relation in time and space.

The former is a prerequisite for understanding a people's philosophy by transcending the phenomenal limits of the ethnologist. Cultural thematics attempts just this and it even goes beyond the limits set by the phenomenologist. It is in the light of this nexus that we understand a people's (African's) philosophy. As K.C. Anyanwu lucidly puts it:

> We must know the basic assumptions, concepts, theories and world-view in terms of which the owners of the culture interpret the facts of experience. Without the knowledge of the African mind process and the world-view into which the facts of experience are to be fitted both the African and European researchers would merely impute emotive appeals to cultural forms and behavior suggested by some unknown mind.[18]

Interthinking provides the medium by which interdisciplinary intercourse and human interaction across accidental boundaries can be realized. A student of logic at Makerere University once observed that interthinking corrects the imbalance that has been perpetuated by the separation of the traditional epistemology and logic from the modern mode of rational, or critical, epistemology. It will also correct the imbalance by recasting the traditional authority that hitherto had held together the society. This is really where interthinking will give a modern solution to what otherwise would appear to be anachronistic. A reference to Kwasi Wiredu may

elucidate this point. He observes that the influence of authoritarianism as a traditional feature has waned in the urban areas, (hence in the contemporary cultural condition). "It is in these changed circumstances that the traditional culture is increasingly felt to be authoritarian. lt may be said, thus* that the particular phenomenon of authoritarianism touched upon in :he foregoing remarks is also an instance of an anachronism."[19] The author proceeds thus:

> Paradoxically the authoritarianism mentioned above is closely connected with one of the strongest points of our culture, namely, the great value it places on what we might call communal belonging.[20]

In the African epistemology, interthinking is germane to the (philosophical) inquiry. Its importance ranges from interdisciplinary discourse to its definitive role in the paradigmatic horizon. As K.C. Anyanwu once again reminds us:

> . . . it is impossible within the African cultural reality and experience to speak of art as if it were detached from religion; religion as if it were detached from mythology and speculative thought; speculative thought as if it were detached from mythical feelings and these feelings as if they were detached from moral principles and political ideas.[21]

In the African situation, it is important that interthinking assume, *inter alia*, a temporal character; viz., there is need to undertake a temporal voyage from the classical past to the present. An allusion was made to the vicissitudes of history. The historical changes distorted much of the fabric of African society, along with its pattern of knowledge and search for knowledge. Thus the required interthinking takes into consideration the choice of pattern.

THE PROBLEM OF THE PARADIGM

The search for knowledge is inherent in man. What separates or identifies man from other animals who also are believed to have intelligence is self-reflection which includes curiosity to discover both the self and that beyond the self. This must occur in a definite paradigm--most specifically an epistemological paradigm. Since epistemology as a specialized discipline is really a result of the Western academic tradition, there is the danger of stating the Western view as if it were the African one. As we deal with African epistemology, it is pertinent to realize:

> We are therefore entering into a cultural world whose philosophy of integration, whose principles of understanding and of aesthetic continuum differ completely from the Western ideas of what constitutes the trustworthy knowledge and reality.[22]

In view of this, an elucidation of paradigm is essential. The classical African philosophy postulates a concrete existence of "man and nature." In African tradition there are "two entities" only by "conceptual numericality," not by separate ontological existence; their bifurcation is impossible. Therefore neither man nor nature could be desecrated. Moreover, in this sacred unity man and nature participate in the same locus without being opposites. So, like ethics among most traditional societies, epistemology really is inseparable from religious cosmology; there is neither a cosmology of a conventional type nor a cosmogony of a single source.

The all-inclusive role of the traditional religious cosmology provides room for the transcendental being in the epistemic experience and in the making of the cognitive content and structure of the African mind. In traditional African cosmology the divine partakes in the process of informing man either directly (through the `dreams' of the sages) or by signs such as happenings in man's life.

Since the African cosmology postulates "a unitary as opposed to analytical world,"[23] the traditional epistemology does not approach the problem of knowledge by dividing its domain into the rational, empirical and mystical. In both the intellectual and the concrete divisions of reality, the three traits of thought-- rational, empirical and mystical--constitute a single mode of knowing. Unlike the western science paradigm that is over-laden with methodological and mathematical formulations, the traditional African paradigm transcends the outer reaches of formal logic. This supralogical feature of the African tradition has the strength of acknowledging the irreducible mystery of the transcendent, which, however incongruent, plays a role in African traditional epistemology rather akin or analogous to that of revelation in Islamic epistemology. It also plays a role similar to that played by the transcendental in modern Kantian and post-Kantian European philosophy. (Of course, revelation did play quite a significant a role in European philosophy until recently when through scientific revolution Newtonian physics captured the mood of philosophical speculation.)

Insofar as the traditional epistemology is not a rigorous philosophical endeavor, the supremacy of the transcendental has a disadvantage. Such an epistemology has the inherent weakness of surrendering easily to the divine wish the arduous task of logically unraveling the complex and difficult human problem.

The fallacy of appealing to authority is common in such an epistemology.[24] Perhaps this is the root of the epistemological authoritarianism to which we have frequently alluded. Although the elder could not be questioned in matters of knowledge, he was not a tyrant. The constraint on questioning was imposed by the degree of certainty essential in all religiously determined systems of thought. Moreover, at a socio-philosophical level, the elder was responsive to the societal demand for collective responsibility. Therefore, authoritarianism played a significant role in mitigating the harshness of the metaphysical dialectics regarding the axiological stability of society. The dialectical interplay between the "flux of ontological dialectics" and the "demand for axiological peace" perpetuated the sense of inquiry.

Epistemology in the tradition of African thought was neither a rigorous nor a deliberately pursued academic discipline (Even in the European or Western tradition epistemology did not become popular and increasingly specialized until the "collapse" of the major metaphysical systems in the face of philosophical scienticism and Hume's thorough empiricist anticipation of logical positivism. Therefore in the former (African tradition), the urge for a continuous assessment and re-assessment of the known or that to be known called for the participation of the subject. The subject was hardly in contradistinction to the object. In fact there was no veil between the two. It is a feature of contemporary man rigidly to delineate the cognitive process in the subject as distinct from the object known.

Does this therefore mean that in traditional epistemology the subject and the object were so fused in their existential predication as to correspond to the pantheism of the contemporary mystic? If not, what was the subject-object relationship in traditional African epistemology?

The Subject and the Object

The immediate and mediate experiences of the African is characterized by a set of contradictions: "one and many, individuality and universality, time and eternity, freedom and necessity, reason and sentiment." These are contradictions not peculiar to the African experience. But in the West they have been bypassed (not resolved) by admitting a duality of experience: the subject and the object are conceived as two separate and independent entities. This dualist ontology has given rise to an epistemology split into rationalism and empiricism, subjectivism and objectivism. Man is not only separated from nature, but also subordinated to it.

We had already said that in the African traditional thought man and nature are not ontologically independent. For African epistemology "man and nature are not two separate independent and opposing realities but the one inseparable continuum of a hierarchical order."[25] Ontologically therefore, dualism simply could not be postulated in the African philosophic tradition. Whereas the rise of the same philosophic postulate in the Western tradition owes a lot to the dogma of intellectualism, and the Indian has to escape the dilemma by denying the reality of the material world, the African seeks for the ego a centrality in the cosmic scheme in order to avoid the embarrassment of dualism and monism--be it idealist or materialist. As such, the notions of subjectivism and objectivism do not constitute any problem in African epistemology. The possibility of their emergence is subsumed under the unity of existence. The subject cannot know the object if it is detached.

The African maintains that there can be no knowledge of reality if an individual detaches himself from it . . . Knowledge, therefore, comes from the co-operation of all human faculties and experiences. He sees, feels, imagines, reasons or thinks and intuits all at the same time.[26]

The subject then is perpetually involved. He or she is not only seeing and thinking, but also experiencing and discovering. For him/her no knowledge of an object is possible without the object entering into experience. The cognitive process is not complete without the experiential. The self of the subject and the objective world outside of the self are really one. The former "vivifies or animates" the latter.

Self experience and the experiencing self, being identical, occupy a central position in traditional African epistemology. This is consonant with ontology. It is not due, as Senghor has claimed, to providence having denied to the African the gift of "analytical and discursive reason." As propaedeutic to his ontology the African adheres to a cosmology which determines his epistemology; yet, it is a cosmology in which existence cannot be defined. Like Scotus' absolute nature, it is neither universal nor concretely singular. As a result even the entities of subject and object can only be specified. This specification is due to the experiencing self realizing its own individuating activity in order to perceive and delineate the objects outside of itself.

The active-self is dominant in the scheme of traditional thought in Africa. For the African theoretical and practical philosophy are not autonomous, but logically and metaphysically fused in a single epistemological system. Hence, the ego that theorizes and the world in which this theory assumes practicality participate in a unitary culture-bound world-view. We are reminded that,

> The African culture makes no sharp distinction between the ego and the world, subject and object. In the conflict between the self and the world. African culture makes the self the center of the world.[27]

Nevertheless the self is not absolute and static. Being at the core of the unitary reality, it manifests "a unitary process of matter-mind as a single universal process with diversities of form."[28] The life-force of such a matter-mind manifests itself in "politics, economics, religion, art, education, science, morals."[29] This integrative character of the life-force perpetuates experience from one period to another. In the epistemic experience, it is a kind of temporal motion, an equivalent of Bergson's élan vital. Here then is the possibility of epistemological change from the classical times to the contemporary. Hence, a consideration of an epistemological continuum is really an endeavor to cope with a fundamental philosophical change, on the one hand, and to contend with a crisis of paradigm on the other.

Change and Crisis of Paradigm

Contemporary times have witnessed a number of changes in the epistemology of traditional African thought. There have been two modes of changes: those due to the internal dynamics of the thought-system and only accentuated by elements of acculturation and changes brought about by the introduction of a paradigm alien to the ontological base of the African world-view. As the latter is an historical exigency, the interconnectedness of the change and the paradigm is germane to our examination of the continuum of heritage in contemporary African thought.

Change and crisis illustrate the problematic nature of the epistemological continuum and call for serious negotiation in the exchange of philosophical ideas between the traditional and the modern minds. Lest the modern mind read its own philosophy into the traditional, scholars eager to retrieve and sustain the creative and philosophic heritage of the African past should take up the task where the factualists have left off without necessarily accepting the latter's conclusions. The state of mind of contemporary scholars makes this task urgent. For the contemporary African, scholarship is characterized *inter alia*; the following: first, a continuous recession of the traditional into the distant past; second, a present characterized by lack of clarity; third, a future devoid of logical predictability; fourth, absence of the certainty of the mystical; and fifth, the authority of the oracle.

On the other hand, spatial change has involved opening up the traditional thought system to a wider world of learning. This opening itself has activated the epistemological crisis for the movement of new methods of learning from one cultural area to another involved two profound phenomena--psychic violence and literary revolution. The latter affected the cognitive content and structure of the African mind. With literacy the African acquired new spectacles through which he saw not only other worlds, but also his own world. The unfortunate impact upon African epistemology--indeed a characteristic of the continuum--was that the African lost his own subjectivity and objectivity, while acquiring some other person's (namely, the owner of the spectacles) subjectivity. This impact is aggravated by the failure of the dilettante to recognize that he is no longer himself. His universe is no longer a universe, but a "multiverse:" the "multiplicity" of the cosmos for the literate African is consonant with a "mosaic culture" externally adopted and without roots in his own ontological and contingent constitution.

Hence literacy, rather than animating the distinctive participatory function of the African artist, introduces a kind of liberalism that reduces collective activity to bare theatrical stage. The "orature" who provides the source of African philosophy and therefore the epistemic medium loses his or her vitality and richness. Only through the oral traditions--music, folk songs, myths--and other oral arts does the African utilize various means of knowing: knowing for the African could be achieved through imagination, intuition and feelings.

Grace A. Ogot reminds us that African legends, folk songs, folk tales and proverbs are "living expressions of oral literacy activity" and that the distinctive feature of this literature is that it represents a form of collective or group activity. Both the performance and the audience participate."[30] She proceeds to explain that committing "orature" to writing individualizes the literature. This is a paradoxical feature of the epistemological continuum. Philosophically, we wish to sustain the heritage in our contemporary milieu, yet to do so we must use literacy. And whereas the philosophy we wish to preserve and perpetuate is a collective mind, "the writing and reading of a book are . . . individual acts." Mrs. Ogot poses a series of rhetorical questions:

> If traditional oral literature is to be ensured of continuity it has to be given the performance of the printed word. But will these literary transcriptions have the same meaning in what are vastly different contexts? What happens, for example, when a long spoken narrative is translated into writing? What happens to the warmth and richness of the speaking human voice? What happens to the sense of participation of the listener? How is the sustained attention of a reader to be maintained?[31]

The wisdom in Mrs. Ogot's words sinks deep into the heart when we realize the case of songs. For example, a student of African thought reading Okot p'Bitek's *Song of Lawino* either in the privacy of his bedroom or in the silence of the library at Makerere University does not perceive and conceptualize the original message of the song as would an illiterate Acholi boy listening to the natural tune of Okot's mother. Sometimes the student is influenced by non-Acholi concepts; and sometimes he relies outright upon the non-African intellectuals. But *Song of Lawino* is an Acholi expression of ideas arising out of Acholi cultural heritage, and the written *Song of Lawino* lacks the philosophic novelty of the oral "Song of Lawino." Similarly, unlike the student at Makerere University who is not an elite of his own society, the illiterate Acholi boys and girls in northern Uganda arc the elite of their traditional society. Under the bright moonlight they participate in the "get-stuck" dance and in the process come to understand the original message of the "Song of Lawino" in its cultural chastity. Then they are able to internalize the values so that epistemology and axiology achieve practically total fusion. Lamentably, this is a feature of African epistemological heritage which the continuum lacks in spite of the power of literacy.

Such inadequacy is perpetuated, though Africa actually exudes two traditions of literacy, the Euro-Christian West and the Islamic. The contemporary failure to harness the two epistemological segments of our present heritage presents us with a challenge of three cultural and ideological segments, namely, "traditional Africa, Islamic Africa and Euro-Christian Africa."[32]

The Challenge of "The Africans: A Triple Heritage"[33]

The introduction of Euro-Christian philosophical tradition in Africa brought in its wake Western scientific paradigm and its consequent disintegrative epistemology. The disintegrative tendency in Western epistemology relegates revelation to a position of benign dogma. This exposes all parts of the Western science paradigm to the actual or potential threat of eclectic change through successive determinist scientific revolutions and this creates intellectual uncertainty. The latter consequence benefits the politician outside the objective scientific development, for the scientist accepts a direction, "determined by the politicians' need to deter,

wage or win wars, or the need to land on the moon before anybody else."[34] Whereas such a development deters man from focusing on the axiological axis of epistemology, it does not really make science "value-free," but only alters the value man should cherish and so doing accentuates epistemological disintegration. Such paradigmatic and axiological disintegrations trace their roots back to the bifurcation of thought (and knowledge) into rationalism and empiricism, the identity of body and mind, and matter and spirit.

The Western trait of analytical, discursive and rigorous logic helped open the African system of thought to a scientific system which hitherto had dominated Western philosophy. However, the opening was betrayed by those practicing science who became exclusive and arrogantly banished revelation as an epistemic medium. When revelation became suspect in the eyes of the Western epistemologist he had either arbitrarily to introduce God in order to save himself from the wrath of the ecclesiastics or to push his philosophy to its logical conclusion by denying God as understood by the Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions. Contrary to those holding to the science paradigm, the medieval scholastic Islamic thinker would be able to see the parallel to revelation in the African sage-experience. This does not mean that revelation is analogous to the experience and sayings of the sage for the ontology and theology of revelation are different from those of the sage, but traditionally the African sees in the latter a kind of "revelation."

A temporal intellectual reversal may help rehabilitate the over-used epistemology of revelation in Western and Westernized epistemologies. As Europe's intellectual invasion of traditional African thought was preceded by the coming of Islam could not the epistemic status of revelation in the Islamic tradition compensate for the elimination of the sage in the main stream of the African epistemological inquiry? This question presupposes other questions, namely where and when Islam and African traditional philosophy met was there a crisis? The answer to the latter question will determine the former.

For purposes of brevity we shall take two areas in Africa. In the Eastern region, where Islamic scholarship was planted, most scholars were bent on cultivation of simple faith and worship. As a result in the coastal towns of Lamu and Malindi emphasis was placed mainly upon the exoteric dimension of Islam. The inner dimension was represented by the Sufi orders, coming mainly from the Sudan and the North-East Horn of Africa. Exotericism and Sufi wisdom were concerned respectively with Sharia and love for the transcendent. Their emphasis on the absolute unity of Allah (may He be exalted) clashed with the African concept of God. Since the pioneers of Islam in East Africa were not aggressive missionaries, the conflict between Islam and African traditional philosophy was minimized.

The actual philosophical conflict between Islam and African traditional belief was clearer in the Western Sudan. But more than an Islamic-African conflict, it had a!so elements of Greek thought. In the ancient Islamic University of Timbuktu, "Aristotle was commented upon regularly, and the trivium and quadrivium were known as one does not go without the other. Almost all the scholars were completely experienced in the Aristotelian Dialectics and the commentaries of formal logic."[35] In such a curriculum the conflict was really threefold: Greek-African, the Islamic-African and the "ageless" Islamic-peripatetic debate.

It follows therefore that, the two questions previously asked can best be answered negatively. The possibility of an Islamic-African resolution of the epistemic crisis is compromised by the divergent concepts of a unitary cosmology. The cosmology of the traditional African mind postulates a divine who can participate with the finite in the same locus. But the cosmology of Islam admits of no common locus for the divine Infinite and the contingent

finite. The African mind proposes no single cosmogony, but the Islamic heritage has one single and absolute cosmogony. The latter heritage postulates a grand paradigm constituted of one that is revealed and another that is man-made science.

These conflicting systems of epistemology not only have baffled the University philosophers, but they also have stifled the actualization of the masses as a vital social force. The latter cannot fulfill themselves because they live now in an ideological uncertainty born out of the "Triple Heritage."

CONCLUSION

Along the epistemological continuum the heritage of the African has experienced profound changes. These occurred, first, with the Islamic intrusion, and, second, with the traumatic dissemination of the Western scientific tradition. In turn, these changes have crystallized a crisis. A reappraisal of this epistemological crisis will instill in the continuum a further philosophical inquiry. It will at the same time mitigate the harshness of the psychic violence resulting from the imposition of philosophical systems.

