AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AS

TECHNOLOGY OF POWER IN AFRICA

by

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There is no power relation without a correlative field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.

- Michel Foucault

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CONTENTS

vi

SUMMARY

The relevance of psychology in Africa is increasingly debated by psychologists. The subject stands accused of continuing a colonial tradition of oppression through its Eurocentrism and failure to attend to the needs of African societies. The relevance debate raises questions around the relationship between power, knowledge, psychology, and African history. This study attempts to excavate the conditions of possibility of the debate, by construing an archaeology of psychological knowledge as technology of power in the African context. It assumes a constructivist stance, employs textual and narrative analogies, and follows Foucault's conceptualisation of the relation between power and knowledge.

Five strata of knowledge emerging historically in Africa, each embodying distinctive approaches to knowledge, are described: Indigenous African knowledge, African Islamic knowledge, African Christianity, knowledges of Enlightenment, and knowledges of resistance. These knowledges, their psychological dimensions, as well as the circulation of power within and between them, are explored, and historical processes of subjugation and resistance highlighted. Western psychology, as technology of modern power, is situated within modernism and the narratives of Enlightenment, which also provided the conditions of possibility of colonialism. The dominant narratives of relevance are related to those of African resistance and the limitations of psychology are conceptualised in terms of those pertaining to modernism. Possible postmodern avenues to the liberation of both psychology and its subjects, that are relevant to African contexts, are suggested.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The history of psychology in Africa is embedded in the history of knowledge and power in Africa. The discipline of psychology arrived in Africa as part of a general process of transfer of knowledge from the West, during a period of western political domination (Bulhan, 1981, 1993b; Sinha, 1984b, 1986). Psychology's role as representative of western power is, however, increasingly being questioned by Africans and the role of western knowledge in power relations in Africa has become central to postcolonial African thought (Césaire, 1969; Curtin, 1972; Fanon, 1967a; Hountondji, 1983; July, 1968; Lambo, 1972; Mowoe & Bjornson, 1986; Mudimbe, 1988; Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981; Senghor, 1966; Serequeberhan, 1991).

It is against this background that a process of self-questioning has emerged in psychological discourse in postcolonial Africa (Akin-Ogundeji, 1991; Desfarges, 1982; Durojaiye, 1987; Ezeilo, 1992; Moghaddam, 1987; Nsamenang, 1993; Witkin, 1981). A similar process is evident in other developing countries that were formerly dominated by the West and are now in a process of reconstruction (Beit-Hallahmi, 1974; Gilgen & Gilgen, 1987; Kâğitçibaşi, 1984; Kim & Berry, 1993; Mehryar, 1984; Sinha, 1984a, 1986; Turtle, 1989) and has recently achieved prominence in South African psychological discourse (Anonymous, 1986; Biesheuvel, 1987, 1991; Dawes, 1985, 1986; Holdstock, 1981b; Manganyi, 1991; Mauer, 1987; Nell, 1990). Such discourse revolves around the relevance of psychology in Africa and forms the background to the aims of this study.

The Relevance of Psychology in Africa

Psychology in Africa currently stands accused of, both wittingly and unwittingly, continuing a historical tradition of serving imperialist and colonial powers (Bulhan, 1981, 1993a, 1993b; Hickson & Kriegler, 1991; Holdstock, 1981b; Karani, 1987; Okonji, 1975), having supported apartheid (Nicholas, 1990a, 1993a; Nicholas & Cooper, 1990), remaining an elitist profession (Hickson & Kriegler, 1991; Rock, 1994; Seedat, Cloete & Shochet, 1988), and

exploiting rather than serving the needs of African communities (Berger & Lazarus, 1987; Bulhan, 1993a; Serpell, 1984). This is attributed to psychology's Eurocentrism (Desfarges, 1982; Durojaiye, 1982; Holdstock, 1981b; Littlewood, 1993; Nicholas, 1993a; Nsamenang, 1993; Serpell, 1984), bourgeois ideology (Hickson & Christie, 1989), and its suffering from the illusion of being politically and scientifically neutral (Bulhan, 1993a; Butchart & Seedat, 1990; Cooper, Nicholas, Seedat & Statman, 1990; Dawes, 1985; Karani, 1987; Liddle & Kvalsig, 1990; Retief 1989). Thus Dawes, in Nell's (1990a) overview of the "relevance debate" in South Africa, identifies the main criterion for relevance emerging from the debate as

> to expose the interests which are served by uncritical psychological theory and practice, and to call for a reconceptualisation of the subject matter of psychology which takes account of the social/ideological discourses which structure the individual person, the psychologist as theorist, researcher and practitioner, and the knowledge which they produce. (p. 130)

Different operationalisations of this criterion emerge from the debate. It is proposed that psychology should be overtly political in aim (Cooper et al., 1990; Freeman, 1991; Nicholas, 1990a), and align itself with the oppressed (Anonymous, 1986; Bulhan, 1985, 1990; Dawes, 1986; Manganyi, 1991; Nicholas, 1990b, 1993b). It should study the process of oppression and become an instrument of liberation (Beit-Hallahmi, 1974; Bulhan, 1993b; Nicholas & Cooper, 1990; Seedat et al., 1988). It should address itself to the mental health of blacks (Freeman, 1991; Karani, 1986) and the restructuring and development of society (Nsamenang, 1993; Sinha, 1984b).

Psychology's Eurocentric heritage is identified as a major obstacle to relevance (Boussat & Dupuy, 1975; Brownell, De Jager & Madlala, 1987; Desfarges, 1982; Erinosho, 1979; Hickson & Christie, 1989; Mgcobo, 1981; Munro, 1978, 1986). Bloom (1976) describes the predicament as follows: "In Africa particular problems arise... from the conflict between the positivist, empirical and materialist approach of psychology, and the moral or religious and non-empirical cognitive systems that characterise much of African traditional thought" (p. 131). Western scientific knowledge is depicted as "alien to the thinking of many Africans" (Abdi,

1985). The issue is especially pertinent in the application of psychotherapeutic approaches, where questions around the role of indigenous healers and independent African churches in mental health care abound (Awanbor, 1985; Erinosho, 1979; Ghanjaoui, 1984; Kottler, 1988; Mkhize, 1981). Community approaches are favoured as more relevant to the needs of African society than traditional therapeutic approaches focusing on the individual (Dawes, 1986; Hickson & Kriegler, 1991; Perkel, 1988; Seedat et al., 1988).

Bodibe (1993), Bührmann (1984), Holdstock (1979, 1981a, 1981b), and Sinha (1973) argue that psychology should look towards a holistic and "intuitive" mode of thought such as that found in Africa, in order to transcend some of the limitations of positivism. Bulhan (1990, 1993b), Kriegler (1993), and Simone (1993) plead for an Afro-centric psychology and various authors view the indigenisation of psychology as an essential criterion for relevance (Bodibe, 1993; Kottler, 1990; Munro, 1978; Okatcha, 1977; Perkel, 1988; Turtle, 1989; Vogelman, 1986; Wickert, 1967; Wober, 1975). This view is, however, is contested by Nell (1990), who re-asserts psychology's universality and views the quest for an indigenous psychology is an attempt at disempowering psychologists.