We see three traits in this philosophy: the rational-illuminative method of Islam, the analytical and discursive procedures of the West, and the culture-bound participatory tradition of Africa. All three should be studied as contributions to the federation of world cultures. This kind of philosophical ecumenism, without diminishing the distinctiveness of each view-point, calls for a sober and rational consideration of the "other's" philosophy in light of O. Reiser's assertion that:

So many human questions have now become world problems, so complex and interconnected that to solve them requires a greater degree of interthinking than the human race has ever known before or is presently prepared to accept.[36]

To conclude,

It is no *distortion* to urge that the *failure* of the modern world is the failure of philosophy to live up to its historic
    role of providing synthesis, wisdom and logical guidance to our
    increasingly perplexed world.[37]

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NOTES

1. Ofelia Schuttle, "Overcoming Ethnocentrism in the Philosophy Classroom," *Teaching Philosophy*, 8 1985. (Cincinnati, Ohio: University of Cincinnati, p. 143.
2. Ali A. Mazrui, *The African Condition. A Political Diagnosis* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1980), p. 22.
3. John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Philosophy (Nairobi: H*einemann 1986, p. 2.
4. *Ibid*.
5. Dr. K.C. Anyanwu has summed up the crux of the inquiry as follows: "How do the Africans know what they claim to know? What are their basic assumptions about the nature of things? What methods must the mind follow in order to arrive at what the Africans accept as a

trustworthy knowledge of reality? What, in their experience, led to the beliefs they hold? What does experience mean to the African in the African culture? What place does the African occupy in the universe"? "The African World-View and Theory (of) Knowledge" in E.A. Rush and K.C. Anyanwu, *African Philosophy* (Rome: Catholic Book Agency, 1984), p. 81.

6. John S. Pobee, *Toward an African Theology* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1979, p. 43.

7. *Ibid*. p. 44. Compare this observation with the proverb of the Lugbara of North-West, namely, "Aria a'anga ase a'ale ndo" (The voice of birds in the wilderness is varied). An eminent student of Lugbara philosophy records the traditional comment that "As each bird sings in its own way, so each person thinks and behaves in his own characteristic manner. The proverb testifies to this variety of opinions and character among humans." The same proverb has been recorded with slight variation of local dialects as proverb No. 143 in A.T. Dalfovo, *Logbara Proverbs* (Rome, 1984), pp. 98-99.

8. This dictum is attributed to Albert Camus. See Ali Shariati, *Man and Islam*, trans. Ghulam M. Fayez (Mashhad, Iran: University of Mashhad Press, 1982), p. 69.

9. Ali A. Mazrui, *Political Values and the Educated Class in Africa* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1978), p. 86.

10. L.S. Senghor, "The spirit of civilization, or the laws of African Negro Culture," Proceedings of the first International Conference of Negro Writers and Artists, *Presence Africaine*, special issue (June-November 1956), 64, 71.

11. Senghor seems to have been influenced a great deal by Andre Gide. The latter is reported to have asserted: "I feel, therefore I am." See Ali Shariati, *op. cit*., p. 69.

12. These are the words of David Hume as quoted in Henry Alpern, *The March of Philosophy* (New York: Dial, 1934), p. 99.

13. Rev. Fr. Innocent Chilaka Onyewuenyi, "Is there an African Philosophy?" *African philosophy (La philosophie Africaine)*, ed. Claude Summer, (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 1980), p. 310.

14. Placide Temple, *Bantu Philosophy* (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1969), p. 73.

15. Onyewuenyi, p. 312.

16. Compare with the Lugbara proverb: "Dri `bi foro ngotia dria yo" (No grey hair on a child's head). "Grey hair is an indication of age and wisdom. By reminding a person that it is children who have no grey hair, the proverb intends to tell him that he should be wise and reasonable and not childish." Relevant to epistemology, is the proverbial implication here that the greatness or authority of the aged is due to their wisdom. See proverb No. 249 in A.T. Dalfovo, *op. cit*., p. 144.

17. Kwasi Wiredu, *Philosophy and an African Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 4.

18. Anyanwu, *op. cit*., p. 77.

19. Kwasi Wiredu, p. 4.

20. *Ibid*., p. 5.

21. Anywanwu, *op. cit*., pp. 77-78.

22. *Ibid*., p. 78.

23. *Ibid*., pp. 88-89.

24. Of course the appeal to authority becomes a logical fallacy when and where the authority appealed to is illegitimate.

25. Anyanwu, *op. cit*., p. 87.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Grace A. Ogot, "The African Writer," *East Africa Journal*, 5, (1968), 35.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization and Development with Particular Reference to the African Revolution* (Nairobi: Heinemann 1964), p. 70.

33. I have derived the sub-title partly from Ali A. Mazrui *The Africans: A Triple Heritage* (London: B.B.C., 1986).

34. Kalim Siddiqui, "Integration and disintegration in the politics of Islam and *Kufr*," *Issues in the Islamic Movement: 1982-83* ed. Kalim Siddiqui, London (London: The Open Press, 1984, p. 2.

35. Cited by Erica Simon, "Negritude and Cultural problems of contemporary Africa," *Presence Africaine*, 18, 1963), 135. Also quoted in Ali A. Nazrui *Political Values and the Educated Class in Africa, op. cit.*, 86.

36. O. Reiser, "World Philosophy and the Integration of Knowledge," *International Logic Review* ed. Franco Spisani, 3 (1971), 18.

37. *Ibid.*

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF TRADITIONAL BUGANDA SOCIETY:
BREAKS AND CONTINUITY INTO THE PRESENT
E. WAMALA

Study of traditional African societies can be confined to that period before the coming of European missionaries and Arab traders. Here the emphasis will be temporal, and the distant past or the historical will be seen as the traditional, while the present will be seen as the modern. On the other hand, the study of these societies can be confined to the rural communities where the old values are still common and cherished. There the emphasis will be spatial, and the distinction will fall between the rural seen as the traditional and the urban seen as the modern. I have used traditional African societies in the first sense.

Traditional African societies have been divided further into two broad categories, namely, those which had very highly centralized authority and leadership under kings or powerful chiefs and those which had decentralized authority and leadership, where small chiefs ruled over small clans or lineages. Anthropologists have referred to the first category as primitive states and to the second as stateless or acephelous societies.[1] Buganda belonged to the former.

MAN AND SOCIETY IN TRADITIONAL BUGANDA

The Buganda had a monarchical type of government. Among monarchical governments there are limited and absolute monarchs. Buganda had the former type because directly under the king (who was also a hereditary ruler), there were heads of clans, chiefs and sub-chiefs all the way down the hierarchy to the extended family. The council of heads of clans under the king acted as the parliament and lower down were the chiefs at the various levels of society; all of them assisted in the social and political administration of society.

It was the Greeks who gave us the word `political' for what, according to *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, was the "socio-organization of society which provided the necessary conditions for men to take for the first time a rational critical view of the individual and the collectivity."[2] Because of the structure just outlined we can see that traditional Buganda society had a political organization of society. The major concern of social and political philosophy in Greece and in traditional African societies then was one of reconciling individual interests and those of society. In the one case, i.e., in the Greek city state, that was a conscious deliberate exercise as is witnessed by the extensive literature on the subject. In traditional African society, it was an unconscious covert activity, but one which proceeded nevertheless. The relationship between the individual and society was as significant in Greece as it was in Africa, where man saw himself first and foremost as an individual in society. His whole being was, because society was. Mbiti summarizes that position as follows: "I am because we are and because we are therefore I am."[3] The individual in Africa was so intertwined in the affairs of society that it was only natural that a way had to be sought to relate an individual to the society. What is true of man in Africa, is true of man in Buganda.

THE MONARCHICAL TYPE OF GOVERNMENT

The hereditary nature of the kings and their quasi-divine origins is of philosophical interest. Myths[4] had it that kings were born with two umbilical cords or with their fists holding on to some unspecified object. Whatever the authenticity of these myths, what is significant is that kings *qua* kings were viewed as semi-divine entities with semi-divine origins. This had two major implications.

(1) *Authority*: Because kings were believed to be semi-divine entities, their power and authority, though never absolute, was never questioned. This practice was true in Buganda as well as many other African societies. Writing generally about kingship in Africa, J.S. Mbiti made the following observation:

> where these rulers are found, they are not simply political heads: they are the mystical and religious heads, the divine symbol of their people's health and welfare. The individual as such may not have outstanding talents or abilities but their office is the link between human rule and spiritual government. They are therefore, divine or sacral rulers, the shadow or reflection of God's rule in the universe. People regard them as God's earthly viceroys.[5]

On the king's part his position meant that he had to behave benevolently to his subjects, who after all, were God-given to him and whose presence justified their (the kings) existence. Kings had the moral and social obligations to see to the well-being of their people. They were seen as the axis of legal and moral norms, holding people together in a political community which was at the same time a religious community. Kings were the force of mythical values. All these points imbued kings with authority unquestioned by anybody in their kingdoms.

(2) *Transfer of Power*: Owing to their semi-divine origins, traditional Buganda experienced a smooth transfer of power--a fact which was of considerable social and political significance. The reigns of power automatically were passed on to the male son of the king who had been born with the `signs'.[6] Moreover, this succession took place after the death of the incumbent. It is important to note that power in traditional Buganda society did not derive from any written constitutions, but solely from the fact that one had been born with the `signs'.

The traditional theory and practice contrasts very sharply with today's theory and practice where whoever qualifies as a citizen qualified also for the highest office in the land. This open door policy has led to a `legitimization crisis' à la Habermas, namely, a situation in which people withdraw from the government the support it needs for its continued survival and existence. Legitimation crises can be due to several reasons, but more often than not because the subjects have questioned the credentials, origins and sources of authority of their leaders.

The coming to power of post independence presidents has raised questions. Writing about one such leader, Karugire says the leader in question did not come to power "because of any particular advantage, his choice had largely been a matter of chance. It was not on account of his longer experience in politics, proven qualities of statesmanship or charismatic leadership that he was chosen."[7] This quotation is of considerable significance for our analysis here because on closer analysis what is said about present-day leaders, namely, their lack of experience, ascent to power by chance, etc., was true also of the kings. Kings, we have seen, did not have any experience, nor did they have such glaring charismatic qualities. Why then did they not face legitimation crises themselves?

The answer seems to be in the origins of the power of the king, namely, their quasi-divine origin made the subjects obey. Authority and power derived from God could not be questioned. This is the very factor that seems lacking in the modern period. If in the modern period we are going to address ourselves to legitimization crisis, we shall have to address ourselves squarely to the problem of source or origins of authority. Credible sources and origins must be sought.

CONSENSUS: THE TRADITIONAL FORM OF DEMOCRACY

To what extent can we, without fear of contradiction, talk of democracy in a monarchical government? To the extent that the monarch was limited, there was always room for debate, critical discussions and often outright rejection of what the king otherwise wanted--in short, there was room for consensus formation.

The monarch ruled through a council of heads of clans and there were many councils of heads, sub-heads and chiefs at the various levels of society. After every debate a consensus had to be reached or sought. Consensus was very central to the operation of democracy and justice in traditional Buganda society and of African societies generally. If after deliberations the heads of clans reached a consensus it would be taboo on the part of the monarch to reject or oppose what the clan leaders had agreed upon. That would spell disaster. In spite of his semi-divine origins, the monarch avoided working autocratically. It should be pointed out that the king rarely took part in the deliberations himself, the rationale being that the monarch should not prejudice the proceedings of the debate. Democracy demanded that the king execute what had been arrived at without his contribution. If the king had anything to contribute he would get it across through one of his closest councilors, who would then pass it on for discussion and eventual consensus formation. We need to note that consensus formation was carried on at the highest level, as well as at the various levels in the structure of society down to the extended family.

In the formation of consensus at the highest level we can see a very weak form of representative democracy. It was weak because the heads of clans who were at the top to influence major decisions were never elected by the people, but the monarch himself. It was representative nevertheless because a Muganda *qua* Muganda belonged to at least one of the 52 clans, whose heads formed the consensus on which the tribe was run.

The fact that kings worked on the basis of consensus from among their citizens points to a liberal outlook in spite of monarchism. According to a liberal view instead of views being held dogmatically by the leaders or citizens, they are held tentatively all the time conscious that newer evidence will lead to their acceptance or rejection. We can still see that at the heart of the spirit of consensus was a liberal spirit. Even the head of a clan or elder had to be open-minded and avoid sticking dogmatically to his own proven views. Newer levels of awareness could always lead to newer insights.

The idea of a veto stands in very sharp contrast to this idea of consensus. A veto is defined as the constitutional right of a president to reject or forbid something. This contrasts strongly to the spirit of a republican form of government according to which the representatives of the people have supreme power in the land. Hence, it is ironic that by the power of the veto they can be overruled by the president. The concept of a veto was alien to traditional Buganda society; any application of it would have spelled disaster.

Whereas in the modern world political decisions have come to be the result of compromise between powerful interest groups, like labor organizations, trade unions, rather than the outcome

of rational discussions or agreements, in traditional Buganda society there was room for reasoned arguments and respect for agreed consensus.

However, there were often cases of discrepancies between the theory and the practice. Although the king's rule was supposed to follow the consensus there were often glaring instances in which kings infringed upon the unwritten constitutional rights of the people. Whenever that happened, it always led to popular disapproval and civil disobedience. One feature stood out very markedly, however, namely that in cases of civil disobedience or rebellion, the aim and result was always to change the personnel of office and never to abolish the office and set in its phase some new form of government.

Whenever citizens rebelled against the monarch, they did so only in defense of the values (traditional values) which they felt the king had violated by his malpractices.

There has been a very sharp break from this outlook in the modern period and modern state. In the modern state whenever there are rebellions (often by the military and paramilitary organizations), which rebellions take the form of coup d'états, the aim always is to overthrow an entire socio-political system with all its values and ideologies and often to replace these with entirely different--often opposed--values and ideologies. Hence, if the rebellion is against a Western liberal form of democracy, the aim and result would be the institution of a Marxist form of government.

The feature that has come hand in hand with this development has been the application of organized force to overthrow values and ideologies no longer deemed desirable. Organized force is used largely because of the problems related to modern forms of power transfer, where incumbents do not want to go willingly, and the presence of large forces which often are very difficult to satisfy. Organized force was used in traditional Buganda, but the aims were always territorial expansion. Armies were externally directed, never a source of solving internal conflicts.

POLITICAL PARTIES: A REJECTION OF CONSENSUS

Political parties have come to the scene with many promises, but at the same time many inherent problems which stem simply from the fact that they are political parties. For political parties have been responsible for the rejection of the tribal concept of consensus due mainly to two considerations: their undemocratic nature and their corrupting influences.[8]

The party system destroys consensus, and thus democracy, by denying the individual any significant opportunity for effective political action. With the rise of the party system, the party replaces the `people' with `citizens' as the dominating factor in democracy. It follows that the candidates proposed by each party no longer appear as individual men of flesh and blood as from the tribal set-up--elders or clan leaders knowledgeable about the societal norms and values. What we have with political parties are party members clad with party cards. With the massive help of the party machine, party members will try to win people's votes by appealing to their base instincts and sentiments; driven to frenzy, the electorate, in turn, is not always so discriminative. Finally, those who are elected are representatives not really of the people, but of the party which has become an abstract concept. Party members do not have loyalty to the people whom they are supposed to represent as is understood by the principles of political delegation. Rather, their loyalty is to the party which ensured their success in the elections. In such a fluid situation of shifting loyalties, where is there room for consensus formation?

But political parties have come with yet another problem. Any party worth the name will try to come to power in order to implement its programs. In order to come to power and retain it, political parties have had to resort to Machiavellian principles. Acting upon the time honored dictum that the end justifies the means, political parties in the modern state have become unscrupulous about the means, thereby draining all ethical considerations from political theory and practice. Whereas ethical considerations had been a key feature of traditional political theory and practice, parties in the modern state will use any means, fair or foul to get power and keep it. As the tribal values which are thrown overboard had guided consensus formation, what we have left are materialistic considerations which foster the welfare not of society, but of individuals.

Personal Rules

Traditional Buganda was characterized by personal rule, whereby the king knew personally all his senior officials. That situation was due to the small size of the tribe which made possible social interaction with a great number of the people. Though rejected in the modern state because it fosters corruption and tribalism, the phenomena of personal rule remains very much a feature of society.

Owing to the development of political parties we find that in elections, the electorate delegates their power to their representatives. But not every party member has power in the party hierarchy. As only a few members at the top really wield power, even the parties which command the majority and therefore form the government really are ruled by a handful of men at the top of the party in question. The powerful party bosses, as a matter of fact, personalize power, and whoever wants favors will try to come under their sway. Consequently, personal rule, after having been rejected, makes its return into the political arena of modern states.

Justice in Buganda

Justice in traditional African society, and Buganda in particular, was justice as fairness. A practice is deemed fair when it is in conformity with the principles which those who participate in it could propose or acknowledge before one another.[9]

Justice as fairness can be appreciated very easily given the small size of the tribes where many people stayed together in extended families and many people knew each other. Justice followed not an elaborate canon of laws, but societal norms. To illustrate the point: if a young woman for some reason ran away from her husband's house and returned to her father's home, say after a quarrel, the traditional concept of justice demanded that before passing justice in favor for or against anybody, both sides, i.e., the girl's side as well as the boy's side, had to be listened to. Even here, consensus was very central. Judgment could be given only after the elders from both sides, i.e., the girl's side and the boy's side, had met and come to a consensus. Several interesting features emerge about the traditional conception of justice:

(i) The offender had a *right* to be heard. This right, which is enshrined in modern constitutions, is not an exclusive concern of modern society, but goes back to the tribal society as well.

(ii) Because justice was always given by the elders in the extended family, it was always given promptly. `Justice delayed is justice denied' seems to be an exclusive problem of modern society.

These two points are of considerable important when we realize that according to modern constitutions we have a right to be heard, but that this right has to be realized through a whole institution of the law courts and a legal system involving lawyers, etc. Because all this has to be paid for, in cases where the citizen is unable to pay, the right is denied.

Then too, the modern state has witnessed a unprecedented incidence of `popular justice'. This phrase is now very commonly used in law enforcement agencies, the administration of justice, discussions, publications and in society generally. Popular justice may be defined as what is fair in the eyes of the public regarding a given case or in general.[10] It may now be asked why popular justice has become a common feature of modern social life? The answer seems to be that in the modern state justice is dispensed from a distance--by the police, the civil administration and law enforcement agencies all of which as centralized are generally located at a distance. As a result the practice of popular justice has to be seen against a background of justice delayed.

There were areas of patent injustice as well; here I am referring, for example, to cases of witch hunting where those accused of sorcery were expelled from villages and often killed. To traditional man that was seen as justice. What would have constituted an injustice would have been to let a sorcerer go unpunished, for traditional man saw those who practiced witchcraft, evil magic and sorcery as the very incarnation of moral evil. Their activities were directed to the destruction of social relationships and society, justice demanded that they be punished. Often, punishment would be payment of fines, after which the member would be allowed back into the mainstream of society.

(iii) A third feature of the tribal conception of justice was that its administration had to be based upon a consensus. The widespread application of the methodology of consensus as a way of coming to decisions implicitly points to an awareness in traditional mind of the possibility of a dictator emerging and imposing his likes on the rest of society. Consensus can be seen as an implicit safeguard against dictators infringing on the unwritten constitutional rights of the people.

How did a political structure lacking elaborately organized law enforcement agencies ensure that decisions arrived at by consensus become binding? This point was raised also by Hobbes who argued that "`just' and `unjust' presuppose a coercive power capable of enforcing obligations."[11] The question how, in the African context, did society ensure that everybody abided by the decisions brings us to another important feature of traditional African society, namely, taboo.

TABOO IN TRADITIONAL BUGANDA

Taboo is defined in the dictionary as an act or thing which religion or custom regard as forbidden. Nabakwe has argued that the African mind uses the term taboo "to mean an attitude against what is regarded as bad or wrong."[12]

Now, in traditional Africa, consensus operated in such a way that if the elders of the community agreed to an issue, the offender had to obey whether he liked it or not. The taboo system here dictated the social and moral roles, and was as binding on the king as on the common citizen. The taboo system enforced social sanctions, rejection of which would bring ostracism, death by curse, deprivation, etc. Nabakwe points out that ostracism was "a more severe punishment than being in jail because a man and his tribe are inseparable. A man under curse is no man. Yet all those things may come to pass because of the break of taboo norms."[13]

What made the taboo so forceful is that it was viewed as an unwritten moral imperative, a supreme good, adherence to which would enhance the individuals' happiness and welfare and make him a fully integrated member of society. Taboo therefore was deeply rooted in consensus.

Equality and Freedom

The concept of equality as we know it today, namely, equality in view of our common humanity or because we are all sons of God does not seem to have struck the traditional mind, be that in Greece or India where in each case we had masters and slaves. Traditional Buganda society was no exception in this. There were distinctions drawn between the royals, *abalangira*; chiefs, *abaami*; and commoners, *abakopi*. Whereas these categories were so firmly fixed in the case of India or Greece, in traditional Buganda they could be changed. Hence, through hard work and diligence a commoner (*omukopi*) could become a chief, and a chief could enter the royal family through marriage. It follows therefore that behind the apparent inequality in traditional Buganda there was always the equality of opportunity to join other classes of higher distinction.

What is important about equality in traditional Buganda society is that, regardless of class, every citizen of the tribe was free to contribute to consensus formation. Consensus formation was not an exclusive right of clan heads and chiefs. The people of lower classes were always conscious of their civil rights and always attempted to exercise them. The point made by M. Fortes and Evans Prichard goes to the heart of the matter:

> The structure of an African state implies that kings and chiefs rule by consent. A ruler's subjects are fully aware of the duties he owes to them, as they are of the duties they owe to him, and are able to exert pressure to make him discharge these duties.[14]

That position marks a sharp contrast of the traditional African to the modern social/political structure, where owing to the emergence of political parties, only the ruling party can influence decisions. In the social organization of the tribe everybody, at whatever level, was free to talk. People "talk till they agree,"[15] which is what consensus and democracy in tribal society was all about.

CONCLUSION

To a very large extent there has been a break from the traditional practices and the social political philosophy of Buganda society. The breaks have been due to several causes.

(a) *Colonialism and Neo-colonialism*: To a large extent this has been responsible for wholesale transplantation to Africa of political and social models. Witness the proliferation of political parties and parliamentary democracy which has taken the place of consensus of the traditional African society. Whereas party politics is not as such adverse to consensus, nevertheless, the inner dynamics of party politics are such that the conditions of consensus formation have little chance to survive, for the values that guided consensus formation are largely ignored.

(b) *Economics*: The economic restructuring of the newly emerging states of Africa may have a far more serious impact on the political and social philosophy of the continent than colonialism and neo-colonialism. It is an open question whether the economics of the modern states are not themselves so many forms of neo-colonialism. What can be said with certainty, however, is that

in the tribal structure economic considerations, though important, were not so overriding in the social and political realm. In the structures of an economics of scarcity, the toll on democracy cannot be over emphasized. Walter O. Oyugi argues that "indeed the whole idea of democracy does not make sense where a peoples' major preoccupation is survival."[16] I would hasten to add here that the economic struggle now is more intense than ever before, given the growing populations and diminishing resources.

(c) *Pluralism*: The problem of shifting away from homogenous societies to heterogenous societies. In the tribal setup, Buganda was a homogenous entity with a uniform culture and language: the tribe had its centralized leadership under the monarch. In the nation-state, we find bundled together tribes of different, often opposed, cultures. The mingling of formerly highly centralized societies with the formerly stateless societies is bound to cause some conflict, and any understanding of present turmoil in Africa must bear this in mind. A new national culture needs to be formed which will blend many strains of thought, but this has yet to be done.

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NOTES

1. M. Fortes and Evans Prichard (eds.), *African Political Systems* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1950), p. 5.

2. Paul Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1973), Vol. V, p. 371.

3. J. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969), p. 214.

4. Myths here should be understood in the Biblical sense. They are stories intended to carry some deeper truths.

5. J.S. Mbiti, *ibid.*, p. 182.

6. The signs referred to here are those referred to in myth above.

7. S.R. Karugire, *A Political History of Uganda* (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980), p. 190.

8. Whereas these considerations may be true of many developing countries, they may not be necessarily true of the developed countries.

9. This is the kind of conception Rawls seems to expound in his *Theory of Justice*.

10. J. Kakooza "Criminology as Viewed from Human Rights Violation" presented at The Uganda Human Rights Activists Seminar on Human Rights (Kampala: Makerere University, 1989), p. 6.

11. Paul Edwards, *ibid.*, p. 300.

12. W.M. Nabakwe "Social and Moral Responsibility Within African Traditional Context." The First International Regional Conference in Philosophy, Mombasa 23-27 May, 1988, p. 4.

13. W.M. Nabakwe, *ibid.*, p. 2.

14. M. Fortes and Evans Prichard, *ibid.*, p. 9.

15. J. Nyerere, *Nyerere on Socialism* (Dar-es-Salaam,: Oxford University Press), p. 104.

16. W.O. Oyugi and A. Gitonga, *Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa*, (Naibobi, Kenya: Heinemann, 1987), p. 109.

AFRICAN LOGICAL HERITAGE AND CONTEMPORARY LIFE: THE COGENCY IN "KINYANKORE ORATURE" FOCUSING ON PROVERBS
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This paper purports to show how culture and logic can benefit from and complement each other in contemporary terms. It will delve on how the scientific approach of logic and the artistic approach of orature can bridge the gap between the trained logicians aid the illiterate village communities for their mutual benefit. It intends to show that logic and orature do share some methodological characteristics, that orature can inject new innovations in the present scientific approach of logic.

Logic has hitherto been described as a science--the science of arguments. The main reason for meriting this description is logics function or working is based on rules and laws.

For the sake of standard, objectivity and clarity in reasoning, logic has reached indubitable proportions and has won itself international acceptance. In this respect logic earns unchallenged repute in the arena of the literates.

However, taking the entire world population, the majority of the populace are illiterate. This is a characteristic of some of the third world. This fact creates a big imbalance between the literate and the illiterate communities.

In order to standardize language as is evident in the syllogisms one at least requires two language skills; the skills of reading and writing. These are wanting in the majority of the world populace.

To compound the problem, not everyone can handle the discipline of logic. Logic being a science--as it is mainly viewed--in order for one to put logic to fruitful and profitable use, one needs a thorough training in order to equip oneself with the rules and laws upon which logic bases its function.

Given this fact, the biggest number of people--the illiterate--is deprived of the opportunity to benefit from this discipline.

With the absence of literacy skills in the biggest part of the world means that the smaller literate part of the world cannot benefit from this large bulk of the illiterate world and vice-versa?

Subjected to this unfortunate imbalance, the literate minority should initiate to explore what the majority illiterate world can offer to the discipline.

(The approach should parallel that used by the developed industrial countries which to some extent lacked industrial raw materials. They used their technical skills and expertise to extract raw materials from the developing third world).

However, this approach should not lead to a situation where the developed community has continued to take a lion's share while the under-developed continued to be impoverished. It should lead to mutual intellectual benefit between the literate and the illiterate communities.

While the literate world is well versed in the literacy skills, the illiterate world on the other hand is well versed in the oracy skills.

It was earlier stated that logic is a science of arguments. In this respect a layman may ask, "what sort of arguments"? A logician will answer, "all arguments." Taking the layman's side,

indeed, what sort of arguments do we find in the day to day life? In order to answer this question, one has to look at these two societies, the minority literate society and the majority illiterate society.

The sort of arguments characteristic of the former are mainly concerned with politics, economic speculation, urban life and everything that goes with modernity, while those in the latter are mainly based on cultural heritage and its survival especially when it is threatened by the onslaught of the superficialities of technological innovations.

A contemporary pragmatist says that "something should be accepted if it leads to tangible and verifiable results."[2] Similarly, a logician says that something should be accepted if it has a strong cogent base to support it. In this respect, logic that is professed by the literate society is based on the acquired rules and laws. This makes logic purely scientific.

At this juncture, I wish to contend that in addition to the scientific nature of logic it should equally be regarded as an art. This contention is based on the fact implied by the pragmatist and logician that something should merit acceptance if it has a practical value or a strong cogent basis to support it.

I wish to point out that cultural aspects do have practical values and cogent objectives. At this point logical and cultural approaches differ in a sense that the former is mainly scientific and the latter is mainly artistic. This difference need not be overemphasized. Instead it should be the common aspect between the two approaches that should be of interest. Both are practical and have cogent objectives.

The literacy and the oracy skills should be blended to give logic a new appearance, the semi-scientific and semi-artistic outlook. It is my conviction that if this approach is adopted the literate and the illiterate worlds will mutually benefit from the discipline of logic.

While logic uses premises to support a conclusion, members of the illiterate culture use oral expression either as premises or conclusions. While logic uses rules and laws to structure cogent arguments, the illiterate community uses language structural arrangement to give impact to the intended message or objective. This structural arrangement is not necessarily scientific, but largely artistic. As shall be explicated later, this structural arrangement is largely logical; hence the need for logic to adopt itself to this artistic approach.

Needless to mention, some members of the illiterate community, especially the elderly group are living libraries. However, the life span of these libraries is short because sooner or later the entire generation will die. Taking this fact into account, how many libraries does the world bury everyday?

It is high time that logicians cease to look at logic as nothing more than a compendium of rules and laws; they should look at the artistic aspect of culture instead. Traditional orature--oral literature--uses emotional appeal as a weapon in delivering messages and in achieving objectives. This area, unfortunately, is greatly neglected by logic. Logic has little room if any for emotional approach.

However, authentic study and exploration into the depths of logic, has shown that bad arguments--which can mislead society--can be consciously or unconsciously made when one is using carefully selected content words. In this regard, the authenticity of logic should not be based on whether the approach is scientific or artistic, but on whether it convincingly serves the intended purpose or leads to the achievement of the set objective.

With this background in mind, I wish to explore in detail a specific piece of Kinyankore orature--the Kinyankore proverbial language--one of the venues through which the Banyankore explicate their cultural heritage. In the exposition of these proverbial structures efforts will be

made to expose some aspects of formal logic embedded therein and to show how logic can benefit from the artistic approach of the illiterate world.

There are many aspects of orature in any community which can expose the logical and cultural heritage of that community. For the purpose of this paper I have decided to choose the proverbial structures. The main reason is that the approach I am using is new to the majority of logicians and non-logicians.

This fact has necessitated the selecting of an area which is terse and compendius. This has been done in order to avoid misinterpretation and for the easy following of the discussion.

Before I explore the structural harmony between logic and the proverbial structure, let me give the systematic nature and orderliness in which Kinyankore proverbs were coined.

The illiterate community is concerned with a well spoken word and they probably have no time for the written word. Hence, they are concerned with the logicality of the spoken word. The authenticity and rationality in the exposition of their logical and cultural heritage is by the tongue rather than the pen. So, the illiterate Banyankore took their time to organize the oral channel into different sections. For instance, proverbs, riddles, sayings, songs, to mention a few, do serve as a demonstration of this fact.

Additionally, these major sections are again subdivided according to the function they serve. For instance, the section of proverbs is subdivided into proverbs on moral cohesion, the inevitability of the communality of work, marriage institutions, the institution of justice, wisdom on cultural matters and others. These subdivisions are clear in the elder's minds and are appropriately quoted during serious conversations, in teaching the youths about their roles in cultural matters, in settling disputes and during public festivities such as weddings.

From this exposition, it is evident that the Banyankore use the system of classification when portraying their cultural heritage. Though due to illiteracy, this classification is not realized on paper, it is tantamount to the approach of logic of the use of rules and laws. For instance, in like manner, logic classifies certain arguments according to the Modus ponendo ponens (MPP), Modus tollendo tollens (MTT), syllogisms and theorems. It is clear that the system of classification and that of using rules and laws is a shared formal characteristic between cultural orature and logic.

Again orature and logic have something in common as regards informal fallacies in reasoning. In terms of logic informal fallacies are mainly committed due to the misuse of words or drawing irrelevant conclusions from what the premises are contending.

The proverbial structures also do take care of informal fallacies. However, the fallacy does not lie in the language structure itself but in the meaning portrayed by the structure. For instance, there are proverbs focused on hypocrisy, such as:

"Omukazi ayisire omwana wa mukaiba akiza nyina omwana jurira"
"A woman who has killed her co-wife's child cries louder than the mother of the child."
It is evident that the fault does not lie in the structure itself but in the portrayed meaning. The louder cry intended to demonstrate deep pain and loss is not actually genuine but a false coverup of the guilt.

There are proverbs focused on chatterboxes, such as:
"Engamba yabyingi tegira ogu ehikiriza"
"One who talks much about the success of an enterprise never actualizes it."

Again it is not the structure that is faulty but it is merely reflecting the fault in the message. The message is a warning that one should not be duped by a chatterbox. All he does is talk and no action.

There are numerous examples of proverbs about lying, slandering, pretending, deceiving, flattering, gossiping and others.

In terms of logic, proverbs in these examples are playing a quadruple function: they expose the faults so that people become aware of the faults of language; they assist people not only to be victims of the faults when committed by others, but not to commit these faults themselves; they provide moral lessons and serve as a challenge to make people think carefully and evaluate what they hear before accepting them. Precisely that is what logic advocates.

Kinyankore orature can be structured into mediate and immediate inferences. For instance long prose structures like folk tales and songs can be structured into syllogisms; hence, harmonizing with the mediate inference standards, while riddles can be harmonized with the immediate inference standard.

"Otari nyoko takureeba hand"
"One who is not your mother never looks at your abdomen."

This proverb is of a literal and a metaphorical nature. The literal nature is that one who is not your mother never bothers to feed you. The metaphorical nature is that one should be a man therefore self reliant. The former is scientific while the latter is artistic. In both cases the premises can be drawn back from experience.

Due to the fact that the premises which support the proverbs are less exact, proverbs do harmonize with the logic of induction.

Needless to say, there is a lot that proverbs in particular and orature in general share with logic, a proof that the majority in the illiterate world have a lot to offer to the minority in the literate world.

In this paper I have given examples picked from Ankore because this is my cultural base but I am convinced that different cultures in the third world, if sufficiently explored would have a lot to offer, hence, the need for researches in these cultures.

I hasten to add that the proverbial structures and the proverbial language, though coined generations back, are modernistic and innovative in nature. This is because they challenge the audience to think systematically while establishing the premises to the proverb; hence linking the past with the present. In this respect the past experiences are inevitably kept alive.

Another dimension that gives the proverbial language a modernistic appearance is the fact that even the context in which the proverb is quoted can serve as a premise to consolidate the proverb itself. For instance, a proverb on justice will be quoted in the traditional judiciary context when judging the offence committed in the present.

With reasonable amount of confidence, one can say that the proverbial language serves the logical analytical approach. It is a handy weapon that is used to make an individual stop and think twice before acting or continuing with his ways. In such a situation an individual is reminded to make a thorough examination of whatever he has been engaged in or is intending to do.

I wish to end this paper with a comment on observation made by some renowned logicians. S. Haack says that:

> The traditional idea that logic is concerned with the validity of arguments as such irrespective . . . of their subject matter . . . could be thought to offer a principle on which to delimit the scope of logic.[3]

This quotation serves as proof to my contention that in addition to the scientific approach which has hitherto characterized logic there is need for logic to focus on the artistic procedures as is exemplified in orature. We have soon that orature can serve as a very effective channel through which logic can tap the wisdom from the illiterate elders. Orature has as its subject matter the cultural heritage. The cultural heritage has some immortal values which have penetrated into the contemporary life. S.J. Joyce says that: "Logic is the theory of correct thinking."[4]

Traditionally, the primary function of the proverbs is to make people think deeply in order to harmonize the proverb with its meaning. In order for one to succeed in this venture one had to think correctly. This is another added similarity between logic and orature. A proverb was meant to test whether one had the mental capacity to correctly associate the context of the proverb with its meaning. This involved correct thought. Copi says that:

> Language is the armory of the human mind; and at once contains the trophies of its post, and the weapons of its future conquests.[5]

This quotation proves the harmony between orature and logic. It provides the thread that weaves together the cultural heritage as manifested through orature and the contemporary scientific approach as manifested by logic.

Generally, I wish to reiterate that the illiterate cultural elite who form the majority of the world populace have a lot to offer to the minority literate elite. The challenge is therefore thrown to this minority elite to use their enlightenment privilege to extract this cultural treasure for the balance and intellectual betterment of the two.

We have seen that there is a lot that logic shares with the cultural heritage, so in addition to its scientific approach logic should rigorously take up the artistic approach, a channel that will enable it to appreciate fully what orature can offer to enrich it.

Finally, it has been discovered that orature perpetually revives the cultural heritage, and keeps its candle burning. This makes the cultural approach modernistic and innovative. Logicians should not allow this candle to be extinguished. From this one, more candles should be lit in all corners of the world to provide light to the entire globe.

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NOTES

1. Kinyankore Orature: (a) "Kiayankore" is a language of the people called Banyankore. (b) "Banyankore" is one of the tribes in Western Uganda. (c) "Uganda" is a country found in East Africa. (d) Orature refers to the skills of listening and speaking.
2. A. Stroll & R.H. Popkin, *Introduction to Philosophy* (New York: H.R.W., 1979), p. 415.
3. H. Susan, *Philosophy of Logics* (London: C.H.P., 1978), p. 5.
4. S.J. Joyce, *Principles of Logic* (London: Longmans, 1936), p. 8.