The idea of the "disempowered psychologist" in Africa is prevalent not only in South African but also in African psychological discourse. Psychologists are dismayed because the profession is virtually unknown in Africa and has made almost no impact on actual social problems (Abdi, 1985; Akin-Ogundeji, 1991; Bakare, 1975; Butchart, 1993; Dawes, 1986; Gilbert, 1989; Liddle & Kvalsig, 1990; Mauer, 1987; Mauer, Marais & Prinsloo, 1991; Nell, 1992; Okatcha, 1977; Strumpfer, 1981). It is described as underdeveloped (Bakare, 1975; Brownell et al., 1987; Ezeilo, 1992; Liddle & Kvalsig, 1990; Nsamenang, 1993), powerless (Nell, 1992), impotent (Mehryar, 1984), insignificant, and a "fledgling science" (Nsamenang, 1993).

Psychology is not viewed by administrators and policy-makers as relevant to postcolonial African ideals and has featured low on the list of priorities of post-independence universities (Akin-Ogundeji, 1991; Dawes, 1986; Wickert, 1967). If it is offered at universities, it is usually subsumed under education departments (Akin-Ogundeji, 1991; Okatcha, 1977), and the few

independent psychology departments tend to replicate western curricula (Dawes, 1986; Tyson, 1987). Psychological research and conferences in Africa focus mainly on applied fields and are directly or indirectly dependent on funds from the West (Hare, 1972; Wickert, 1967; Wober, 1975). It is questioned whether Africans always benefit from this research (Bulhan, 1993a).

Although psychology has a strong presence at South African universities, psychologists are mainly employed in health sectors, research organisations, schools, business, and industry, and government departments (Raubenheimer, 1987). The question is raised whether they merely serve the economic and political interest of those in power, rather than the community (Cooper et al., 1990; Foster, Nicholas & Dawes, 1993). The psychologist occupies a marginalised position in health care (Foster et al., 1993; Nell, 1992, 1993). Psychologists "have become so accustomed to this scandalous subjugation to the medical, and psychiatric systems that they do not even question it" (Nell, 1993, p. 213).

The Psychology of Oppression and the Oppression of Psychology

Power is both implicitly and explicitly addressed in the relevance debate. Two views of the relationship between psychological knowledge and power emerge.

The first view assumes that psychology is a "powerful agency of socialisation and social control" (Cooper et al., 1990, p. 60). Its power resides in its ability to generate knowledge that has far-reaching effects in society, but in the past this knowledge was employed in the service of dominant oppressive powers. The proposal is made that it should align its power with the oppressed, those outside its traditional margins, as an aid to their liberation. Thus emerges a "psychology of oppression" (Bulhan, 1985; Nicholas, 1993a) as powerful instrument of liberation.

The second view of psychology that underlies the relevance debate is that of powerlessness. It is portrayed as impotent, underdeveloped, and ineffectual in meeting the actual (overwhelming) needs of African communities. Professionally, it is dominated by the demands of the medical, military, educational, and industrial fields. Its "irrelevance" pertains to

powerlessness; its powerlessness emanates from its marginal, elitist position in relation to African culture and society. Psychology in Africa is depicted as alienated, oppressed, and in need of liberation and empowerment.

The relationship between psychological knowledge and power, as reflected in the relevance debate, thus raises the following questions: What kind of power does psychological knowledge embody? What kind of power does this knowledge lack? Whom does it serve/rule and how? Is it a helpless pawn, serving whomever may be in power, or a powerful agent of empowerment? The "relevance" discourse locates the answers to these questions in history. An awareness of psychology's historical roots is viewed as essential (Butchart & Seedat, 1990; Dawes, 1986; Fanon, 1967a; Holdstock, 1981b; Manganyi, 1991; Seedat, 1990; Vogelman, 1986) and the relationship between psychological knowledge and power demands to be explicitly addressed (Beit-Hallahmi, 1974; Bulhan, 1993a; Dawes, 1985; Karani, 1987; Kottler, 1990; Littlewood, 1993; Nell, 1993; Simone, 1993; Swartz & Foster, 1984; Vogelman, 1986).

As this study aims to investigate the relevance problem within a historical context, it is necessary to outline its frame of reference regarding knowledge, power, and history.

Frame of Reference of the Study

This study adopts a postmodern (Kvale, 1992c) stance in that it employs textual analogies such as narrative and discourse in preference to the positivist analogies traditionally employed by modernistic psychology, such as man-as-machine and man as quasi-organism (Bruner, 1987, 1990; Geertz, 1983; Sarbin, 1986). Postmodern thought (Kvale, 1992c; Waugh, 1992) assumes a constructivist, relativist approach to knowledge (K. J. Gergen, 1985, 1992, 1994; Sarbin & Kitsuse, 1993), a narrative approach to history (Rüsen, 1993; H. White, 1973), and explicitly addresses the circulation of power in discourse (Foucault, 1980b).

Knowledge

A constructivist, self-reflexive view of knowledge does not assume the existence of an

objective reality independent of the observer and is not concerned with establishing "truths". What is considered to be true varies according to different cultural and historical contexts (K. J. Gergen, 1992, 1994; Maturana & Varela, 1992; Sarbin & Kitsuse, 1993; Turner & Bruner, 1986). Knowledge is viewed as a process mediated through language, who's narrative conventions constrain what can be known. "Understanding the world is thus not a product of the world as it is, but of textual history" (K. J. Gergen, 1992, p. 22). Knowledge is created through discourse and is shaped by a storehouse of culturally and historically generated meanings and narratives (Bruner, 1990; K. J. Gergen, 1994). It is always informed by epistemic contexts, including cultures, ideologies, religions, and worldviews, and in its turn informs these contexts (Neimeyer, 1993; Richer, 1992; Said, 1989). It manifests itself in and is generated by social relations: "The terms in which the world is understood are social artifacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people" (K. J. Gergen, 1985, p. 267).

This study will make no effort to establish <u>what</u> "really" happened in Africa's discursive history. Instead, it seeks answers to the question of <u>how</u> it came about that certain forms of knowledge have assumed hegemony while others were subjugated, negated or disregarded, and <u>where</u> psychology fits into the larger discursive fields dictating at any time what may be known and what may be regarded as true.