5. J.W. Copi, *Introduction to Logic* (New York: Macmillan, 1978), p. 80.

CHAPTER IV
THE CONCEPTS OF INDIVIDUALITY AND SOCIAL COHESION: A PERVERSION OF TWO AFRICAN CULTURAL REALITIES
J.K. KIGONGO

The concept of individuality or individual freedom is fundamental in determining human life in society for it underlies human thought and behavior.[1] Individuality co-exists with social cohesion, which in turn is a basic component of human life in society. They constitute a dichotomy, without any essential opposites.

As social factors, both concepts exist in the particular epoch of a peoples' existence though in subtly differing relationships. In African traditional society social cohesion was dominant over individuality; unlike individuality, it seems to have been distinctly discernible. But the order of dominance was natural, that is, society evolved in this manner with social harmony rather than tension or crisis between the two.

In contemporary Africa there is a deliberate coercive tendency against individuality in the attempt to build a cohesive harmonious society and realize nation unity.[2] Despite its inherent oppression, this has been the foundation of nation building, since the imposition of European colonial rule. The coercion, in turn, provokes reaction in form of resistance, both physical and psychic, thus causing a crisis between social cohesion and individuality.[3]

The thesis of this paper is, first, to examine the concepts of both individuality and social cohesion in African traditional society or culture and, second, to show how these ideas are influencing contemporary African thought, particularly among the political leadership. This influence manifests a perversion by the political leadership of two African cultural realities, namely, individuality and social cohesion, and the will of the individual to restore the *status quo* of the traditional society.

DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPTS

Individuality may be referred to as metaphysical freedom. According to David Bidney this is the autonomous power of choice and decision of will as essential conditions for the exercise of other freedoms.[4] Individuality is the essence of a human being, notwithstanding any form of constraint, control or influence; it is inherent in human nature and survives any form of external influence to one's self or conscience.

Social cohesion is a state of affairs whereby individuals in the society consistently pursue certain fundamental virtues on the basis of enhancing a common or social good. In the African traditional sense this is called African communalism. D.N. Kaphagawani calls it the social structure which pervades traditional Africa in which every member voluntarily cooperates. Each is proud and much obliged to help any other member of his or her community.[5]

The two concepts are dichotomous because individuality sometimes tends towards enhancement of the freedom that entails pursuit of egoistic or selfish interests, that is, negative individualism. On the other hand the social good tends to submerge such freedom. But both concepts are not essentially opposites or antagonistic because if individual freedom is rationally pursued, that is, pursued responsibly or with a sense of duty so as to safeguard the good or what

is beneficial to others, it does not contradict the social good. At this level the individual is normatively free.

Bidney calls normative freedom that according to which human action is directed by rational ideals and conforms to rational laws and principles. It presupposes that a rational man makes his own decisions as to how to act in the context of values and standards of his society which are prior to his existence in the society. Thus, one's demand for freedom of conscience and thought depends directly upon recognition of the power of reason to conceive valid ideals of what ought to be done and what can be realized in action.[6] In this normative sense freedom is responsibly pursued. Responsible freedom is the basis of social cohesion, and in African traditional society education played a vital role inculcating this freedom among members of society.

TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

The Role of Traditional Education

In African traditional society through the system of education an individual was brought up to respect the values and standards of his society. Education was the basis of inculcating social and moral values; it pervaded the entire framework of the social system and was the instrument for socialization.[7]

Virtue, defined in terms of a social ethic, was the ultimate aim of traditional education in Africa. The normative dimension found here a very definite expression, being primarily concerned with social and moral values.[8]

The cultivation of social and moral values and hence enhancement of social cohesion played a dual fundamental role. First, it enabled society to be held together; great value was placed upon communal fellowship in the traditional society, which fellowship infused African social life with a pervasive humanity and fullness of life.[9] This state of affairs entailed psychological integration of the people and hence enhanced social unity. Second, the social cohesion was instrumental in society's evolution which involved positive inner social and institutional changes. These changes have occurred over time and they provided opportunity for social challenges to ensure social order, integrity and the present and future survival of the society"

Authoritarianism in African Traditional Society

Notwithstanding the basic values of African communalism, there were clear (indirect) coercive elements inherent in it. There was epistemological and political authoritarianism. Wiredu states that authoritarianism refers to any human arrangement which entails any person being made to do or suffer something against his will, or if it leads to any person being hindered in the development of his own will. He qualifies this conception by saying that what is authoritarian is the unjustified overriding of an individual's will.[10]

Kaphagawani says that epistemological authoritarianism was rampant in traditional Africa precisely because the elders were the only ones held to have all knowledge and wisdom, so that what they said had to be believed without questioning.[11] This epistemological advantage the elders had over the rest of the community ensued into a political advantage or political authoritarianism,[12] from which emerged the core of political leadership in the traditional society. These elders claimed to know what was good or right for the society so their ideas were imposed on the non-elderly. Because of their assumed superiority in knowledge and wisdom as well as

political authority and power, they assumed the position of Plato's philosopher kings. Their dual authoritarianism was excessive. They unjustifiably overrode the will of the non-elderly. The authoritarian tendency, a form of indirect coercion, was inimical to the growth of individuality. Though it was a means of social control, it denied the non-elderly a critical appraisal of the social system, hence, deprived them a cognitive active participation in it.

THE STATUS OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE AFRICAN TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

Nonetheless, Kaphagawani says, to assert African communalism (and the authoritarianism of the elders) is not in any way to imply that traditional Africa knows no concept of the individual. Africans of the independent existence of each and every person in their communities. In fact African communalism presumes pluralism in that it is essentially a voluntary pooling together of independent and differing efforts and capabilities that makes the African communal life what it is. Moreover the young are not ontologically less human than the elders. According to Tempels, the name is the very reality of the individual.[13]

Moreover, the overriding of the will of the non-elderly was a kind of benevolent authoritarianism. The elders were not rulers but wise leaders or guardians who were safeguarding the interests of society, that is the good of every individual and therefore order and harmony, which ensured social security and a worthy life for the individual. Besides, in their leadership they were open to everybody; they do not hide behind the institutions they formed such as monopolistic political parties characteristic of the contemporary world. The elders lived up to their status as philosopher kings for after a long period of continuous education they acquired considerable social wisdom.

The fact of the reality of the common or social good and the willingness of the individual to subscribe to it implied a dialogue between the individual and the society. A person was not compelled to be a conformist to the social ethic but was expected to have a moral obligation to behave in a manner that would enhance the social ethic. This moral principle could be analogous to Kant's categorical imperative, i.e., "Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a general natural law."[14] Accordingly, in order to ensure cultivation of the moral obligation among the individuals, coercive social institutions were an exception rather than a rule. So while the individual was morally bound to promote the common good, society had a moral obligation to ensure the integrity of the individual. Therefore, both society and the individual were bound to each other.

Despite the virtuousness of African communalism sometimes there were dissenting voices among the individuals, especially from among the non-elderly, due to the elders' authoritarianism. The fact of dissension can be maintained by the existence of the concept and practice of punishment in the traditional society.

INDIVIDUALITY AND SOCIAL COHESION IN CONTEMPORARY LIFE

The epistemological and political authoritarianism filters into the modern state in Africa. Though some of the African contemporary leaders are not elders, they assume the superior knowledge and wisdom of the traditional elders. The colonial system facilitated usurpation of the authority and power of the traditional elders by the contemporary political leaders. Colonial control and education led to the emergence of a new social and political elite in the African society from among the non-elderly. They were those who accepted the new system, i.e., the

colonial system, and collaborated with or helped the colonial regime to sustain it in Africa. Over the time their social and political status was enhanced while that of the elders withered. They then with the struggle for political independence took up the political platform and thus assumed political leadership.

In the post-independent state, under the guise of socialist ideology to realize the common good or social cohesion and also under pseudo democracy, the contemporary leaders impose their ideals and ideas on the people. Through epistemological and political manipulation they invoke the virtues of African communalism. Africa has had abundance of examples of such leaders who in the name of the common good have established `democratic' institutions at the apex of which there is a single political party in which `freedom of expression' is guaranteed. This political monopoly has been the rule rather than exception in post-colonial Africa. It has enabled several presidents to be `elected' to power for several consecutive terms of office. Hence, democracy has always been manipulated in their favor.

The authoritarianism entailed in such monopolistic political system has always inevitably led to a conflictual climate, i.e., conflict between the state and the individual. Thus Africa has witnessed growth of political liberal movements; Africa today is experiencing the liberal tide of the 19th century Europe which was directed against the political control of the monarchs who were the `wise' men of Europe at that time.

In contemporary Africa the ethic of African communalism is an ideal beneath African socialism. Ideally African socialism anticipates a revolutionary change to redress economic and social imbalances in African countries which resulted from European colonialism; African socialism is regarded an antecedent to social cohesion.[15] However, African socialism in its contemporary context is founded on authoritarianism; the ideology is developed by political leaders who have over the years in the post-colonial state assumed epistemological and political authoritarianism and have not allowed the citizens adequate means to express their interests, ideas and values. The will of the people has been assumed and `choice' made for them; conformity is forced on the people. In this case the people have been denied political freedom, i.e., real participation in the political process.

The authoritarian political behavior of the leaders negates their ethical legitimacy in society. It erodes the dignity of the individual and becomes a basis of his perpetual unhappiness. Consequently a perpetual, though sometimes illusive, antagonism between the individuals and the society or state ensues. This conflict parallels the social harmony that results from the natural social evolution.

The conflict between the individual and the state is not only a phenomenon of the African world. It is also a social and political crisis which is an inevitable consequence of man's attempt to organize society and establish institutions to ensure a way of doing things. The problem of crisis arises when the attempt is not ethically motivated, that is, when it is not genuinely intended for a common good.

The behavior of the political leadership in contemporary Africa has eroded the moral base of the socialist ideology. Instead of playing its role as "a set of ideas about what form a good society should take,"[16] it is used as an instrument for political propaganda and unjustified manipulation of the people as a means for the `philosopher kings' to realize their interests, i.e., political monopoly, a monopoly which is politically and socially unhealthy.

In contemporary Africa the manipulation of the people is greatly facilitated by their ignorance. They lack formal education on codified knowledge, and they also lack political consciousness. In many instances, the manipulation is supported by the use of military force.

Under such circumstances, where wisdom has been put aside, political authority and power lacks valid foundation as was the case in the traditional society. Thus it is inherently fragile and bound to disintegrate.

CONCLUSION

The validity of the paper in view of the proposed thesis ought to be evaluated on the following observations. First, the paper emphasizes that in the African traditional society there was a moral imperative or obligatory commitment among the people to the virtue of social good which greatly facilitated social cohesion, and thus enabled growth of a viable society. This moral trait was fundamentally based on society's recognition of the status of the individual, namely, his individual freedom, notwithstanding certain constraints to that freedom. Second, as a consequence of the first, society was devoid of the inherent social crisis that results from tension between individual freedom and society interests. Third, the harmonious link between the individual and society that was a feature of the African traditional society has been perverted by the contemporary African political leadership. This led to deep social or political crisis in Africa between the state and the individual. This perhaps is the greatest tragedy of Africa's political life today. Social cohesion in contemporary Africa is a nightmare.

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NOTES

1. The two terms: "individuality" and "individual freedom," are used synonymously in the paper.
2. P.H. Partridge says, coercion includes direct forms like commands and prohibitions backed by sanctions or superior power and many indirect forms like molding and manipulation whereby one:s course of action is determined by conditions set by another, (P.H. Partridge, "Freedom," Edwards, P., (ed. inc.): *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, V. 3. New York, The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1967, p. 222.
3. However, traditional African society was not free of coercion, like any other society, especially the indirect form. The main difference between coercion in contemporary Africa and in traditional Africa is that in the latter it had great degree of approval by society whereas in the former it lacks that acceptance and it is a burden to the people.
4. David Bidney (ed.): *The Concept of Freedom in Anthropology*. The Hague, Mouton, 1963, pp. 12-13.
5. D.N. Kaphagawani: "On African Communalism: A Philosophic Perspective." Paper presented at The First International Regional Conference in Philosophy. 23-27 May, 1988, Mombasa/Kenya, p. 2.
6. Bidney, *op.cit*., p. 12.
7. R.J. Njoroge and G.A. Bennars: *Philosophy and Education in Africa*. Nairobi, Transafrica Press, 1986, p. 163.
8. *Ibid*., p. 168.
9. Kwasi Wiredu: *Philosophy and an African Culture*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980, p. 21.

10. *Ibid*., p. 21.

11. An elder in the African traditional society was the person of very old age and was considered to have considerable wisdom in matters pertaining to society. The quality of wisdom gave him authority to play a leadership role in the society.

12. Kaphagawani, *op. cit*., pp. 9-10.

13. *Ibid*., pp. 15-16. Emphasis in the brackets is mine.

14. Bertrand Russell: *A History of Western Philosophy*. London, George Allen and Unwin, 1946, p. 683.

15. The colonial rulers pursued economic and social policies which benefitted only a small section of the countries' populations, especially in the urban areas and thus created a big socio-economic gap in the African societies, hence negating social cohesion.

16. This is Wiredu's definition of the term "ideology."

AFRICAN METAPHYSICAL HERITAGE AND CONTEMPORARY LIFE:
AFRICAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONTEMPORARY LIFE
P. KABOHA

As the title of this paper indicates, the study aims at evaluating the role of metaphysical concepts in traditional African life, and considering the value of an integrated life style in relation to the natural environment as contrasted to the artificial environment. Finally the paper looks at the possible contribution to the contemporary society (especially the Western industrialised society) which such concepts and way of life can provide. This is not a typical academic paper in that it is "researched" from existing written material. Its intention is more to look at different attitudes and lifestyles and to try to formulate original conclusions from the contrasts and similarities elucidated through the comparison. These conclusions also will be drawn from the trends and the physical, social and psychological results of these lifestyles and attitudes. From these conclusions will come suggestions of what from the traditional African world can be of value to contemporary society.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES

A common characteristic of traditional African societies is that they did not separate consciously the various aspects of life and social behavior into discrete compartments or treat them as possible areas of study or contemplation. All areas of life were seen and treated as part of an integrated whole which also included all nature. Thus aspects of religion are intertwined with aspects of culture; politics not only is mixed up with its sister economics but mingles freely with family structure and even relationship with ancestors. In a traditional African mind this does not lead to confusion, but shows how the African derives his ideas and way of life from the integration that he sees in the diversity of nature around him. He does not feel that he is separate from nature around him, but feels so "integrated" in this diversity he does not stand aside to analyze and intellectualize nature. This does not mean that the African does not use his intelligence to deal with his environment, but that he uses this intelligence to play his role in the "ecology." This "intelligence" develops from his own integrated relationship with nature which is an "informing" process whereby his learning about nature is an internal process just as the child learns about its mother through a special relationship which is part of the child's life and growing up, so that by the time the baby is weaned it "knows" its mother emotionally, physically and lastly intellectually. This kind of knowledge is more complete than the intellectual knowledge so popular in contemporary society. The African's knowledge of nature was, therefore, integrated with his life and with his very identity. The life experience of one generation was added to the life experience of previous generations and was handed down to succeeding generations as "social wisdom" or as social structures and convention which later could later be modified by new experience.

What can be described as metaphysical concepts in traditional African thought derive from African cultural and social practice. From the self renewal and the natural cycles that Africans observed around them came not only the feeling, but the conclusion that man renews himself and

that ancestors do not die out but are reborn in the young. This entailed belief in ancestral spirits and specific conduct towards them. As elders were at the top of the social ladder, so ancestral spirits were seen not only as super elders, but, being spirits, as close to the Gods. Thus, sacrifice to and worship of ancestral spirits naturally followed. Children born resembling dead relatives or forbearers reinforced belief in the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Children were thus not only loved, but held sacred as ancestors reborn; bearing children (or having them) was seen as a special blessing of the Gods. Conversely, miscarriage was seen as a curse and deliberate abortion was an abomination unknown.

The Gods--often one central God--were not just a belief, but a conviction in all African societies. This was at the center of African traditional metaphysical systems. It was arrived at not only by intuition and reason but also through their communion with nature and the society around, which not only implicitly believed in God but also "lived" this belief. If you live close to nature the integration and purposefulness of nature are things you take for granted. If nature was chaotic and disorganized it would prove impossible to predict its behavior; hence, one could not adapt to it. This truth is self-evident to those who live close to nature as opposed to those who live in artificial man-made surroundings. Living in what I would call "the natural state" (i.e., not so civilized as to find nature strange) one learns to "pray" to the spirits or spirit controlling nature for protection against unpredictable natural forces and calamities. Living in cities protected by man's science and reading about nature in books is how modern metropolitan man has progressively lost his integration with nature and the intuitive understanding of this great system. When dependent on science, one regards religion and metaphysics as mere academic curiosities, and subjects them and all life to the same rationale that guides science. One cannot comprehend that all things are not governed by and understood through a similar logic. In traditional African life the "logic" that guides or explains nature is felt and understood, but it is not a *prima facie* requirement for accepting an integrated life with nature. The question then is whether this integration with nature and the metaphysical intuitions arising from it are of any value to modern man?

THE WESTERN PROBLEMATIC

Modern man (in the first, second and progressively in the third world) is living an artificial life divorced from nature. We hear phrases like "man rediscovering nature" from western world media, this would not be the case if western man was in harmony with nature. Man who is educated through the system of Western civilization comes to metaphysical concepts through mental discovery processes such as mathematics, or through belief or faith in a religion. Faith does not come naturally to modern western man, it is a forced attitude inculcated by family habit and social pressure. This is because all other approaches to knowledge are through a scientific system of education with self evident materialistic concepts. Africans who have been integrated into this system live a dichotomous life of opposed cultures and values.

So long as the so called "Western" civilization was successful in most areas of human endeavor and in controlling the environment, large parts of the world embraced it warmly though it often disrupted their own way of life and always broke up any society's integrated systems of life and belief. But now western civilization has reached a crisis. Its technologies have created environmental hazards hitherto unknown to man and capable not only of destroying man but rendering our planet unfit for life. Even on a daily basis environmental pollution has to be fought to preserve threatened plant and animal species. The ideologies engendered by this civilization

and those that support it emphasize individualism, consumerism and materialism. The "permissive" nature of societies which have emerged in the centers of western culture has stretched the moral and cultural fabrics of those nations to the breaking point. Let it suffice to mention that it is still a matter of shock to many in this world to learn that in certain societies homosexuality and abortion are permitted by law.

Individualism, materialism and consumerism emphasize the body at the expense not only of the mind, but of metaphysics. The physical world is glamorized in an artificial and synthetic way since it is divorced from nature. Food, clothing, shelter and medicine are all ready-made, packaged and waiting for the consumer. Knowledge and religion are also similarly "packaged" and made easy to consume by "sweeteners" and "preservatives". If you have enough money you can buy any amount of this "manufactured" stuff till both your mind and body are obese, lazy and sick of it. This has the effect also of stunting one's spirit and the growth of one's non-physical attributes. This makes it difficult, therefore, to perceive any non physical entities or even to entertain metaphysical concepts. This gross materialism cannot of necessity and by persuasion admit of "any" god except science which can preserve and maintain it till the inevitable end.

My description of Western materialism may sound exaggerated till one realizes that computers can now be "trusted" to compose music and other forms of creative art. Since the contribution of the human spirit to these activities is considered doubtful, a good brain (e.g. a computer) is all that is needed. Marriage guidance bureaus use computers to match partners since love is considered a purely biological phenomenon. Religious fanaticism (e.g., Islamic fundamentalism) is now relegated to technologically underdeveloped societies which are growing suspicious of western materialism. Gone are the days of the crusades which are now a matter of intellectual curiosity. The modern western mind can only "crusade" in politics and economics, while religion is regarded as a matter for priests and such specialists. You do not mention religion or God in "polite" society especially at mealtimes. This crusading spirit in politics and economics has found expression at national level. Spurred on by the challenge of Marxism, it has led to wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Afghanistan and Angola. The pawns in this game of power are the nationals of those countries settling a power struggle between the two opposed mamoths of materialism: the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

The surrender to materialism by the western world has not gone unchallenged. Being the most sensitive, the young rebelled against their elders in the sixties (1960's) with movements like the "hippies" in America, the "flower children" in Britain and others in Europe. These openly denounced the materialistic values of their parents oriented toward "success" in the Western world. They challenged their empty religiosity as formalized and materialistic, and even turned to Hinduism and Buddhism in search of spiritual expression. This should have sounded the warning bell to the Western world, but few understood the implications of this revolt. The generation that rebelled has now joined the mainstream of the materialistic world for the sake of survival. The only expression left in the 80's of this kind of spirit are the "Greens" and other environmentalists, who always are looked upon as the lunatic fringe because they interfere with money making.

Philosophy did attempt to revive the flagging spirit against the twentieth century onslaught of materialism spurred on by the scientific and industrial revolutions. Heidegger, following in the footsteps of Kierkegaard[1] tried to define human existence and purpose in terms of an essence which involved "mind" more than "body". In other words, the human person was not merely the product of the evolution of his body.[2] At the turn of the century Bradley[3] had developed

Hegelianism into a system that caused a polarity between the British Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, the latter being the center of atomic materialism led by Bertrand Russell[4] and later Ludwig Wittgenstein[5] the single most influential thinker behind the logical positivists. The clash between the metaphysicians of the school of Hegel and Heidegger and the materialists of the Vienna the circle[6] and the Cambridge variety was settled by historical and social circumstances in favor of the latter. Science and Technology were achieving revolutionary progress everywhere, normal human cupidity gave science an omnipotent and omniscient future, and this cupidity penetrated to philosophy. In many if not most European and American Universities metaphysics and ethics went out of fashion, and philosophy became a "science" of language, a kind of philosophy little divorced from linguistics. So influential was this movement that even a number of post-war existentialists, such as Jean Paul Sartre,[7] were materialists and Marxist, which goes to show that very few philosophers, if any, can rise above the predominant influences of their time and place.

AN AFRICAN RESPONSE

But neither Hinduism, nor existential materialism, nor even Marxism can solve the crisis in Western civilization. In African terms this is the crisis of the person who has broken away from his parents, his society and his roots and is living a new life supported by artificial systems in a cultural and metaphysical vacuum. Such a person cannot hold the Gods or God as sacred since he does not see his parents, society and ancestors as so sacred. In ancient Greek terms he has committed "hubris," which always led to tragedy.[9] In both ancient Greek and African terms the God or Gods gave such a person enough rope to hang himself. Traditional European and African societies coincide in this view. The African Heritage would view modern "Western" or "Westernized" man as a rebel against nature and God, someone who inevitably is being taught a lesson. He has created toys that can destroy him and, like a forest fire started by a child, are out of control. Now, paradoxically he is appealing to his parents, to every passerby and even to God; science, the tool he turned into a god, has turned traitor. Western-oriented man has to learn some humility, seek himself once again, and find his place in a natural ecology of body, mind and spirit.

The approach of African traditional society to the problem was not to seek to "control" or "manipulate" nature, but how best to "integrate" into their system of life whatever new knowledge, discovery and invention they had come across. They (the Africans) would always discard whatever seriously disrupted their social order or spiritual beliefs, for instinctively they recognized that their society was not yet ready to accept such a disruptive change. They would discourage any "inquiring mind" that would bring about such a disruption because they were afraid of seeking "power" over nature (they reserved this for God), and concentrated on how best to live within the system physically and spiritually. They knew the price of "hubris" from experience; always they expiated any acts that appeared to challenge the Gods with elaborate ceremony and sacrifice intended to prejudice popular opinion against such tendencies. Nobody was expected or even allowed to "play God" by trying to control the system; one was only to seek to understand how God wanted the system to run. Nobody sought to understand "how" God or the gods run the system or "why" the gods run it the way they did. This hierarchy of authority began in the home, was present in the society and was pursued in spiritual matters. You did not question the motives of your parents, the elders, and *never* those of God.

The assertions above may sound childish in a century when man has left his planet and can reach others and they may appear as a condemnation of science and technology; but his is not the case. All I am saying is that all development must be integrated. If man must take a big leap in technology, he must take a similar leap morally and spiritually or he will turn technology into a God and will only wake up when his own tool is about to destroy him. It is my contention that science has become a religion in the western world and technology a God. There are stirrings against it now, but environmentalists and other preservers of nature still look at the problem from a purely materialistic standpoint, their morality is an argument for self survival. There is little realization that this is the result of lopsided development and divorce from nature. Like physical development, spiritual and moral development must be nurtured, but it is dangerous for moral "infants" and spiritually malnourished "children" to handle advanced technology whose capacity can reach the moon or carry out genetic engineering. The one area where this lopsided development is obvious is the capacity of the military arsenals of NATO and the Warsaw pact countries vis-a-vis. The number of quarrels currently going on in many parts of the world spurred on by rivalling alliances whose ideological quarrel is endemic. Man has not yet outgrown war as a means of settling disagreements, yet his capacity to destroy far exceeds what is necessary to destroy all life on earth. Man's moral and spiritual condition thus is far behind the requirements of a being so endowed with powers of destruction. It is the condition of a child holding in his hand a very dangerous weapon which should be retrieved from him till he is old enough to use it wisely if at all.

Looking at man in the above light it is obvious to all that we must stop and reconsider. Man could not have reached such an impasse unless at a certain stage he went wrong in his development. It has become the characteristic of "Western" civilization to worship science and machinery ever since the industrial revolution. Philosophy followed suit. The movement started by empiricists like David Hume[10] culminated in the twentieth century assertions of Wittgenstein[11] and other linguistic analysts that metaphysics and ethics not only were *not* philosophy, but that they were palpable nonsense.[12] This kind of "hubris" was not limited to philosophy, but was reflected in every aspect of life. The popularist political philosophy that every budding revolutionary "ate up" was dialectical materialism, a denial of "soul" in man. Popular art in cinema, theater and elsewhere swung to sex and violence; popular music spoke of physical passion. Beauty became an industry as did games of skill and those of violence. Except for the abolition of slavery Western Europe did not seem to have advanced morally from the days of the ancient Roman Empire. Such materialism is a sign not only of spiritual and moral decadence but of underdevelopment.

I submit that the foregoing problems are all the result of a kind of "hubris." Man was so happy with the discovery of his new "toy" technology that he concentrated all his energies on its byproducts and forgot the serious things in play. Western man organized his society to suit technology or to let technology organize his life and his society. He trusted to scientific methods for understanding life and God, and when he could not he abandoned God and "life" as the African understands it. When you commit "hubris" the Gods react by "blinding" you to your acts till it is too late.[13] It is the job of Africa now to lift this veil of blindness before it is too late for the whole world. It is the turn of Africa to play missionary to Europe, America and even Asia. African man is not yet entirely divorced from his environment; he knows nature not just with his head but with his body and spirit. One thing Western man must learn from the African is that mental analyses and generalizations must come last rather than first in our knowledge of anything, we must first live and tangle with that thing. In other words there are other types of

"knowledge" apart from the mental type, this comes from communing with nature as our physical and spiritual "senses" get attuned to that which we are communing. This experience defies easy mental analysis, and one must learn to accept at times what may not be explained by science.

Simple faith--and at times blind humble faith--is good to foster among the young and not so young members of society in order to preserve the hard earned values which uphold that society. African society encourages this. In contrast, the young in Western society are free to inquire into any subject, there are no forbidden subjects; and the scientific inquiring mind is encouraged. This leads to a society dominated by science. Since the elders tend to give children a right to question them and even to disobey them "hubris" comes naturally. In Africa we know that a child who does not obey his parents will not worship God, so we insist that he first must hold his parents sacred, respect the elders and obey them, then he will hold God sacred. Respect must be cultivated, it does not grow on the soil of challenge and dispute. Nature too deserves some respect, that is why at times certain groves and trees were held sacred, often for the purpose of teaching society not to misuse nature out of disrespect. People learned to associate nature with God, and not to divorce it from his law and his interests. This results in a general respect for nature and also for things in nature one did not understand. This attitude is opposite to that of manipulating nature to the extent of releasing forces one cannot control.

The metaphysical "concept" of God per se is not a concept in Africa, but for ages it has been a living reality. The metaphysical world is introduced to the child as part of daily life in Africa and, like the physical world, the metaphysical world must be lived in to be fully understood and not simply studied as an abstract hypothetical possibility. The African "lives" the metaphysical as well as the physical life, his religion is not divorced from his culture or his philosophy of life. In many parts of Uganda one still finds the ancestral spirits' huts close to the homesteads, and people still take there beer and food for the ancestors. Only the Westernized elite scoff at this.

CONCLUSION

I am not advocating the blind copying of African culture by the Western and Asiatic worlds. What I am advocating is a more sensitive, receptive and humbler approach to nature. We must all be willing to admit that the technological development of Western man has created a lopsidedness in the whole world of man which we must strive to correct because technology has spread. It is difficult to correct a bend in an old tree, but it can be done with the young and tender saplings. However, the old trees must acknowledge that they are bent before we can get their cooperation in helping to straighten out the young. The "straight" sticks to which the white young saplings can be tied (so as to grow straight) exist in Africa; even these are no longer as straight as one would have wished, but they are some of the few left in the world. This symbolism in an attempt to illustrate the depth of the problem. Those Africans who are still integrated with nature in their lives are so because of the way they have been brought up and the seclusion of their lives from the influence of materialistic cultures. If certain aspects of their integrated lifestyles are to be "tried out" in the West it can work only on the young whose psyche is still sensitive and receptive to lasting influences. In order to be lasting an environment sympathetic to such influences must be created, or else the unsympathetic atmosphere of flagrant materialism and skepticism would wipe out these influences from the psyche.

The change required in the Western world would be too fundamental and drastic for it to be willingly accepted. The sort of change that would alter the outlook of the adults sufficiently for

them to accept a different and revolutionary system of upbringing for their young could only be dictated by a catastrophe of no small magnitude. However, the condition of imminent danger to life which brings about endless "arms reduction" talks (which only scratch the surface when they do achieve reductions) and the increasing environmental concern are signs that if the Western world could recognize the root cause of their problem they may be willing to do something about it.

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NOTES

1. Soren Kierkegaard, *"Fear and Trembling" and "Sickness Unto Death."*
2. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*.
3. F.H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*.
4. Bertrand Russell, "*The Analysis of Mind*;" "*The Problems of Philosophy*."
5. Ludwig Wittgenstein, "*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*; *Philosophical Investigations*."
6. Ernst Mach, *The Analysis of Sensations*; Moritz Schlick, *Positivism and Reality*.
7. Jean Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*; *Critique of Dialectical Reason*.
8. Euripides, *The Bacchae*.
9. F. Kitto, *The Greeks*.
10. David Hume, *Inquiry into Human Understanding*.
11. Euripides.
12. Ludwig Wittgenstein.
13. Euripides.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CONTEMPORARY LIFE
The Moral Continuum
A. T. DALFOVO

This paper is a brief analysis of the moral continuum in the cultural heritage and contemporary life of Uganda. It focuses upon the element of constraint and compulsion in the form of colonial coercion that characterized Uganda at its beginning, persistently conditioned its growth, and prevented, among other things, the development of a national moral consensus.[1] In reference to the morality and culture of traditional societies, the paper proposes humanity as the common denominator for a national consensus and culture. In conclusion it envisages the moral advantage ensuing from a realistic reaction to the moral crisis and to the social pluralism experienced by the nation.[2]

SOCIAL HETEROGENEITY

At Independence on October 9, 1962, Uganda comprised four Kingdoms (Buganda, Bunyoro, Toro, and Ankole), ten districts (West Nile, Madi, Acholi, Lango, Karamoja, Teso, Sebei, Bugisu, and Bukedi) and the territory of Busoga. With the exception of the name "West Nile", all the others are meant to refer to the ethnic groups inhabiting them. This would seem to imply that Uganda consists of fifteen major ethnic groups, counting also the Lugbara and Alur in West Nile. But *The Uganda Atlas* enumerates forty-two ethnic groups in the country.[3] Ladefoged, Glick and Cripper list sixty-three languages and dialects there, and ethnicities are generally identified by their proper languages.[4] In fact, Uganda ranks as the second most heterogeneous nation in the world, with only 10% of ethnic and linguistic homogeneity.[5]

An understanding of the contemporary life of the nation requires an awareness of, and attention to, the many social units that constitute its roots and are its historical and cultural heritage. This historical recognition takes one to the migrations and settlements in the area now known as Uganda about A.D. 1000.[6]

The social units of that time should not be looked at retrospectively through the ethnic paradigms of today. Those groups took time to form into their present patterns. "Although there have been Nilotes and Bantu in East Africa for one or two thousand years, the traditional histories of individual Nilotic and Bantu tribes usually go back only one or three hundred years, and never for more than six hundred."[7] This remote history of Uganda "is not just a collection of histories of individual tribes or groups of tribes, but a story of fusion and interaction by which all tribes and groups have been constantly altered or even transformed."[8]

It can be assumed that the life and history of those units went through the normal vicissitudes that characterize any such group: inner and outer tensions, cohesive and disintegrating alternatives, prosperity and decline, peace and war.

Colonial Coercion

About 100 years ago, colonialism impinged on those social units with a force presumably never before experienced before and with effects lasting up to the present. Traditional societies

had experienced force before, but the colonial type of force was exceptional for its magnitude, complexity and penetration. The colonial impact upset the organization of those societies, coercing them to radical changes in both their inner structures and outer relations with other societies. In most cases, those units were amalgamated in larger entities and identified by names that were new to the More vast amalgamation as such. Thus, for example, the Toro and Ankole kingdoms were enlarged; their names were extended to the people brought into the larger kingdoms. Busoga resulted from an agglomeration of various states and the name of a smaller unit given to the new amalgamation. Acholi was created into one entity by the merger of many clans. The Karimojong proper are only three ethnicities among those in the present omonimous area. Teso had many chieftainships which had to be conquered one by one to forge the present territory. Bunyoro and Buganda were states in their own right; however, the Bunyoro territory was restricted while the Baganda territory was enlarged; their structure as that of the other social units, was emptied of real power. The ethnic groups on the map of newly independent Uganda, appear to be fairly homogeneous though they had been quite heterogeneous at the time of their amalgamation.

Colonial coercion was in many cases direct and overt violence. Troops were permanently mobilized and engaged in direct fighting or terrorizing to bend the people into submission, and in constant looting to acquire provisions for themselves and income for the colonial administration. The army was a permanent source of fear; it was meant to foster a climate of compulsion and constraint curtailing freedom.

At other times, coercion was indirect and covert, as typified by the treaties extensively used to establish colonial rule. The signing of these treaties, in the words of A. F. Thurston, a colonial administrator in Uganda, "is an amiable farce which is supposed to impose on foreign governments, and to be the equivalent of an occupation."[9] Though these treaties might have been sometimes a farce, they were never amiable. They were not intended to be a legal instrument between equals, as treaties are supposed to be; they were used as a fraudulent means of manipulation. Though both parties probably were aware of the inner senselessness of these treaties, each tried to exploit them. But as the colonial party had a stronger force behind the treaties, it could draw a greater advantage from them--not because of the treaty in itself, but because of the force behind it.

This colonial coercion marred the nation at its beginning, and has continued to undermine its life and history. It has prevented the formation and development of a moral consensus at the national level. As morality concerns free human behavior, morality can only originate, develop and apply in freedom. But a nation like Uganda whose freedom has been impinged upon by colonialism, particularly in public life, could not develop a common view on fundamental moral issues in the atmosphere of freedom needed to achieve a moral consensus. This does not mean that Uganda has had no moral values in her public life. It has had them, and fact could not have lived without them.[10] But these public values were rooted in and ensued from ethnic groups; in this sense, public ethics originally and fundamentally was ethnic.

Wider Identity

The colonial amalgamation posed a challenge to the social units undergoing that experience, and this led to their developing a more vast communal identity and cohesion. Thus, in 1943 the Basoga were proposing a constitution that had the monarchical Buganda state as a paradigm. In 1947, the Acholi were demanding an overall chief on the pattern of the centralized societies in

the nation. Other ethnic groups were envisaging a paramount head as a point of reference to their vaster identity. The Samia people in East Uganda "provide a very good example of a peasant society that had no centralized political structure being forced under the influence of external circumstances to take the identity of presenting a unified aspect to the outside world it had formerly lacked."[11]

The development of this wider identity was circumscribed by cultural boundaries, namely, it occurred among people who could communicate with each other through the same language and understand the same values. Thus, this expanding identity interested culturally homogeneous groups as for instance in Toro, Ankole, Busoga, Teso, and Acholi. Some units among them did not merge in this vaster identification process because of their linguistic and cultural differences, like the Bamba and Bakonjo in Toro. Some larger societies, like the Banyoro and Baganda, did not undergo the colonial merger referred to; their identity remained within their traditional areas.

Hence, identity was conditioned by culture. When identity expanded, its widest confines were those of culture; it did not extend to what would have become the national boundaries of Uganda. As T.B. Kabwegyere notes:

> The ideology of law and order and good administration provided the guidelines in building the foundation of ethnic identity. As an offshoot of this process, parochialism, rather than widening the base for a wider identity, became an essential value in the emerging structures. Far from molding a Protectorate identity, the discontinuous change from the pre-colonial ethos to the colonial era not only encouraged but in some cases imposed and forced on people a will to identify with the local area.[12]

Referring to the previous assertion that public ethics was fundamentally ethnic, it can now be more clearly seen how public moral consensus could develop, but not beyond the confines of the new wider identities, namely, not beyond particular cultural areas. To be able to go beyond them, moral consensus would have needed a common language and basic values by which the moral discourse could have reached the expected consensus. In fact, a moral consensus results from an intense personal communication entailing persuasions at the deep level of conscience. Such interrelations among groups need a possibility of communication and understanding that only common cultural values can offer.