A relativist view of knowledge has been accused of obscuring the differential effects of power, leading to nihilism and social anomie (Geertz, 1984; Kvale, 1992c). However, Fish (1990) has demonstrated that the concept of power is compatible with a relativist position as implied by the systemic paradigm and Foucault's (1977, 1980b) analyses of power and knowledge in the social sciences clearly adopt a relativist position even though they investigate and elucidate the processes of domination and resistance underlying discursive fields. This study aims to search for similar processes in the role of psychology in Africa and will follow Foucault's (1980a, 1980b) approach to the study of knowledge and power.

<u>Knowledge and Power</u>

In contrast to the popular view of power as an inhibiting, repressive force, limiting

options, Foucault (1977, 1980b) views power as "positive", in the sense of its generating knowledge, constituting action, and creating alternatives. Power and knowledge are inseparable, so much so that Foucault (1980b) has coined the terms power/knowledge and knowledge/power to refer to this process. We are all acting within and through a given field of power/knowledge and exercising this power/knowledge over others. A domain of knowledge is necessarily a domain of power, and vice versa. Power is mediated through truth. "Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth, that is, the types of discourses which it accepts and makes function as true" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 131). The knowledges producing these discourses assume ascendancy over others. Alternative knowledges become disqualified. Foucault (1980b) refers to disqualified knowledges as subjugated knowledges. They include local and erudite knowledges that have been superseded by the dominant knowledge aspiring to truth. "In our society, 'truth' is centred on the form of scientific discourse and the institutions that produce it; it is subject to constant economic and political incitement" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 131).

In studying the history of western systems of thought, Foucault (1970, 1977) found that the emergence of the human sciences was dependent on the simultaneous emergence of new forms of power, and that the expansionist quality of modern power was dependent upon progress in the construction of certain scientific knowledges that aspire to "truth" status, including psychology. These knowledges are variously termed "technologies of power" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 238), "technologies of normalisation" (Rabinow, 1984, p.22), and "technologies of the psyche" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 185), indicating their active role in mediating power relations. They have their origin in the elaboration of a range of practices for discipline, surveillance, and administration of the social body via dividing practices, scientific classification, normalisation, and subjectification (Foucault, 1977).

The "technologies of power" were developed to recruit persons in "knowing" themselves and others (thus exercising power over themselves and others) via norms (Foucault, 1977). Thus, power is rooted at the local level, in the knowledge that circulates in interpersonal relations; it is in fact rooted in the psyche. Foucault is interested in an ascending rather than descending analysis of power.

There is a trend in dominant western knowledge to limit the use of the term "knowledge" to scientific or rational knowledge and exclude myth, belief, intuition, religion, and other forms of "local knowledges" (Geertz, 1983) from the definition (MacGaffey, 1981). However, following Foucault (1980b), this study will view knowledge from as wide and inclusive a position as possible, in all its possible manifestations. It will explicitly aim at including subjugated and regional knowledges in order to describe the circulation of power through different kinds of knowledge and the historical process of domination and subjugation of knowledges in Africa.

The Archaeological Approach

Foucault's approach to the histories of various discourses and practices has variously been termed archaeology (Foucault, 1972, 1973) in his earlier writings, genealogy (Foucault, 1980b) in his later writings, and interpretative analytics, an effort at combining the two, by Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982). These terms tend to overlap to a large extent (Gutting, 1994). For heuristic purposes, this study will employ the term archaeology to designate "a 'domain of research' which explicates the system of knowledge that accounts for the types of theories and practices present at a particular historical period" (Bernauer, 1981, p. 231).

Foucault's archaeologies are concerned with the "field" within which ideas, statements, discourses, and epistemes are generated, as well as sudden transformations in their coherence (Foucault, 1970). He studies the conditions of possibility of various discourses, the a-priori of their existence (Foucault, 1970, 1972, 1977). It should be emphasised that Foucault's archaeologies are above all "histories of the present" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 241). Their ultimate aim is to ground current knowledge within a historical critique. By historically contextualising current knowledge and practices, they are relativised and their apparent taken-for-granted truth brought into question. This study will enquire into the criteria that have historically afforded the status of truth to various narratives and discourse, including the science of psychology, as part of the history of knowledge in Africa.

Objectives and Overview of the Study

The central objective of the study is to construe an archaeology of psychological knowledge in Africa, so as to excavate the conditions of possibility of the relevance debate. Its specific aims are:

- To identify and describe the different strata of knowledge (Foucault, 1970) historically emerging in Africa,

- to investigate the kinds of knowledge, including psychological knowledge, embodied in each,

- to describe the nature of power embodied in each stratum as well as the circulation of power within and between them,

- to situate psychological knowledge as technology of power within these fields of power/knowledge, and

- to suggest possible avenues of liberation of psychology that are relevant to the African context.

Chapters 2 to 6 are chronologically arranged according to different strata of knowledge emerging historically in Africa. Each stratum is assumed to embody a different approach to knowledge in general, and psychological knowledge in particular. These approaches, and the power relations implied by each, are explored. Although psychology, as a science, formally entered the African stage during the Enlightenment (chapter 5), it was superimposed on existing knowledge concerning human conduct, derived from indigenous African thought (chapter 2), and African Islam and Christianity (chapters 3 and 4). These strata continue to co-exist with western knowledge to the present, and provide a storehouse of alternative knowledge competing with western secular knowledge.

Chapter 5 is concerned with the colonial importation of western secular knowledges of Enlightenment to Africa, including psychology as technology of modern power. Chapter 6 deals with African reactions to, appropriation of, and resistance against the knowledges of the Enlightenment. Chapter 7 situates the current relevance crisis in psychology within the context of the historical strata of knowledge and explores possible avenues of liberation of psychology and psychologists. The study concludes with a brief coda.

Note on Gender Terminology

The discourse on Africa, and the literature that this study refers to, are dominated by men writing about other men, and frequently employ gender-biased language. The conditions of possibility of this bias are to be found in the dominant view of "man" emerging from the knowledges of Enlightenment, and is explored in chapter 5. This study cannot avoid reflecting, to some extent, this bias. The pronoun "he" and other gender-biased terms such as "man" and "mankind" are used deliberately (and without interrupting the text with explicit indicators such as "[sic]", so as to avoid clumsiness) when quoting from or paraphrasing writing that employs these terms, but a more gender sensitive language and approach is employed whenever possible. It is hoped that future research will address this issue by further excavating the hitherto subjugated knowledges of African women.

CHAPTER 2

INDIGENOUS AFRICAN KNOWLEDGE

> We deem it essential to preserve a difference
> between us, an elite no matter how small, who see
> the world as it really is, and them, who see it only
> through a glass, darkly. (MacGaffey, 1978, p. 110)

A distinction between western and indigenous African ways of knowing is central to the relevance debate in psychology. Authors such as Awanbor (1985), Bakare (1975), Bloom (1976), Bodibe (1992, 1993), Brownell et al. (1987), Gobodo (1990), Holdstock (1981b), and Nsamenang (1993) assume the existence of a distinctive African cosmology and system of knowledge which preceded colonisation. There is wide agreement that many aspects of pre-colonial African knowledge are not only historical curiosities but have managed to survive intact to this day (Abraham, 1962; Edgerton, 1980; Elliot, 1984; Erinosho, 1979; Jackson & Sears, 1992; Kamalu, 1990; Mbiti, 1971; Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981). Others (Hountondji, 1983; Nell, 1990; Swartz & Foster, 1984) warn that a concern with indigenous African knowledge may mask oppressive power relations in the present.