This possibility did not exist at the national level. A culture is not artificially manufactured or legally established or hastily concocted. One can perhaps impose a political system on a national community, but not a moral system. Interaction at the national level existed, particularly in political matters; here too some analysts could interpret such political exchange as ultimately being motivated, guided and achieved. Whatever the opinion on the nature of this political relations, the moral discourse rested its legitimacy upon and drew its authoritativeness from tradition. Tradition, in turn, came to the public scene through the medium of ethnicities. The resulting public morality reflected the heterogeneous conditions of the nation in its motivations and purpose.

MORAL AWARENESS

Besides history, anthropology as the discipline of small-scale societies can help in assessing the position of ethics in pre-colonial societies. Anthropologists agree that all societies have rules relating to what ought and ought not to be done; all societies have an ideal standard of conduct

sometimes adhered to, sometimes deviated from. Some societies may not have developed an explicit and systematic set of moral principles; this however does not imply that such societies are confused in their practical application and appraisal of such principles. George M. Foster points out that "the members of every society share a common cognitive orientation which is, in effect, an unverbalized, implicit understanding of the `rules of the game' of living imposed upon them by their social, natural and supernatural universes. A cognitive orientation provides the members of the society it characterizes with *basic premises and assumptions* normally neither recognized nor questioned*which structure and guide behavior.*"[13]

The social units that constitute contemporary Uganda are described as traditional societies. The influence of some anthropologists, and also the desire by some philosophers to explain the development of morality, have led to the consideration of traditional societies as living by a traditional morality which is, by definition, blindly accepted. Further explained, critical thought is needed to pass from traditional, conventional or customary morality, to a reflective one.[14]

The available evidence on traditional Ugandan societies as they lived during the decades before colonialism, does not allow the above mentioned paradigm of traditional "blind" moralities to be applied to them. Such evidence from historical and anthropological findings and from linguistic analysis, is found, among other things, in the ways in which education was imparted, marriage contracts arranged, public hearings conducted and punishment administered. These and similar social aspects testify to a continuous incentive to motivate, assert, and perhaps modify the moral demands of individuals and society. A blind moral conformity embracing the whole community appears unrealistic. Moral issues were constantly confronted and demanded to be reflected upon.

However, there may be a time or an occasion in the life of an individual or a society when moral values are strongly challenged by some exceptional condition that induces what can be described as a *crisis*. A crisis here indicates a conflictual situation that challenges moral consistency at its roots, demanding a choice for or against; it touches on the principle of contradiction, by which it is an "either-or" moral choice. For instance, it could be a choice for either a traditional or a moral value; for either social conformity or individual creativity; for either a holistic or an individualistic vision of reality. The extraordinary experience effecting a crisis could be death, destruction, sickness, war, revolution or calamity. In Ugandan history, a typical instance of such experience was colonialism.

A crisis provides considerable incentives to reassess morality. Such a crisis however needs to be perceived for it to provoke the envisaged reassessment of morality: without an awareness of the crisis, there can be no reaction to it. The amount of public awareness about the moral crisis in Uganda provoked by colonialism is not easy to establish. At Independence, public awareness appeared to have been mainly drawn to the political crisis inherited from colonialism; the moral crisis received less or no attention. Today such moral awareness gradually is being acutely perceived. As a result an individual may react by developing new principles, finding new justifications, reconsidering his or her moral stand vis-a-vis other aspects of existence. The group may react to it by finding new motivations for cohesion, new patterns of interpersonal relations, new goals.

Moral Uniformity

Historical and anthropological literature on traditional societies in Uganda is abundant and several texts describe traditional moralities. These moralities varied in their prescriptions or in

the way they were applied. Traditional societies were molded by their specific geographical and historical environment, and as the configuration of Uganda is remarkably varied, the characteristics of its societies varied accordingly. The application of moral tenets is to be included in this diversity. At the same time, when comparing the various moral codes of these societies, one discovers behind the prescriptive variety, a considerable measure of uniformity.

Such uniformity emerges for instance in the respect for human life. The common good may require sacrificing the life of an individual and each community assesses the nature of this communal good, the way it is threatened and it need to be safeguarded. But when human life needs to be suppressed, the general behavior that precedes, accompanies and follows such action indicates its exceptional nature. Another example of moral uniformity relates to property. This relation varies in many ways, but in all societies everyone avoids being even suspected of being a thief. The prompt and merciless lynching of thieves, which may occur even at present, ensues from this deep repulsion for people who disregard property. Also in marriage life one could detect the same fundamental tenets of indissolubility, fidelity, harmony, etc., even when the external behavior seemed to hide such ideals. There is abundant oratory in all traditional societies projecting such common moral "oughts." One is here reminded of the distinction drawn by Ralph Linton between the conceptual values, which are the broad universal values common to humanity, and the instrumental values that refer to the varied means to attain these ends.[15]

The difference between this moral uniformity and moral consensus is one of awareness and appropriation. Uniformity indicates the possibility of consensus, but to become such, uniformity needs to be reflected upon and assumed. Uniformity may be given, but consensus has to be acquired.

For most anthropologists the immediate explanation of the uniformities or universal values underlying the different moral codes lies in the basic requirements of any society. Morris Ginsberg maintains that there are no societies "which do not regard that which contributes to the need and survival of the group as good, none which do not condemn conduct interfering with the satisfaction of common needs and threatening the stability of social relations."[16] A.L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn acknowledge that "the mere existence of universals after so many millennia of culture history and in such diverse environments suggests that they correspond to something extremely deep in man's nature and/or are necessary conditions to social life. . . . Anthropology's facts attest that the phrase `a common humanity' is in no sense meaningless."[17]

The moral code of the colonialists also entered the moral arena of Uganda, with its possible diversities and uniformities. One could begin with the ethnographers' consideration of the moral codes of small scale societies. These societies distinguish between their members and outsiders in the sense that the moral norms of the group cease to have meaning outside their particular collectivity; the group may have no code or a different standard of conduct towards others. The moral code of the colonialists was most probably seen under a similar perspective, namely, as being the code of a small scale society, and consequently as valid for its members, within their interests and culture. This meant, among other things, a moral code allowing double standards.

At the same time, elements of uniformity might have been noticed in that code, like the respect for life, property, marriage contracts, parents and authority. With regard to the consensus regarding such uniformities, one could envisage two alternatives: either such a code was perceived as one with the Christian moral code and in that case the acceptance of some of its elements might have happened because of religion; or the code appeared as purely colonial and consensus over its uniformities encountered two main obstacles. The first concerned the pervasive element of coercion that made whatever was colonial suspicious and generally

unacceptable. The second refers to the relativism and duplicity of the colonialist code which emptied it of objective values.

COMMON HUMANITY

The concept of a common humanity could in fact provide the moral continuum linking the cultural heritage to contemporary life. The moral advantages ensuing from this concept are generally appreciated; however, the concept itself has no agreed upon interpretation. Its analysis ultimately leads to the relation of person and community and to the individualistic or holistic visions of society. Hence, the concept of humanity poses a metaphysical challenge.

In the Ugandan context, this metaphysical issue could be seen vis-a-vis the African world-view which has harmony as one of its components. This harmonic component is still to a great extent implicit or philosophy in a "broad sense." Not having been made sufficiently explicit in "narrow sense" philosophy, it may not be possible to use it in an attempt to solve the metaphysical dualism of person and society in the concept of humanity.[18] Thus the combination of an harmonic vision of reality with its dual components could be considered a further challenge to metaphysics in Africa.

But if the metaphysical problem remains, morality may still be able to benefit from the harmonic vision offered by the African world-view. For in the practical field of moral behavior, the experiential knowledge that the African has of himself and his fellow humans within a common humanity helps him discover the relation: "I am because we are, and we are because I am."[19]

This concept of humanity would lead to the human person as the essential constituent of humanity. It would demand, in the context of Ugandan history, that the person be given back all that belongs to his humanity, specifically the use of his freedom within the context of social cohesion. The concept of a common humanity would lead also to the common elements in culture that constitute the inner cohesion of a human society, and upon which one can elaborate a moral consensus at ever wider levels of society.

The concept of humanity may appear to contrast with that of nationality, causing a dilemma in the Ugandan context. But humanism and nationalism are not contraries. The latter concept is actual a derivate from the former, in the sense that one is human before being national. Hence, reference to a common humanity does not supersede national characteristics. Rather, it provides their foundations: a national culture has its reason from existence in the humanity of the nationals who live in it.

Philosophy and particularly ethics need to continue a critical appraisal of this concept to avoid its being appropriated and manipulated by one part of humanity. Such philosophical criticism must be exercised within the pluralistic and conflictual aspects which appear to characterize contemporary society and are evident in both the cultural heritage and the contemporary life in Uganda. If pluralism and conflict are ignored in favor of monistic and irenic positions, society will never achieve the moral consensus needed for its survival.

Pluralism and Conflict

The history of Uganda testifies to the existence of a social pluralism coercively impinged upon by colonial social monism. The effects and pervasiveness of this coercion have not yet been fully realized and assessed. This could be one of the reasons why they seem to have persisted

beyond political colonialism up to the present. Colonial coercion has penetrated the national organism contributing to what some people call "the culture of violence" that has conditioned the thought and action of the nation. Such culture would not allow a moral consensus.

Nevertheless, seventy years of colonial attempts at social monism have not done away with social pluralism. On the eve of Independence, the Constitutional Committee recognized that "Uganda is an artificial unit containing within its borders . . . a variety of different tribes with different languages and customs."[20] At the same time, twenty-eight years after Independence, the International Seminar on Internal Conflicts in Uganda had to reassert: "It was widely recognized at the conference that Uganda was a land of many cultures and traditions. These should be nurtured and protected. Ethnic identities should not be de-emphasized as in Obote's time, when cultural differences were not discussed and were bottled up." And the ensuing recommendation was: "that schools should teach African cultures and traditions to build up pride in national unity. We need to enshrine our cultures in the education system . . . African traditions should be established as a subject taught in primary schools in the first three years."[21]

Thus pluralism is a factual datum that antecedes any conceptual consideration. Without a realistic recognition of this pluralism and a consequent refusal of monism, colonial or otherwise, a national moral discourse cannot develop. In fact, not only are individual citizens expected to recognize themselves as ensuing from the same humanity; also ethnic (cultural) groups are "natural" results of that humanity "natural" in the sense that culture is a necessary derivate of the socializing effect of humanity. Hence, a national moral consensus develops not only from an interrelation of individual citizens, but also from the exchange among cultural (ethnic) groups that must therefore be recognized and accepted in a pluralistic vision of history and society.

The past and present of Uganda attest to the presence of conflictual conditions which have generated crises in the field of individual and social morality. It has been asserted that such conflictual and critical conditions do not in themselves curb morality. Morality can actually develop in such conditions; crisis and conflicts can be an incentive to moral elaborations. Hence, conflicts are not an obstacle to morality, but a challenge and a means to its development when properly exploited to that effect.[22] Thus, the conditions of constraint and compulsion that marked the inception of the nation and that have accompanied its life-history do not in themselves imply that a development of moral discourse and consensus is impossible. In other words constraint and compulsion have not deprived the people of their inner or metaphysical freedom, but only of its outer or social exercise.

Past conflictual conditions continue, challenging a critical and continuous reappraisal of moral issues. If this takes place in pluralism and by reference to the common values which ensue from a common humanity vis-a-vis national characteristics and culture, then contemporary society is developing a national moral consensus it had been constrained from achieving by past monistic coercion. There are indications that this is happening in Uganda: the exchange in the mass media, the debates in court rooms, the popular committees at various levels, the human rights commission, and other forums, point to the acceptance of the challenge arising from pluralism and conflict.

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NOTES

1. *Constraint* is the condition of being prevented from doing, i.e., forced to omit; *compulsion* is the condition of being prevented from omitting, i.e., forced to do; *coercion* is the deliberate forceful interference in the affairs of human beings by other human beings. J. Feinberg, *Social Philosophy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), pp. 5, 7.

2. The need of a national moral consensus proposed by this paper assumes that morality is not only individual, but has also a social and national dimension.

3. *Atlas of Uganda* (Kampala: Dept. of Lands and Surveys, 1967), p. 40.

4. P. Ladefoged, R. Glick, and C. Cripper, *Languages in Uganda* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 31.

5. G.T. Kurian, *Encyclopedia of the Third World* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1987), s.v. "Uganda."

6. The peoples involved in these movement generally are classified in four main groups: the *Sudanic* in the north-west (Lugbara, Madi, . . .), the *River-Lake Nilotes* in the north, center and south-east (Acholi, Alur, . . .), the *Highland and Plain Nilotes* in the north-east and east (Karimojong, Iteso, . . .), and the *Western or Interlacustrine Bantu* in the south-west and center (Baganda, Banyoro, . . .).

7. J.E.G. Sutton, "The Settlement of East Africa", in B.A. Ogot and J.A. Kieran, *Zamani* (Nairobi: Longmans, 1968), p. 95.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

9. A.B. Thurston, "African Incident," quoted by R.K. Mukherjee, *The Problem of Uganda, A Study in Acculturation* (Berlin, Akademic Verlag, 1956), p. 126.

10. "What makes a society of any sort is a community of ideas, not only political ideas but also ideas about the way its members *should behave and govern their lives*; these latter ideas are its *morals*. Every society has a *moral* structure as well as a political one: or rather, since that might suggest two independent systems, I should say that the structure of every society is made up *both of politics and morals.*" P. Devlin, *The Enforcement of Morals* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 9 (Emphasis added).

11. R.W. Moody, *Social and Political Institutions of the Samia*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Cambridge, 1967, p. 1.

12. T.B. Kabwegyere, *The Politics of State Formation* (Kampala: East African Literature Bureau, 1974), p. 50. The author adds: "We may therefore conclude that the so-called `tribes', at least in the Uganda context, the `units' anthropologists have studied as traditional units, are mainly a creation of modern forces, of which colonialism is one" (*Ibid.*, p. 50). The amalgamation of traditional units is described by the author as tribalization or the creation of tribes: "Busoga presents one of the most clear cases of tribalization in the history of Uganda" (*Ibid.*, p. 41); "If what `tribe', it is difficult to see what else it was" (*Ibid.*, p. 45).

13. G.M. Foster, "Peasant Society and the Image of the Limited Good", *American Anthropologist*, 67 (1965), p. 293. (Emphasis added).

14. P.W. Taylor, *Principles of Ethics* (Encino, CA.: Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc., 1975), pp. 9-11.

15. R. Linton, "The Problem of Universal Values" in R.S. Spencer (ed.), *Method and Perspective in Anthropology* (Minneapolis, 1954). pp. 145-168.

16. M. Ginsberg, "On the Diversity of Morals," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 83 (1953), p. 124.

17. A.L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn, *Culture, A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (New York, Vintage Books, 1963), pp. 351, 353. The endurance of universals does

not make them absolute in the mind of anthropologists. Absolutes would in fact be subtracted from scientific scrutiny. Universals instead can be subjected to empirical scrutiny and even abandoned if evidence were to suggest so.

18. The terms "broad" and "narrow" to describe philosophy as a worldview or a technical discipline are used by Kwasi Wiredu, "Philosophy in Africa Today," 1981, mimeo: quoted by L. Outlaw, "Philosophy and Culture: Critical Hermeneutics and Social Transformation," in H. Odera Oruka and D.A. Masol, eds., *Philosophy and Culture* (Nairobi: Bookwise Limited, 1983), p. 28.

19. J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London, Heinemann, 1969), p. 214.

20. Report of the Constitutional Committee: The Wild Report (Entebbe, Government Printer, 1959), p. 34.

21. International Seminar on Internal Conflicts in Uganda, Kampala, MISR, Makerere University, September 21-25, 1987. Recommendation No. 2.

22. "From the ethical point of view, conflict is fundamentally ambivalent; it is therefore neither bad in itself (harmonious thinking) nor the good `father of all things' (dialectic of history). Its destructive and constructive potentialities depend largely on what judgment is passed on circumstances, means and ends. . . . The pugnacious element in man's individual and social self-realization is at all events not bad in itself, but takes its value or worthlessness from the relation in which its stands." B. Stoeckle, ed., *Concise Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (London, Burns & Oates, 1979), s.v. "Conflict" by D. Mieth.

CHAPTER VII
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND VALUE CLASHES IN AFRICAN CITIES
ERNEST K.M. BEYARAAZA

INTRODUCTION

While it is true that the cities in Africa are rather few and less populated in comparison to the rest of the world, it is also true that currently there is a mass movement to urban centers. Very soon Africa will be faced with the problem of a population explosion in its cities. Already a number of problems exist in these cities; this paper will focus mainly on those which have arisen due to cultural differences and value clashes.

To understand the nature of these problems, one needs to have an insight into the basic social structures in Africa. In other words, to understand city life one needs to look beyond the city and understand rural and tribal life because the people who live in cities come from rural areas, and African cities still maintain very strong relations with rural societies. Consequently, both the urban and rural mentalities have influenced each other so much that they bear indissoluble marks on each other. This two-way influence may vary from country to country, or from city to city, or even from individual to individual. However, it is such a strong characteristic of African life today that those who are not aware of it will fail to understand a number of issues in their African experience.

As various individuals meet in the city, cultural differences tend to emerge since these individuals come from different cultural backgrounds to which they are strongly attached. If African cities had been built on unpopulated islands, they would present the picture of market places, or churches, or any other public places where different people meet for certain purposes and then return home. However, most of the African cities are built amidst certain ethnic groups, some of whom think the land is theirs and wonder why the rest of the groups have invaded them. For example, in 1966 problems arose in Uganda between the figurehead President and the executive Prime Minister. The Prime Minister removed the President from office and took all his power. But the deposed President happened to be the Kabaka or king of the Baganda, and the capital, Kampala, happened to be on Buganda land. Consequently, the Baganda ordered the Prime Minister to remove the capital from Buganda land! I will dwell on the fact that urban life in Africa is not yet divorced from rural life in the second part of this paper.

When we talk of cities in Africa, it is important to distinguish between those which developed during pre-colonial Africa and those which were introduced through colonialism. The significance of distinguishing between these two types of cities will be discussed in the third part of this paper. Concentration will be on modern or colonial cities which are more relevant to our theme. Modernity in Africa is measured by Western civilization: generally, urbanization leads to westernization. But as I have already explained, a westernized, urbanized individual has strong ties with the rural life of the area where his relatives live. The first problem to which this type of relationship leads has been described as cultural differences. The second problem, however, arises from within one cultural group. A school educated person tends to develop values that are strange to his traditionally educated parents. More broadly, those who have embraced the modern or western values find themselves clashing with those who have maintained their

traditional values. What makes matters worse is that while the two categories may live apart *conceptually*, physically they share the same space and time.

The strange circumstances in which Africa finds itself today have an historical explanation. We have already seen that there were traditional cities, but today cities are mainly modern or western. Before the colonialists set foot in Africa, a number of nations had developed into full kingdoms or democracies, among other forms of government. But when Africa was partitioned on a sheet of paper at the Berlin Conference, no one paid attention to these already established dynamic, progressive, peaceful nations with their various cultures and values. Instead nations were mercilessly mutilated and disorganized into grotesque territories, colonies or protectorates. In nations the people are held together by indivisible bonds fabricated out of the common culture and values. But what held people together in these new territories were the gun, cruelty, positive law and conditioning to western culture, among other foreign values.

The concern of the colonialist was territorial. Regardless of the civilization that had existed on this territory over centuries, the colonialist demarcated his territory according to natural boundaries like rivers and mountains. This divided communal areas where families drew their water or grazed their cattle together, so that a father could cross over to visit his son only with permission from the new authorities.

Thus, Africa may be seen in historical perspective through three phases: pre-colonial Africa, colonial Africa, and post-colonial Africa. Part four of this paper will be dedicated to this historical explanation of the African predicament.

Many Africans have reacted differently to the circumstances that were created for them by the colonial authorities, among other foreign powers or influences. As this is a broad subject, I will cite only some examples of those who have resisted, and those who have crossed to the other side. This fact may also best be understood within the historical framework of the three phases. When the westerners fought the Africans physically and psychologically there was both resistance and success. Once the Africans freed themselves from the colonial yoke they established ministries of culture to liberate African values. Generally, this type of reaction may be summarized into three parts: those who over-react against the western influence and would rather cut the umbilical cord, thus making an about-turn toward everything African; those who, like their masters, still see nothing good in African culture and values; and those who are liberal and look at both sides objectively, accepting only what is acceptable and rejecting the rest. This reaction will be dealt with in part five.

Having shown the situation in African cities, the historical background which explains it, and the reaction of the people to it, we shall evaluate the significance of the city in African life today. In part six, I will show how the African city is double-edged. Finally, in part seven, I will discuss what philosophy can do for Africa, for it is not enough to describe and explain problems: it is necessary to seek solutions. I have suggested a philosophical approach to these problems, not as the best solution, but as one of the possible solutions. If my academic field were different, probably I would suggest a different approach.

Whenever one talks of philosophy, people react with mixed feelings. In the facial expressions of some one sees wonder and even disbelief. The general tendency seems to be that philosophy is too lofty to be called upon for down-to-earth problems. Of course, a lot depends on what one thinks philosophy or a philosopher to be. At an International Philosophy Conference on "Philosophy and the Mass-Man" in Cairo (1983), one philosopher argued that philosophy is for special people. I would like to retain the position I took there, namely, that philosophy does not come from heaven, but from the people in their capacity as people. Any mentally healthy person

is capable of philosophizing. It is true that many people ask themselves philosophical questions without knowing it, but look lost when one speaks of philosophy since they know nothing about academic philosophy.

The basis of my argument, therefore, will be the assumption that what makes people human is certain common powers and abilities, e.g., the mind, the will, and such products of these powers as language, morality, law, religion and art, among others. While we may have different languages, moralities, laws, religions, etc., we have a common mind that enables us to reflect on our differences, appreciate others and learn from one another.

It is this type of reflection that I recommend for the African quandary. Generally, people acquire values through conditioning; they accept values without any rational grounds. Thus, whenever these values clash, chauvinism tends to set in and no one can convince the other. My position is that when we reflect on our values we should be able to establish rational grounds for them. While all values are valued, their rational grounds are not equally strong. Through philosophical reflection, we should be able to hierarchize our values and thereby be able to resolve many differences regarding which is the higher value.

URBAN VIS-A-VIS RURAL LIFE IN AFRICA

Urban life in Africa is so close to the rural that one can say, without expecting much contradiction, that almost all people who live in urban areas have roots in rural areas where they have a great deal at stake. Those who do not have parents have other relatives there. Unless one is a foreigner, one has both a house where he stays in the city and a home where his parents and other relatives live. The difference between house and home are extremely important. Many working people, including high officials, live in the houses that either belong to, or are rented by, the unit for which they work. It is important to note here that the employee lives in this house with his family and even other relatives only as long as he is still employed. This is very significant because at any time one can lose one's job or die, and eventually one must retire. In the event of any of the above, the family members, relatives, and whoever has been in the house will have to go. But where? This question arises, not on the spur of the moment, but much earlier in one's life, particularly when one gets married and knows there is a family that some day will need a home. What makes the question more crucial is that nobody can tell when!

Due to this uncertainty, many tend to resort to the rural areas. This is the safest in Africa today. First of all, when you have a good job and fit in the city it does not follow that all your children will fit there as well. Thus many think it wise to keep contacts with both urban and rural life. Second, experience has shown that whenever wars break out or even political uprisings, it is the urban people who suffer most. One may lose all one's savings in a day. Therefore, even those who can afford establishing homes in urban areas think twice before they do so. Many first develop homes in rural areas and then build houses in the urban areas for mere comfort. Third, when they retire many feel more comfortable in rural areas where life is often far cheaper and much easier to cope with. Fourth, the general tendency in Africa is to bury the dead at home, i.e., in rural areas, whereas urban areas are generally places of work. Loss of job, death, or retirement generally mean returning to the rural areas. Due to inflation land development is better than an insurance policy.

The following presidential examples illustrate this point. Recently, the former President of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, retired to a remote village on the shore of Lake Victoria in Northern Tanzania, at the far end of country from the city of Dar es Salaam where he had lived

as President for over twenty years. He is the pride of Africa, not only because he left power and retired to his home, but because he served Tanzania and Africa with a clean record. The government and the Party of Tanzania had to give him a pension to survive and even built him a house--a very rare thing in political life.

The second presidential example is that of the late Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya who died at Mombasa. Immediately, the body was flown to Nairobi, and then driven to his home in Gatundu where his family members and relatives intended to bury him. In recognition of his services, the government of Kenya had to plead hard with his family to let him be buried in the city center. Partly due to culture, his body lay in state at Mombasa, then at Gatundu, and finally in the parliament buildings.

Generally, political life in Africa is considered to be the highest calling. Many take it as a sign of prestige, while others consider it the means to whatever they dream. To get into parliament, however, generally one has to win in elections in a constituency situated in the rural area. This situation has led parliamentarians, together with other aspirants and their respective friends, to keep in touch with the people back home. This entails development projects and other activities which keep urban areas in close contact with rural ones. There also are a number of organizations intended to keep in close contact the members from certain rural areas who are working in urban areas. These serve a number of purposes: social activities, marriage arrangements, rural development projects and burials, among other activities. As the various ethnic groups become so organized, the city tends to remain a no-man's land, merely a meeting place, or rather a place of work.

However, cities and towns are organized in a special way. People do not just go to work there as if it were in their gardens at home. Someone has to know which jobs are vacant, to advertise these jobs, and to arrange interviews. But as this someone must come from somewhere, and is bound thereby to certain others, corruption sets in. It is common to find certain organizations employing people from a particular ethnic group simply because the top man in that organization is from that group. This often leads to rivalry among ethnic groups as to who should man which job. Such tribalism not only leads to inefficiency at work, but often to actual fighting and political upheavals.

While this is a fact, it is also true that some organizations and individuals have transcended the tribal groupings, and deal with others objectively. They employ people on merit, and even marry those they love regardless of where they come from. While the clashes of values due to inter-marriages are becoming less, they are not dead. Many marriages fall into problems due to individual differences, but some are in difficulty due to inter-marriage. For example, some ethnic groups are patrilineal in contrast to those which are matrilineal. Whenever there is a divorce in a patrilineal ethnic group, the woman leaves the husband with the children and may marry elsewhere and have other children. In the matrilineal group, however, a woman leaves with her children, and goes with them to another husband. This entails two major complications. First, in the modern economy where many children are no longer an asset, the patrilineal group finds it difficult to accept the woman with another man's children. Secondly, such children will not be committing incest if they cohabit with those they find in the new family. Traditionally, brothers are supposed to protect their sisters against any immoral activities, but the sons of this new woman will not be in position to fulfill this responsibility.

The language barrier is often a problem too. Some marriages are made difficult by the in-laws who fail to communicate with their son's wife. It is important to remember that extended families in Africa are still the order of the day. It is not uncommon to find a house full of both

the husband's and the wife's relatives, despite the fact that the salary of one or even both is not even enough for their food. Yet, it is almost a crime to tell these people to go back home. Often you are forced to borrow money, not only to buy them food, but to pay for their school fees and buy them clothes.

This extends beyond one's relatives. People assume the right to knock at your door explaining that they are a son of so-and-so from the village neighboring that of your fathers. You may not even be able to recall his father, but you will squeeze yourself and give him what he wants. Without this special manner of African life many of the big officers driving big cars in big cities would never have seen the inside of a classroom! We are rich because we share our poverty, and we are poor because we share the little we have.

THE AFRICAN CITY

Urban organizations seem to be natural to man. As nations naturally develop, certain circumstances lead a part of these nations to live in urban areas. Such circumstances could be those of administration, trade, industry or agriculture, among other human activities. Partly because of these activities cities arose in Africa at dates which are only partly known. Such cities include famous ones and those whose sites are the only thing known about them. For example, some ancient cities in North Africa were built thousands of years before Christ, others existed on the Eastern Coast of Africa, and still others existed in the interior and along the Nile Valley.

However, our immediate concern is with the modern cities where the problems of cultural and value differences are concentrated. In the previous part it was pointed out that these modern cities are not yet divorced from rural areas. For city life this implies that cultural clashes and tribalism, among other problems, exist in the city. While in the previous part we saw that city dwellers had difficulties coping with each other due to their cultural backgrounds, in this part we see them having some problems in common regardless of their cultural backgrounds since various individuals are similarly influenced by city life and similarly harassed by their respective cultural backgrounds. The problems of intermarriage and extended family introduced us to this new type of value difference.

Traditionally, marriage to an African meant the preservation of life. Among the Bakiga of Western Uganda, part of the blessing of a marriage ceremony was: *Ozaare ozarurukane*. This phrase is difficult to translate, but may mean simply: may you produce as many children as possible! One of the reasons that justified poligamy was failure on the part of the wife to bear children. Whenever a man failed, his brothers would assist, but the children would be his. This conception of marriage still exists and because of this Africans find it a real problem to allow their sons and daughters to become celibate priests and nuns.

A man is supposed to produce children not only for the sustenance of life, but to keep his lineage strong, and also *to survive the grave* through the sons left behind. One who produces only daughters is better only than one who produces nothing. While daughters are supposed to go to other families, it is the sons who are supposed to keep their fathers' families alive. Those who fail to achieve this die *encwekye*, or literally, "broken off." Hence, producing only daughters also traditionally led to polygamy. The presence of children at home was always a pleasure. The parents and grandparents would have someone to send here and there for water, firewood, fire, among other things.

But what has the city done? Many have turned into Europeans due to city life. They have only one or two children. Some even prefer cats and dogs to children. While they see nothing

wrong and actually enjoy themselves, their parents at home are saddened. Even those who have many children are not of much greater use to their parents. It is very difficult for a modern parent to send a few of his children to their grandparents to look after cows and goats, to fetch water and firewood for them. So the poor grandparents die as if they had produced no children. The moral aspect is still worse. While traditionally parents knew what to do to control their children, today they do not even know where they sleep. Partly because of this, in certain areas some parents are against their daughters going to far-off schools.

The city has threatened the traditional social control in Africa. Traditionally, the people knew who was who. This was vital for married life which, in turn, is vital for life itself. According to the Bakiga, *Oshwera abuuza*, i.e., it is very important to marry someone you understand. Traditionally, this understanding was made possible by relatives and friends who would recommend which girl your son should marry. The girls were always aware that eyes were on them from all corners and through secret chinks. This made them behave themselves wherever they went and in whatever they did. Today the city is the safest place for sinners. A girl may become pregnant, run to the city, abort and return to tell people she had gone to visit her aunt.

The city is the hiding place for all sorts. One who cuts people's throats at night, during the day is greeted with "Sir." A child who is out of control at home may run to the city where there they can always find something befitting their character to do. The worst danger from the city is its ability to keep secrets so that there exist all sorts of impenetrable networks beyond the control of anyone, including the government.

Due to this private and secretive life, society has come to be threatened by innumerable problems, including foreign diseases like VD and AIDS, among other catastrophic harbingers. Cities in Africa are swelling with people, but many are afraid of them. Surprisingly, those who fear them include not only rural dwellers; many city dwellers spend sleepless nights in beautiful surroundings.

Why is the city so strange to African people? This leads us to the question of origin. As we already have seen, the modern city was introduced into Africa by the West. So, urbanization, modernization and westernization in a sense mean the same. In Africa many systems were introduced and maintained by Europeans. At the time of independence these were inherited by Africans, some of whom had not been prepared at all for such duties. The city is one of these systems. It is not surprising that it is strange to many Africans. It seems that, as some Europeans did not expect to leave, they built the cities for themselves, and never explained much about them to the Africans. Perhaps we shall get a better picture of this when we see the city in its general historical perspective in the next part. However, it is also important to realize that while the rest of the world became urbanized through industrialization, Africa remained rural as it was used for the raw materials for the European industries. People would go to work in plantations or mines and then return to their homes in rural areas. Those who worked in urban areas were the educated class, who, as we have seen, also were strongly attached to rural areas. So the city remained distanced from the African population.

THE HISTORICAL EXPLANATION OF THE AFRICAN PREDICAMENT

When the African nations were destroyed and rearranged into new territorial groupings, much planning on the side of the Europeans had to be done to keep the situation under control. First of all, participation had to be achieved. For this reason, the British, for example, recruited

Indians and then Africans into the army to be able to suppress any uprising or resistance. The following contradicts the popular belief that the Indians in Africa were mere laborers, particularly to help build the Uganda railroad.

It is rather humiliating to think that a tribe of natives with scarcely, if any, a gun amongst them, and using for the most part bows and arrows, can defy and has defied, ever since May all the well-armed Indians commanded by a colonel of the Nubis and all native troops and maxim guns sent against them.[1]

Secondly, it was considered necessary to turn the people against their own culture before another could effectively be introduced. To achieve this, the colonialists needed the assistance of the missionaries. As the missionaries never participated in fighting or harassing the people in any way they were more trusted by the people. They made an effort to learn the peoples' languages. One of them, after learning Kikamba had the following to say.

Their language is wonderfully expressive. . . . It gives one much food for thought to find a language so philosophic in its structure on the lips of naked savages, and we come to the conclusion that Kikamba must have come to them at babel or elsewhere, from the hand of the Eternal Omniscient.[2]

More signs which can give some inkling about the order that was destroyed by the Europeans in Africa will be dealt with when we turn to the African reaction to colonialism and imperialism.

Despite the clear evidence available, those acquainted with European conversation or even literature about Africa come across bizarre stories, for example, that the Africans have a simple primitive language consisting only of a jargon of somewhat inarticulate sounds, or of only a few words which are followed by much gesticulation. Dr. Kihumbu Thairu reports that in the late 1950s his European teacher told his class that there was still a tribe in the Congo--present-day Zaire--which could hardly communicate in the dark because the word for "come" was "U," and the word for "go" was also "U," the two words only being distinguished by hand movements. With such mentality, it is quite possible that another teacher in the Congo taught that there was a tribe in Kenya which could hardly communicate in the dark. . . . There are too many malicious stories about Africa; the reasons behind them are so obvious as to be transparent!

Hardly any African who stayed long at school during colonial days will not tell you a story about language. One was caned for uttering a single word in one's mother tongue. Many European languages, including Latin, were learned but never spoken, yet there are many things which can be expressed only in one's own language. Different schools had different methods of punishing those who spoke the "vernacular," "primitive," or "dirty" language. Some had placards reading "I am a fool"; others were made to kneel on bare knees on hard ground with their arms stretched sideways for a long time.

Immediately after the African countries became independent, a Ministry of Culture was established to cater to the sadly downtrodden African cultures and values. In the case of language, probably the best example is that of the former President of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, who not only made Kiswahili the national language, but made it also the general language for communication, including teaching. He personally translated important books, including the works of Shakespeare, into Kiswahili. Scientific terms were also translated. Other countries like Kenya also developed Kiswahili and put it on an equal footing with English. For example, one needs to pass tests in both to be able to contest a parliamentary seat. While in Uganda only English has been spoken in parliament, recent developments show that one is free

to express his views in his mother tongue as long as one arranges in advance for the translation of his address. In Uganda more than twenty languages are spoken.

The language example has been dwelt upon in a representative capacity. What happened to language also happened to the other aspects of culture and to the whole value system. This has taken place in three stages. In the first stage culture and values were freely developed. In the second stage there were deliberate attempts to destroy the African culture and to condition Africans to Western culture: during this stage culture meant only Western culture. When someone was described as "uncultured," this meant someone was not "westernized." In the third stage efforts have been made to liberate African culture. Besides the Ministry of Culture, many individuals seem to have reacted bitterly against the way the Europeans looked down upon their culture and values. It is probably in reaction to this mistreatment that a man like the late President Jomo Kenyatta, who had studied in England and even married an English woman, later decided against speaking English. It is also possible that President Mobuto Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu wa Zabanga banned all foreign names in Zaire and reinstated African ones for similar reasons.

While all this mistreatment was going on, the city served as the residence of the oppressor. In many countries there were both the colonial and the local governments. The posts from that of Governor to that of District Commissioner were manned by Europeans; local governments were under District Commissions. At District Centers there were two types of residences: those for the Europeans and those for the Africans whose houses were often mere single rooms.

Those who dared go into urban areas did so to buy things from the Asian shops and then returned home. Generally, urban centers were symbols of oppression; it is not surprising, therefore, that many people tended to avoid them. The present feeling of uneasiness in the city could be explained as the oppression-hang-over. In many countries, rulers who replaced the colonialists tended to behave like their former masters. The soldiers are those who served the colonialists and continue still to mistreat the people the way they were trained. Some of these soldiers who have taken over power are even more brutal than their colonial masters. In the case of Uganda, many people had to escape from urban areas and hide in rural areas till only recently. So, while many cities in Africa were expanding, Kampala and other cities in Uganda have been dwindling.