The purpose of this chapter is not to assume an ethnophilosophical or ethnopsychological stance towards present knowledge but to arrive at a description of the functioning of indigenous African knowledge, as this forms the first layer of knowledge from the archaeological point of view assumed in the present study. This description will serve as a background to the subsequent historical layers of knowledge, which all embody different relations to the first. These relations are central to the state of African knowledge in the present and will be explored in the following chapters.

The chapter takes as point of departure an introductory consideration of the discursive context surrounding the study of early African knowledge. This is followed by a brief explication of the relation between knowledge, culture, and cosmology, which underlies this

discursive context. A synopsis of indigenous African cosmology follows, as this serves as the context surrounding African epistemology, specialised "psychological" knowledge, and the relation between African knowledge and power, as explored in the subsequent sections.

The Mirage, the Mute, and the Myth

There is no direct access to the knowledge of pre-colonial Africa, as it was almost never recorded in writing and was obtained by birthright, revelation, and initiation. It is and will remain a mirage which has only recently been (re)constructed by anthropologists, theologians, psychologists, psychiatrists, and philosophers. All written representations of indigenous African knowledge are subject to the constraints of these zones of discourse, have been created by and for westerners or western-educated Africans, and may in fact reveal more about recent western thought than about that of pre-colonial Africa.

> All of these discourses have as their essential point of reference the historical existence, organization, and culture of African peoples, who themselves remain mute in these discussions because their institutions do not include the printing press.... It is a feature of all of the discourses... that participants constantly challenge the validity of each other's representations concerning the mute. (MacGaffey, 1981, pp. 227-228)

Indigenous African knowledge was orally and symbolically transmitted (one exception being ancient Egyptian knowledge which included writing). Social scientists have indirect access to this knowledge via, inter alia, myths transmitting historical and social knowledge over generations. From these myths are constructed "scientific" narratives called histories or thought systems. From a constructivist stance, these narratives may, however, also be viewed as "myths", confirming a certain view of the world. A paradoxical situation arises, where African knowledge becomes a "body of work in 'social science' which is, in fact, myth, and which itself deals, in part, with a body of 'myth' which is, in fact, social science" (MacGaffey, 1978, p. 101). These two kinds of myths/narratives both satisfy their audiences by confirming their views of the world, "but the context of the one is the lawsuit between two clans, or a

divinatory seance; of the other, the university seminar, the university press, and the research grant" (MacGaffey, 1978, p. 118).

The conditions of possibility (Foucault, 1970, p. xxii) surrounding this mythical discourse will be further explored in later chapters. One feature of this discourse is that it assumes a unity between African knowledge, culture, and cosmology (and often fails to perceive the same unity between western knowledge of other cultures and western culture and cosmology).

Knowledge, Culture, and Cosmology

Culture may be viewed as the organised pattern of thoughts, beliefs, values, and behaviour that is learned and shared by a group of people, and which is passed from one generation to another (Bodibe, 1993; Schoeman, 1987). A culture functions as a unity which is organised around a set of core principles called a worldview or cosmology, referring to consensually validated assumptions and meanings in terms of which people interpret all aspects of reality (Hammond-Tooke, 1986; Kalu, 1980; Schoeman, 1987). Knowledge, culture, and cosmology function as a whole and mutually confirm each other. Although they function dynamically and are subject to constant change and local variations, the following section will focus on what is considered the relatively universal and enduring aspects of African cosmology. It will generalise, as does the prevailing "scientific" myth.

African Cosmology

Holism

African knowledge is rooted in a holistic view of man and the universe (Kamalu, 1990; Lambo, 1973; Manganyi, 1973; Mbiti, 1971; Ngubane, 1977; Nobles, 1980; Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981). An essential unity is assumed between body and soul, subject and object, humans and society, humans and the divine, and humans and the material world. Most of the dualisms displayed in western thought are transcended, united, or nonexistent in African thought. It is

14

integrative and synthetic rather than analytical (Keita, 1984; Udechukwu, 1980).

The Integration of Opposites

Holism implies an integration of opposites (Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981). Kamalu (1990) and Keita (1984) trace this aspect of African thought to the ancient Egyptians. African ritual, art and symbols are concerned with restoring unity between opposing forces, within the community, and between humans and the spiritual world (Bührmann, 1984; Udechukwu, 1980).

Religiosity

The distinctions between the material and spiritual and between the sacred and the secular do not apply in African knowledge (Mbiti, 1971). The African cosmos is profoundly religious (Kalu, 1980; Lambo, 1973; Modum, 1980; Richards, 1985). Man is firstly a religious being and lives in constant interaction with religious forces and beings. All aspects of daily life are religious and worship permeates social life (Mbiti, 1971). Natural phenomena and objects have strong religious significance so that "the physical and the spiritual... dove-tail into each other" (Mbiti, 1971, p. 57). The religious universe is actually experienced in the natural and social world (Onyanwu, 1975; Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981).

Indigenous religious practices vary at tribal level. Religious ideas spread spontaneously. There are no missionaries nor conversions. Each society's religious system is integrated into its social structure and one acquires a religion by birth (Mbiti, 1971). However, all religions share certain characteristics, such as monotheism. God is the ultimate explanation of all things (Kamalu, 1990; Keita, 1984; Makinde, 1988; Mbiti, 1971; Senghor, 1965). Most African peoples approach God indirectly, through intermediaries such as priests, diviners or other specialists. Acts of worship are offered to the living-dead, regional spirits, local divinities or directly to God, and are aimed at maintaining the balance between man and the spiritual. When this balance is upset, misfortune, and suffering may result. The practice of religion is never a private affair, but involves at least two or more parties (Abraham, 1962; Mbiti, 1971).

The Ontological Hierarchy

Cosmology and ontology coincide in a hierarchical view of the universe (Abraham, 1962; Makinde, 1988; Mbiti, 1971; Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981). Inanimate things are located at the bottom of the hierarchy, followed by plants and then animals. Humans are set apart from the preceding in that they have an immortal soul or spirit (Abraham, 1962; Mbiti, 1971; Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981), an idea that is traced to the ancient Egyptians (Kamalu, 1990; Keita, 1984; Olela, 1986).

As long as a person exists in the memory of those who are still alive, she belongs to the living dead and is considered a member of the community (Kalu, 1980), for instance by appearing in their dreams (Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981). The living-dead possess special knowledge of and are considered guardians of family affairs, traditions, and ethics, but have the power to bring both fortune or misfortune. This places them in a paradoxical position: They are respected and wanted, yet not wanted (Mbiti, 1971).