The nature of insecurity and its magnitude, among other aspects, vary from city to city and from country to country. In South Africa the apartheid policy has created special problems for the Africans who are discriminated against in their own home. In many other countries political upheavals have turned the cities into monsters from which even presidents flee. Yet in many others peaceful co-existence has led to the swelling of the numbers of city dwellers to such a degree that people worry about the population explosion. The city of Nairobi may serve as an example. Unfortunately, planners have not been able to cope properly with the swelling numbers. Consequently, 60% of the city is slums, and whenever there are heavy rains people drown in their vehicles due to the lack of a proper drainage system.

However, the African seems gradually to be catching up with the realities of the city. We have already noted that the modern city is as strange in Africa as it is in Europe. It was planned by Europeans, built by Europeans, and even maintained by Europeans. With the departure of the Europeans the cities remain behind and their maintenance is a problem. For repairs there lack not only expertise and spare parts but, more importantly, the willpower and responsibility. When things are always done for someone they will not know where to begin when the organizer departs.

The following observations may illustrate the changing spirit in Africa. In 1971, Idi Amin toppled the Obote government in Uganda; in 1972 he sent away the Asians who had been controlling trade and commerce in the country. Asians' shops were re-allocated mainly to Nubis who only sold off what they found there and did not know where to get new goods. Consequently, Uganda fell short of commodities. In 1979 when Amin was toppled, the subsequent looting destroyed shops and houses. For a long time cities like Kampala looked like ghost towns as nobody cared to repair anything. In 1985 Obote was toppled for the second time, and again looting followed. At this juncture, however, one noticed a change. Within one week, the people themselves had repaired all the broken shops and houses. The "they" concept, which had crippled the Africans ever since the Europeans entered Africa, was at long last being overcome. Unfortunately, the Ugandans have learned the hard way. Elsewhere, it is still the foreigners who do everything for the Africans in terms of technology, etc. Thus, there are many things which have never been repaired since the colonial masters left certain countries in Africa.

THE AFRICAN REACTION TO THE EUROPEAN INVASION

Despite the malicious propaganda about Africa, it is a fact that before the European interference, the African nations were very well organized, and even powerful enough to challenge the heavily armed Europeans with their Indian and Nubian soldiers. Commenting on the Ugandan situation recently, Prof. Jean-Francois Medard recognized the following fact:

> At the time of colonization, the Baganda Kingdom was a true state fully set up with an administration, an army, a navy and a road network. . . . The British colonizers therefore relied on the Baganda Kingdom and on their aristocracy to establish their domination.[3]

Yet this was only one among other well organized kingdoms in Uganda alone. Even the tribal populations which had no kings were well organized. One could talk of the existence of both representative and popular democracies here before the confusion created by Europeans. Tribes were connected through marriages, among other relations.

The resistance met by the Europeans in Africa is another indicator of independence and sophistication. They will never forget the wars they lost in trying to subdue the Africans. It was mainly because of this sophistication that the Europeans later tried to ban everything traditional, including the making of arms and other war objects. Unfortunately, when they had succeeded in crippling the African, they turned around and maliciously asked: "Where is your technology? You are the stupid son of Ham good only for manual work"! Deep inside, however, they bitterly remembered great kings and warriors like Kabalega. The following is a mere example of defeats the Europeans suffered in Africa.

The manner in which Ketshwayo has been received by the British public would be amusing if it were not disgusting. This gormandizing black savage, who *cost us many of the flowers of youth, thousands of lives, and millions of money*, has scarcely landed, before a young lady presents him with a valuable locket and all Southampton is waiting to clasp his enormous paws. The airs the fellow gives himself are tremendous. He would not receive the Governor of Madeira, but sent word that `the King sleeps,' and on waking the first morning at Melbury Road, he expressed a wish that the people should be thanked for the way in which they had cheered him. This really only wants the insertion of `was graciously pleased to express' to read like a bit of our own Court Circular.[4]

There are many examples of this nature, but when the Europeans introduced their educational system in Africa, they made sure nothing was taught to recall the part of Africa. Some people have gone so far as to claim that African history began with the coming of the Europeans. This deliberate distortion of the African reality has annoyed modern Africans so much that many little trust Europeans. Many who thought they were good historians feel ashamed of themselves when accidentally they come across great names like Ketshway about whom they know nothing, though they can tell you everything about Livingstone!

In African history, we have tended to distinguish between the following types of foreigners: The Colonialist (the bad European), the missionary (the good European), the farmer (the settler), and the Indian (the business man who came as a work-man to build the railroad). After independence, the Indians stayed behind along with the missionaries. Some farmers also remained behind and, surprisingly, some of the colonialists who even physically had fought the Africans stayed behind to become Reverends.

Today, the mistrust of all Europeans and Asians is deepening. We have seen the involvement in fighting by the Indians. Many Africans also were shocked when they discovered the role of missionaries in colonialism and the contributions they made even in transporting European settlers to Africa. For example, Rev. Dr. R.T. Campbell in his book, *The Life of Livingstone*, reveals the following: "In December, 1850, pressing his kindred to emigrate he says he believes the cause of Christianity will be better advanced by emigration than by missionaries."

Livingstone himself in the first chapter of his book, *Missionary Travels*, pledges two thousand pounds, out of the profits of the book sales, "towards the cost of equipping and sending out selected British families to colonize the shores of Lake Nyasa (parts of present-day Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia) if the (British) government would support the proposal."[5]

The African mind today seems to be at a loss. It is clear that the Europeans hid much truth about Africa from the new generations under their control. Now the African wonders: if he was not told the truth about historical facts, was he told the truth about values and culture? While the colonialist seized the land, harassed the Africans and was hated for this, the missionary promoted an education which eroded African culture and values. The co-operation between the two is brought out by the following:

> We as missionaries are indebted to the presence of the (colonial) government in this country (Uganda). And we would not forget, when we reckon up the triumphs of the cross in Uganda in how large a measure these victories have been owed, under God, to the fact that the way has been paved for us by others, and that an immense amount has been done for us which we could never have done for ourselves and which has rendered the progress of missionary work incomparably easier than it otherwise would have been. To the presence of a strong government and a settled government (i.e., with its officers around the missionaries) we owe a peaceful country. . . .[6]

The missionaries vital role in colonization was, in turn, recognized by Colonel Sadler, a Commissioner of the Colonial Government in Uganda in the following words:

> The C.M.S. (Church Missionary Society of the Church of England) was the first in the field: its connection with political history in the early days, the difficulties it successfully suppressed, and the assistance its members (i.e., missionaries) rendered the Colonial Government at the time of the (African nationalistic) rebellion are too well known to

need recapitulation. . . . There has been complete accord between the (colonial) government and the three (Christian) denominations (the White Fathers, French Catholics; The Mill Hill Mission, British Catholics; and CMS, English Protestants) and in no single instance has there been friction of any kind. Besides recording my appreciation of the excellent work these societies have done during the years in the cause of education and in the progress of civilization, I would wish to thank them for the assistance they have given the (colonial) government in the matter of Hut Tax and to myself personally in willingly placing at my disposal the fund of information they (the missionaries) have given regarding the country and its people.[7]

Colonel Sadler's claim about the relationship between the government and all the three denominations is not quite true. The British government certainly discriminated against Catholics, and this brought about subsequent political upheavals, particularly in Uganda. Today we still have problems arising out of this discrimination.

While so many questions are being asked by some Africans regarding their traditional culture and values, there are many who feel quite at home with the new western culture and system of values. Those who are asking questions have different points of view. Some are of the view that Africans should go back to their roots and reject the European culture and value system. An example of these is the late Prof. Okot p'Betek from Uganda who has written much particularly on Africa, mainly as a poet. His famous poem: *Song of Lawino*, criticizes the modern "educated" African about the religion and politics he practices, about keeping time, going to school, reading books, dancing, kissing, using cosmetics, and even using the toilet.

Commenting on the above criticisms, one of the greatest academics in Africa, Prof. Austin Lwanga Bukenya, observes:

Far from being banal, this extremely down-to-earth approach makes the poem go straight down to the depths of our feelings. We are forced to ask ourselves the fundamental question: *what sort of people are we as individuals and as a society*?[8]

This question can be answered in hundreds of ways, and there is quite a variety of positions in Africa. There are those who, being totally conditioned, see African values and culture as evil and even the color of the skin as devilish, and have become split personalities due to this conditioning. They want to be something else: what the Europeans have told them is the ideal, but, unfortunately there are certain realities they cannot change. So, the poor souls are caught between their unattainable dreams and the rejected realities which are part of them. It is a special pity when one is convinced to hate oneself for one cannot possibly run away from oneself!

Still others are confused. They are committed to neither side, and are being swayed from side-to-side like reeds in the wind. They have no sense of direction and are therefore a concoction of everything that has come their way. They do whatever they have seen others do without any personal initiative to select what is right from what is wrong. Luckily, there are also those who are thinking hard, asking themselves the deep question: what am I? Why? What can I do about it? The list is long.

As for society, we can easily establish a similar pattern along the lines of the individuals analyzed above. Many societies have little sense of direction, despite the presence of governments. Corruption in Africa is very high, and many people enter government offices, not to serve, but to "eat." A government may be compared to the mind of an individual as an engine

is to a vehicle. To have good societies in Africa we must have good governments first. There are strong views that foreigners who want to keep on exploiting Africa see to it that weak governments are installed and kept in power by any necessary means.

Another example is that of Dr. Kihumbu Thairu, whose book, *The African Civilization*, has been quoted above. After analyzing the pathetic situation in Africa, he asks the following questions: "How has this deplorable situation come about? Who is meant to benefit from it? How can it be changed?"[9]

Again, these are deep questions and the answers to them are many as he himself confesses: "Full answer to all these questions would fill several volumes." But he adds:

> In the heart of every African, however *Westernized* or *Easternized*, she or he may be, there is a small African fire which, when fully ablaze, will release the dignified complete person that the unadulterated African is. This book is but a small drop of fuel to make the flame in every African burn a little brighter. At least it is hoped that the African reader will, on reading this little book start (if he has not already started) asking himself who he really is--instead of accepting slavishly what the non-African has said the African is.[10]

While those who have been conditioned would describe Okot and Thairu as radicals, there is a third group that gives the two sides both credit and discredit. Judging neither of the two sides to be totally right or totally wrong, they see something to choose and discard from either side. Prof. Chinua Achebe, one of the best writers in the world, seems to belong to this category and Prof. Kwasi Wiredu, one of the best philosophers, is also against an African over-reaction which tends to accept values and cultural practice on the basis of being African, and rejects the rest on the basis of being foreign, e.g., European. Both academics recommend selecting values and cultural practices from both sides basing ourselves on the *worth* of what we select. This category seems the ideal situation.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CITY IN AFRICA TODAY

The modern city in Africa is of great significance, despite the problems related to it. It is a reality to cope with, however foreign we consider it to be. Since I have discussed the negative side and its problems, now I would like to turn to the other side.

First of all, the city is the unitive factor in African social and political life. We have already seen how city dwellers have strong roots with rural areas. But the reality of the city as a dwelling place has contributed to bringing the various peoples together. Rationalistic movements and wars, among other activities, have brought certain cities close to unity. Common language, e.g., English and Kiswahili, and the nature of work in which various groups emerge jointly have also fostered unity. Today it is possible to talk of *sub-cultures vis-a-vis cultures* due to common platforms like the city. While *cultures* may be characterized by the same outlook on life, the same language, the same practices, among others, *sub-cultures* may be characterized by exactly the same ingredients. While culturally I belong to Bakiga people, sub-culturally I belong to the university community, and particularly to philosophical thought and activity. My outlook on life, my philosophical language, my practices as a philosophy teacher: reading philosophy and attending international conferences and seminars, are shared not only by my colleagues at my current university, but by many philosophers all over the world. It is possible that one may feel closer to one's colleagues or to a thinker one admires in one's field of study than to his mother.

While one finds one reading and thinking about this thinker almost every day, one may meet one's mother and speak one's mother-tongue once in a number of years. The city, therefore, through such multidimensional facets as educating, is undoubtedly a great unitive factor, not only nationally but also internationally.

The colonialists used the city as the center of administration. At independence, various nation-states have taken over the same center for organizational purposes through various ministries. Social services also have been organized in the cities before moving to the people in rural areas. Therefore, the city in Africa is the nerve center of the whole network in the country.

Internationally, the city serves as the means of unity. Due to limited resources and technology in Africa, the TV networks that unite huge countries like the USA are absent. In many African countries TV's are available only in cities. As it unites the city people with the rest of the world, it also trickles down to the rest of Africa through other types of mass media.

In a nutshell, the learning obtained from the universities and other advanced institutes in cities, the facilities for information and other services obtainable only in cities, the central government and other means of organization that exist only in the city, the religious institutions centered in the city, among others, are eventually of great service to the people in rural areas despite their distance in terms of space.

WHAT CAN PHILOSOPHY DO FOR AFRICA?

In the introductory part, I stated my assumption of what man is, and pointed out that this nature of man makes it possible for him to reflect upon and critically assess things. Such a mental activity is philosophical in nature. Hence, basically what philosophy can do for Africans as regards the problems raised in this paper is to help them understand basic issues and resolve their differences, among other problems, through vigorous thinking or reflection. We need such vigorous thinking to be able to get to the root causes of our problems.

I already have pointed out, also, that philosophy belongs to us in our capacity as human beings. We do not need to learn philosophy at school to be able to ask philosophical questions. This may be illustrated by the fundamental questions we have already examined, i.e., those posed by Prof. Bukenya, and Dr. Thairu. These certainly are philosophical questions, but I know very well that the two gentlemen would shy away were they to be called philosophers. Prof. Bukenya is by profession a professor of literature, while Dr. Thairu is a medical doctor.

When it comes to professional philosophers, my contention is that while philosophy may be a personal affair, in the sense that philosophical issues are internalized and visualized at an individual level, the philosophers' activities are not limited to themselves. Their writings are read in all directions and at various levels of understanding. Their addresses influence people in a similar manner. Consequently, the picture I painted of the city being isolated from the rural area mainly in terms of space may apply also to the philosopher. Simply develop correct ideas and, like the biblical story of the sower, go out and sow them!

People's minds have been influenced from pulpits, political rallies, classrooms, and other places where men and women of ideas have spoken. Those who have opened their ears accordingly have made various resolutions. In this paper we have talked much about "conditioning." We have also seen the role of the gun in paving the way for Christianity in Africa. As a matter of fact, taking the time factor into account, when we compare the spread of Christianity into Europe before it became "Christendom," with that into Asia, America, and Africa, Africa seems to lead statistically. According to me, it would be unfair not to attend to

African intellectual activity during the transitional period. True, fighting took place and conditioning was rampant, but the African mind was also at work comparing and contrasting the various values.

It is this type of evaluation that I would like to see continue, but now free from the gun and conditioning. This way, the Africans will be able objectively to examine their traditional values vis-a-vis those that are European and something new and better will result.

I have already discussed how I think traditionally people acquired values. What strikes me is that when one does not quite understand how and why one acquired a certain value, one tends to be tied to it even to the extent of physical combat for it. Philosophy can help one take a stance before their values and those of others, so that when one says yes or no to one or the other, one does so based on rational grounds.

Today we distinguish between the modern and the traditional methods of education. The basic distinction seems to be that the traditional system of education was concerned mainly with producing people patterned upon traditional culture and values. Thus, the truths to be taught and the teacher to teach these truths were the most important. The student had only to learn, or rather conform. Hence, methods which made the student internalize the truths, such as rote learning, were stressed. The various ethnic groups in Africa learned various value systems through this traditional system of education. Yet those who brought new values to Africa also conditioned the people.

The modern system of education values philosophy. As philosophy is an individual affair, this system is more for the individual than for the society. Consequently, instead of giving the truths and the teacher prominence, this method stresses the learner. Instead of rote learning, the modern system cherishes creativity, dialogue and discovery. When eventually the learner discovers and internalizes the truths, the same learner will be in position to take a stance to these truths and elaborate them, showing what makes them more or less valuable.

If such an approach could be applied to the cultural and value systems in relation to which many of us are biased, we could go a long way in bridging the gaps between us, whether in our cities or in our rural areas. As I have already mentioned, such awareness is possible at an individual level, or at least at the level of the leadership that will slowly influence the individuals in society.

However, I must admit that it is one thing to know the truth and quite another to follow it. So, philosophy is not enough. Many know the truth that man's life is more valuable than material things. They can even write good books about this. But, in practice, they will destroy people in order simply to loot the land and its minerals, among other worldly gains! So, we need both philosophy and committed leadership.

CONCLUSION

While it is clear that the city is double-edged, we may not sit back and lament among ourselves the problems we have harvested from the city. We must think hard in order to get to the roots of these problems, and then devise ways and means of resolving them. Nor should we fix our attention only upon the problems and be shaken by them to the extent of developing city-phobia. We must look at the other side of the coin and appreciate what we have reaped from the existence of the city amidst us. Certainly, life would not be the same without the city. We must, therefore, make this reality our own, instead of regarding it as foreign. We should agree that whatever is foreign and good is good, and whatever is traditional and bad is bad, and vice-versa.

We should be open-minded, reflect on our cultural values, accept what is acceptable, and reject what must be rejected. If we can replace bias by critical thinking, at least we can establish the hierarchy of values by which we can tell which is more of a value and which is less, thereby becoming able to be conscientious objectors. Although knowing the truth will not necessarily make us follow it, at least it will make us feel guilty when we do not. Above all, we must search for correct leadership, a very rare commodity in Africa and, perhaps, in the world.

By stressing correct leadership, I am not suggesting a one way flow of ideas. This should be clear since I recommend the role of philosophy and indicate that this is an individual affair. Individuals must listen to one another and then to leadership, just as leadership must listen to individuals. I stress correct leadership because it is a necessary condition for healthy social interaction.

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NOTES

1. Colonel Sadler, *Mengo Notes*. Vol. 1, No. 8, 1900.
2. Rachael Stuart Watt, *In the Heart of Savagedom* (Glasgow: Pickering and Inglis, 1922).
3. Jean Francois Medard, *The Creation of a Political Order in Uganda* (Nairobi: Center for Research and University Exchanges, 1986), Working Paper No. 1.
4. Francis Ellen Colenso, *Ruin of Zululand*, Vol II (London: William Ridgeway, 1885).
5. David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, Ch. 1.
6. Rev. J.J. Willis, *Mengo Notes*, Vol. 5 (No. 4, 1904).
7. Colonel Sadler, *op. cit*.
8. Lwanga Austin Bukenya, *Notes on East African Poetry* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1978).
9. Kihumbu Thairu, *The African Civilization, Utamaduni Wa Kiafrica* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1985).
10. *Ibid*.

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