Once the living-dead disappear from the memory of the living, they become spirits; nameless, depersonalised beings, who are less directly involved in the living community. In some societies minor deities are above the spirits in the hierarchy. Deities may assume the form of personified natural phenomena or heroes. God, who is all-knowing, is at the top of the hierarchy.

The living human forms part of a hierarchical society, that may be headed by a king, followed by village and town heads, household heads (males), elders, women, and children (Makinde, 1988). Kings have divine authority and can exercise the power of life and death. Those members of society who are endowed with specialised knowledge serve as intermediaries between the living and the spiritual. These include heroes, sages, rain-makers, diviners, other healers, and priests (Fortes & Dieterlin, 1965; Mbiti, 1971).

This ontology functions as a complete unity. To remove any category would be to destroy existence. "One mode of existence presupposes all the others" (Mbiti, 1971, p. 16) and a

balance must be maintained between all of them.

The Life Force

The cosmos is assumed to be drenched in forces and powers, all emanating from God. God is present in creation through the life-force, power or energy which permeates all beings (Lowery-Palmer, 1980; Mbiti, 1971; Modum, 1980; Richards, 1985; Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981). The universe is a closed system of forces, individual and distinct, but also interdependent and in equilibrium. This dynamic view puts greater emphasis on the links or relations between beings than on the beings thus linked (Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981).

Being, or the life-force, is unstable equilibrium, always capable of growing stronger or weaker (Senghor, 1965). Every individual has his or her own life-force, which can vary qualitatively and quantitatively (Lowery-Palmer, 1980; Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981), but is under guidance of the soul. Some humans and spirits have the power/knowledge to tap or manipulate the life-force, either for the good or ill of their communities (Mbiti, 1971; Minkus, 1984). Interaction between humans, between humans and nature, and between humans and God are those between vital forces, souls, and powers (Lowery-Palmer, 1980). Standards of behaviour are aimed at maintaining, respecting, and strengthening the relationship between vital forces (Lowery-Palmer, 1980; Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981).

Anthropocentrism

Humans occupy a central and privileged position in the universe (Kalu, 1980; Senghor, 1965). "Everything is seen in terms of its relation to man" (Mbiti, 1971, p.16). Man is, in turn, viewed in terms of his relation to the universe (Abraham, 1962; Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981). If the self becomes disordered, the universe is experienced as disordered; if the universe is disordered, the self becomes disordered. "Man somehow mirrors and contains the universe" (Lambo, 1973, p. 314).

The universe is anthropocentrised. Spiritual beings and God are viewed in human terms and the spirit world is assumed to function like human society (Lowery-Palmer, 1980; Onwuanibe, 1984). Forces, knowledge systems, and even illnesses and medicines are personified (Makinde, 1988; Minkus, 1984). A universe or history before or outside humans and the community is inconceivable. Knowledge attains truth value in terms of its value to the community, never in terms of some "outside" value such as "objectivity" (Abraham, 1962).

We do not know the world of nature but of culture. This cultural world is not that of natural evolution but of cultural evolution. We cannot project our ideas and thought into the world of nature said to have existed before man and culture. (Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981, p. 97)

Communalism

Humans do not occupy their central position in the universe in isolation, but always as part of a community (Abraham, 1962). Communalism is a central value in all African societies (Kamalu, 1990). Mbiti (1971) refers to a sense of kinship binding together the life of the tribe. Abraham (1962), and Lambo (1973) emphasise the spiritual nature of this kinship. Nkrumah (in Makinde, 1988) describes traditional society as communal, egalitarian, and humanistic. The state, clan, and other units all function as families. Similarly, Nyerere (in Makinde, 1988) likens the "communal spirit" to the "family spirit".

"The family is the microcosm, the first cell. All the concentric circles which form the different levels of society...village, tribe, kingdom, empire...reproduce in extended form the family" (Senghor, 1965, p. 43). The family includes the living, the unborn, and the ancestors (Mbiti, 1971). The family is the clan, "the sum of all persons, living and dead, who acknowledge a common ancestor" (Senghor, 1965, p. 43). Genealogy bestows personal identity and establishes relationships between individuals. Each person has literally hundreds of fathers, mothers, uncles, wives, and children. "The African is thus held in a tight network of vertical and horizontal communities, which bind and at the same time support him" (Senghor, 1965, p. 43). The individual is incorporated into the community through rites that continue throughout

his or her life. Ultimately, the individual can only say "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am" (Mbiti, 1971, p. 108).

Many authors tend to emphasise the positive aspects of communalism in African societies, such as mutual support and protection. It is, however, a paradoxical feature. Although it offers protection to all members of the community, it also makes every member "dangerously naked in the sight of other members" (Mbiti, 1971, p. 209) and vulnerable to accusations of evil, often blamed on a closely related member of the community. The community is "the centre of love and hatred, of friendship and enmity, of trust and suspicion, of joy and of sorrow, of generous tenderness and bitter jealousies..., of security and insecurity" (Mbiti, 1971, p. 209). Similarly, Lowery-Palmer (1980) refers to interpersonal relations as "uncertain and dangerous. In relating to other individuals, one proceeds with caution" (p. 62).

The strength of communal values in traditional societies has led to the conclusion that individualism was actively prohibited (Lowery-Palmer, 1980) and a "remote concept" (Makinde, 1988, p. 60) in such societies. Mbiti (1971) goes as far as saying that "a person cannot be individualistic, but only corporate" (p. 209). Abraham (1962) stresses that allowances were made to incorporate the uniqueness of each person and that the group was never over-responsible. However, subservience to the clan was a moral and spiritual necessity.

Oruka (1990) ascribes the idea of the suppression of individuality to the attitude of researchers, who tend to focus on communal rather than individual knowledge. Individual sources of innovative knowledge were not recorded, but that does not deny their possible existence. Individuals who made outstanding contributions to society, such as kings or heroes, achieved mythical status. Bird and Kendall (1980) use hero myths to describe the relation between the individual and the community as one of dialectic tension and interdependence. The hero, someone with special powers, is an agent of disequilibrium who works against the stabilising and conservative forces of society. However, he may have the power to act when social conventions immobilise others. His motivations may be selfish, but he becomes a hero precisely because his acts ultimately benefit society. The social system operates in such a way that the hero and group are interdependent. The hero may venture forth into unknown territory,

but has to return to the praise songs of the community to receive glory.

Concepts of the Person

The person is firstly defined in terms of the community: "The reality of the communal world takes precedence over the reality of individual life histories" (Menkiti, 1984, p. 171). Persons become persons only after a long process of social and ritual transformation (Menkiti, 1984) and personhood may be conferred by the community only after initiation in puberty (Mbiti, 1971). "An ontological progression exists between infancy and ripening in old age" (Menkiti, 1984, p. 173). Man is born as an "it" and returns to this state when he enters the spirit-world (Mbiti, 1971). The person exists between the times of entry and exit from the community.

The African view of the person is an essentialist one (Kalu, 1980). A person is an irreducible essence which is constant and unchanging (Abraham, 1962, p. 42), and an integral part of the metaphysical universe (Abraham, 1962; Onwuanibe, 1984). However, humans transcend the world through immortality (Onwuanibe, 1984). The person is essentially spirit, who is only encased in a body for a while (Abraham, 1962; Onwuanibe, 1984). The relation of body and soul is always an integrative, holistic one, as is evidenced in the following examples of African views of the person.

The Yoruba have a tripartite concept of the person: Body (ara), soul (emi), and inner head/destiny (ori). Like the soul, the ori is spiritual. One's destiny is not determined by the ori; moral effort and sacrifice may influence it (Makinde, 1984, 1988). The ori serves as an explanation of irrational behaviour, but the soul is more important. The soul's physical counterpart is the human heart, and its physical attendant, the human blood (Makinde, 1984). Bührmann (1984), Lowery-Palmer (1980), and Ruch and Anyanwu (1981) point to similar bodily locations of "psychological" and spiritual functions: "Some cultures have a whole detailed anatomy of psychological functions" (Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981, p. 158). They warn, however, against viewing these localisations in too literal a fashion and emphasise their symbolic and metaphorical meaning.

Although Gyekye (1984) views the Akan concept of the person as essentially dualistic, others (Abraham, 1962; Kalu, 1980) identify five aspects: The body, the soul, the "destiny", a moral/educable aspect, and an inheritable/temperamental aspect. The inheritable aspect is passed down the lineage, so that the clan as a whole is viewed as having a distinct personality (Abraham, 1962).

These views of the person coincide in that immortal spiritual forces are viewed as primary determinants of human behaviour (Onwuanibe, 1984).

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Time

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According to African cosmology, the past carries over into the present by virtue of the presence of spiritual beings. Consequently, Mbiti (1971) regards time in African indigenous thought as a two-dimensional phenomenon, with a long past, a present, and "virtually no future" (p. 17). If future events are certain to occur, or fall within the inevitable cyclical rhythm of nature, they constitute what Mbiti calls "potential time", not "actual time". The present and the past dominate African understanding of the individual, the community, and the universe (Kalu, 1980).

Time is reckoned in terms of events or phenomena in relation to one another (Kalu, 1980; Mbiti, 1971). "Time is a measure of life, not of non-human events" (Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981, p. 116). Ayoade (1986) differentiates between two measures of time: Human indicators (including egocentric and communocentric events) and environmental indicators (celestial/cosmic and terrestrial/ecological events). Since events define time, humans "make" as much time as they want (Mbiti, 1971). Similarly, Ayoade (1986) describes Africans as "potential conquerors of time" (p. 107) rather than helpless victims thereof.

The African conception of time differs essentially from a linear conception of past-present-future (Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981). Mbiti (1971) replaces these terms with micro-time, Sasa, and macro-time or Zamani. Sasa denotes the period of immediate concern to people. It is "an experiential extension of the Now-moment.... It is the time region in which

people are conscious of their existence" (p. 22). It has its own short future, a dynamic present and an experienced past. The individual and community directly participate in and experience Sasa. Ruch and Anyanwu (1981) agree that the Now (described in similar terms to the Sasa) is a dominant concern in African thinking.

Sasa, the period of conscious living, continually disappears into Zamani, the period of myth. Zamani denotes not only the long past, but also the present and future, on a wider scale. It is the period "beyond which nothing can go. Zamani is the graveyard of time... the dimension in which everything finds its halting point... the ocean of time in which everything becomes absorbed into a reality that is neither after nor before" (Mbiti, 1971, p. 23).

Mbiti (1971) uses these time dimensions to explain the mythical nature of history in Africa. In contrast to the view that history progressively moves forward towards a future climax or golden age, African history finds explanations in the Zamani which is represented in myths, offering a source of knowledge around Sasa. Ruch and Anyanwu (1981) agree that both the past and the future serve as mythical background to the Now. Mythical time is cyclical, for "peoples expect human history to continue for ever, in the rhythm of moving from the Sasa to the Zamani and there is nothing to suggest that this rhythm shall come to an end" (p. 24). The cyclical dimension of African time is also stressed by Kalu (1980) and Richards (1985).

Human life has a cyclical rhythm, and revolves around key transitional events, each of which is marked by rituals and ceremonies. Unusual events that do not fit into these cycles disturb the ontological harmony and demand special attention in the form of religious activity (Mbiti, 1971). The life span of an individual may be viewed as a gradual movement from the Sasa to the Zamani. After having died, the person lingers in the Sasa and only "passes out of the horizon of the Sasa period" and sinks into the Zamani when the last person who knew him dies (Mbiti, 1971, p. 25). This view of immortality explains the importance of marriage and family ties. Unless a person has close relatives to remember her when she dies, she will pass directly into oblivion. Surviving relatives keep the mystical ties with the living-dead alive through symbols of communion, fellowship, and remembrance.

Although Mbiti's (1971) view of African time is widely accepted, some authors such as Ayoade (1986) and Makinde (1988) have criticised his view of a "futureless" time conception. These authors, however, refer to societies that currently function in a "traditional" way, whereas Mbiti's time perspective applies to pre-colonial societies. He explicitly states that missionary teaching and westernisation have changed the African conception of time (Mbiti, 1971, pp. 27-28).

Space and Time

Space and time are closely linked, and often the same word is used for both. The Zamani (spiritual, mythical time) is also mythical space, and as such it is both timeless and spaceless (Richards, 1985). Lambo (1973) speaks of "a space-time continuum in which space, time, and matter are all parts or aspects of the same primeval reality" (p. 314). As with time, space is not "measured" in a linear way, but is defined in terms of the activities of the community. "What matters most to people is what is geographically near, just as Sasa embraces the life that people experience" (Mbiti, 1971, p. 27). Lowery-Palmer (1980) illustrates this in the thought of the Yoruba, who associate nearness to one's natal village with safety and distance with spiritual danger.

Space is further defined in terms of African cosmology: Man is often depicted at the centre of space, with God above and the spirits below (Kalu, 1980). The spiritual world is spatially conceived of as an alternative reality existing parallel to and geographically overlapping with the living world (Lowery-Palmer, 1980). The land is the concrete expression of both the Zamani and the Sasa. It binds people to their departed, who are buried within or close to the living quarters. Being removed from the communal land or having to travel far endangers these ties and demands special rites of protection. Dying or being buried far from the ancestral home may remove a person from the remembrance of the living and disturb communal relations (Oruka, 1990).

African Epistemology

The Idea of Knowledge

The dominant view of knowledge in African societies that follows from descriptions of African cosmology is that it is something given through oral tradition and accepted as authoritative. Knowledge is associated with the total community, rather than with innovative individuals. It is carried over from the past, rather than being actively created in the present. The indigenous African orientation to time precludes the idea of knowledge cumulatively progressing towards a final truth and discourages critical thought. "The stereotype of the uncritical, unreflective, 'closed' nature of African systems of thought has proved extraordinarily resilient and resistant to criticism. One obvious reason for this is that most of the evidence available supports it" (Hallen & Sodipo, 1986, p. 121).

This may, however, be an oversimplification following from western preconceptions and research methodology. In a careful translation of the knowledge concept in Yoruba thought, Hallen and Sodipo (1986) found that senior diviner/sages differentiate between two kinds of knowledge: Oral traditional knowledge (similar to "belief" in English) is viewed as second-hand information that one agrees to accept; but "knowledge" is defined as something one knows at first hand, notably from sensory evidence, and is ranked as superior to the first. Hallen & Sodipo (1986) find it ironic that

> the model of African thought systems produced by English-language culture should
> typify them as systems that treat second-hand information (oral tradition, "book
> knowledge", etc.) as though it were true, as though it were knowledge! This is precisely
> what the Yoruba epistemological system... outspokenly and adamantly refuses to do. But
> the English-language system does - grossly. Therefore it, in the end, fits its own model
> for traditional thought systems better than the Yoruba ever can! (p. 81)

Hallen and Sodipo (1986) differentiate between the recording and expression of knowledge, on the one hand, and the attitude towards knowledge, on the other. African

knowledge is orally recorded and expressed, in the form of relatively "unreasoned" metaphor. This does not necessarily imply, however, an uncritical attitude towards such knowledge. Although they successfully challenge the stereotype of African knowledge as being uncritical and unempirical, Hallen and Sodipo (1986) themselves equate knowledge with empirical and critical thought, and tend to exclude belief from knowledge. Beliefs (traditional oral second-hand information) are extremely powerful determinants of behaviour and cannot be separated from knowledge (Sogolo, 1993). Both define reality and arrive at truth claims. The unity of belief and knowledge is best illustrated in the divination process (Peek, 1991), which is characterised by a non-rational, non-empirical mode of knowing, producing agreed-upon rather than empirically validated truths. The diviner's credibility is dependent on an authorising process which is employed in all societies to arrive at a consensually validated reality. The legitimation of divinatory truths may depend on a fixed system of esoteric knowledge, it may be a function of social authority or spiritual validation, or it may result from a debate about an oracular message between client and diviner.

The Origins and Limits of Knowledge

The ultimate origin of all knowledge is God. The distribution of knowledge follows the ontological hierarchy. God may pass on some knowledge to lesser deities whose knowledge may be partly shared by specialists, who may help others to attain knowledge via inter alia divination. Divine knowledge may be communicated to humans by spirits or gods through dreams or spirit possession (Bührmann, 1981, 1984; Lowery-Palmer, 1980).

As most events are caused by invisible, spiritual agents of which precise knowledge is unattainable, imperfect knowledge is accepted as part of life and a striving for final truths, irrelevant. Humans strive to acquire more knowledge, but what is known is very little compared to what may potentially be known. All knowledge gained is derivative, imperfect, and incomplete (Abraham, 1962; Mbiti, 1971; Makinde, 1988; Minkus, 1984).

Within the Ifa system of knowledge, as practised by the Yoruba, Ifa is both personified as a deity and viewed as a repository or infinite source of knowledge and wisdom. It functions

as an oracle (Makinde, 1988) and is similar to an omniscient intelligence. It possesses the forces and powers of nature, as well as knowledge consisting of several branches: Nature, animals, plants, oral incantations, divination, medicinal plants, and healing. Ifa not only knows but controls language, culture, philosophy, and religion (Makinde, 1988). Knowledge is thus viewed as inseparable from power and from the functioning of society as a whole.

Ruch and Anyanwu (1981) emphasise the anthropocentric nature of African knowledge. No knowledge of reality independent of human experience is possible. Knowledge is subjective: "Self-knowledge is the basis of all knowledge" (Myers, 1984), but the self is always an extended self, including the ancestors, nature, and the community (Myers, 1986). Truth includes communal, aesthetic, imaginative, emotional, and intuitive knowledge. Lived and felt realities, such as the spiritual nature of the world, derive from individual, social, and historical experience (Myers, 1984). "Vague", "subjective" concepts such as spirit and ancestor "embody so many qualities that nobody can clearly and precisely limit them in human experience. These 'concepts' are not even defined. They should be regarded as symbols, not concepts" (Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981). Meaning is transmitted through imagery and symbolism, which convey multiple meanings (Dixon, 1976). Thus understanding is synonymous with unification and truth essentially a unifying principle (Myers, 1984). The "vagueness" of African representations of reality may be related to the "diunital" logic employed (Dixon, 1976). In contrast to either/or, dualistic logic, diunital logic refers to "both-and". Distinctions are made, but are always viewed in terms of a united whole (Dixon, 1976).

These features of African knowledge insulate it from attack or doubt (Horton, 1973). "Failures of prediction or incomplete knowledge can be accounted for without jettisoning the basic causal explanations" (Minkus, 1984, p. 141). The insulating effect of African knowledge systems has led authors such as Horton (1973) to suggest that these systems of thought preclude critical thinking and are essentially closed, in contrast to "open scientific" thinking. Horton (1973) ascribes this to the system of convergent causality (A, B, C, D,... may all lead to result X) underlying African thought, whereas science searches for linear cause-effect chains and final truths. Horton's claim will be reconsidered after a closer look at the concept of causation in African knowledge.

Causation and Chance

In an anthropocentric universe, causes of events are attributed to God, spiritual forces, and other people (Lowery-Palmer, 1980; Makinde, 1988). Manifestations of evil and good fortune are mostly attributed to malicious human or spiritual agents, but the manifestation of goodness and good fortune are attributed to God (Mbiti, 1971). The attainment of good fortune is associated with a moral life, respect for others, observation of taboos, and the attainment of ritual and practical knowledge. However, such good behaviour is always attained through the mediation of spiritual and human benefactors. "To blame oneself or another for misfortune is acceptable; to claim total responsibility for one's own good fortune... would be regarded as somewhat sacrilegious" (Minkus, 1984, p. 141).

Although there is a clear understanding of the laws of nature, the concepts of chance and accident are said not to exist in traditional thought (Makinde, 1988; Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981; Shelton, 1968) or "to play a minimal role indeed" (Sodipo, 1973, p. 15). The ultimate cause of an apparent chance event is always attributable to a person (Minkus, 1984). Although Sodipo (1973) challenges the idea that chance is absent from African thought, Sodipo agrees that personalised causes are preferred because they fit into African religious cosmology. In a dynamic universe dominated by spiritual forces, "natural" explanations are inadequate simply because they do not include the spiritual dimension (Lowery-Palmer, 1980). Only an intelligent being can have "principle causality"; non-intelligent beings may at the most be endowed with a "derivative instrumental causality" by a principal intelligent cause (Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981, p. 110). Although Akan causal theory includes spiritual forces (in medicine and charms) which operate "automatically" (Minkus, 1984, p. 118) once their mechanisms have been set into motion, even these forces are dependent on the actions and wishes of personalised beings. Humans, by participating in the life force, are not passive spectators in the universe; they play an active, causative role in it, but are also vulnerable to and dependent on other humans and spiritual forces.

Horton's (1973) claim that convergent causality operates in African knowledge is confirmed by the above. His claim that African knowledge is closed and uncritical will be

considered in the following section.

Ways of Knowing

There is no subject-object split in indigenous African thought (Onwuanibe, 1984). Subject and object are united in "a world consciousness which transcends both" (Lambo, 1973, p. 314) and in an "act of love, from which the fruit of knowledge is born" (Senghor, 1965, p. 32). The other does not become object: "African reason is intuitive and participates in the object" (Senghor, 1965, p. 34). For the African, knowledge is at once discovery and creation; the reason of the African is a "reason-by-embrace" (p. 33). Senghor (1965) describes the process of knowing as an emotional, social, and intuitive process. Similarly, Ruch & Anyanwu (1981) emphasise the personal nature of knowledge, which is attained through total experience: "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. Only through this method does he claim to have the knowledge of the Other" (p. 94). However, personal experience is always connected to collective and shared experience (Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981).

Senghor's (1965) view of African knowledge as being intuitive and "irrational" is criticised by for instance Bloom (1976), Horton (1973), and Oruka (1990). There is little doubt that common-sense and rational knowledge are essential for survival in any society and that African specialists employ a rational, critical, sceptical, and pragmatic attitude to information (Bloom, 1976; Horton, 1973; Peek, 1991; Sanda, 1978; Sogolo, 1993). Horton (1973) searches for similarities between the rational aspects of African traditional thought and western science and finds similarities in the nature and functions of theoretical thinking. Both systems of thought search for explanatory theory, place things in a causal context wider than that provided by common-sense, abstract and analyse, re-integrate, draw analogies, and construct models (Horton, 1973). However, Horton (1972, 1973) also finds differences between the two. These are to be found in the personalisation of forces in African thought, versus impersonal forces in science, as well as African thought being closed, "characterized by lack of awareness of alternatives, sacredness of beliefs, and anxiety about threats to them" (Horton, 1973, p. 481), whereas science is supposed to be open.

Horton's views have been criticised by Pratt (1972), Nduka (1974), and Sanda (1978). Sanda's argument is most incisive: Horton's science/non-science dichotomy is questionable, especially as far as the social sciences are concerned. In fact, most of the "limitations" he ascribes to African knowledge, may be equally applicable to the social sciences. "Freyerabend (1975) says myth is much closer to science than even Horton is prepared to admit. Science owes its pre-eminence not so much to its superior rationality as it does to the political power of those whose ideology it is" (MacGaffey, 1981, p. 266).

If one assumes that theoretical, rational, and critical ways of knowing are found in traditional African thought, this does not, however, preclude the use of intuitive, non-rational modes, as in divination, which involves a combination of "logical-analytical" and "intuitive-synthetic" modes of thinking (Peek, 1991). It is precisely the non-rational, puzzling, randomising nature of the divination process that creates opportunities for innovation in ideas (Parkin, 1991). The diviner is the articulator of new ideas that have not yet come into general social currency (Oruka, 1990). This challenges the stereotype of African knowledge being static or closed to innovation, but also the accompanying stereotype that innovation is always the result of critical, analytical, and rational thought.

If truth is viewed as a consensually validated reality, the distinctions between rational and non-rational or scientific and non-scientific ways of knowing move to the background. In summarising a volume of work on African divination, Peek (1991) concludes: "Throughout this volume we see that "'truth' is in the action generated, the social reality constructed, and resultant well-being of the people; it is not to be found in an abstract system" (p. 135).

The Transmission of Knowledge

Knowledge of God's existence is intuitive and available to all humankind (Abraham, 1962; Oguah, 1984). Other knowledge is obtained by birth, through revelation or initiation. The exchange of knowledge between different groups is spontaneous and expert knowledge may be borrowed or assimilated between groups, explaining the communality of fundamental beliefs across the continent (Mbiti, 1971).

Elders and specialists are viewed as repositories of knowledge and wisdom and it is their collective responsibility to educate the young. The emphasis is on practical wisdom (Abraham, 1962), which is communicated in a variety of ways: Nonverbally through musical instruments such as talking drums, personal dress and masks, art and other symbols, as well as orally via narratives, riddles, songs, myths, folktales, and legends (Oreh, 1980).

The deepest expression of African cultural reality has been through art, music, folksong and myths rather than logical analysis. Through these procedures, the African culture constructed an edifice of truth that enabled the people to achieve a relative balance with their environment. (Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981, p. 89)

Language

The oral literature of Africa is recited or sung and often accompanied by musical instruments. It includes legends, songs, myths, proverbs, folk-tales, place legends, myths of origin, and salutation poetry. Although these transmit religious and other knowledge (Boateng, 1985; Mbiti, 1971; Nwoga, 1980), they constitute "a way of life, rather than an exclusive area of life" (Nwoga, 1980, p. 58). The major genres are characterised by a metaphorical process and fall into a cyclical, not linear, mode. As history, they serve more as comments than as records; as "a way of observing a society that reveals the way a community feels about itself" (Scheub, 1985, p. 2), and are continually adapted to fit present realities (Abraham, 1962).

Proverbs contain "whimsical and pragmatic wisdom" (Abraham, 1962, p. 72) of the past in a distillated form and serve to stimulate discussion and argumentation in the present (Gyekye, 1975). Proverbial sayings are widespread and their themes similar across the continent (Boateng, 1985). Abraham (1962) further identifies wellerisms, aetiological tales, fables, cantefables, and mixtures of verse and narrative as part of the oral tradition. Trickster stories, similar to riddles, have an educative function. However, it is notable that characterisation, the "distinct individual" (Abraham, 1962, p. 96) is absent from these stories. There are only human types.

Fernandez (1980) describes riddles as

iconic thought primarily producing and working with images more or less visual and concrete in effect...the information it communicates is not coded in rules to be abstracted and applied. It is the nature of iconic thought to have much more of a personal component and also to excite contextualization. (p. 57)

Riddles have no single correct answer and are posed to a group. Each member of the group ventures answers drawn from personal experience and the final answer is determined by consensus and circumstance. Fernandez terms this process edification by puzzlement (p. 44), as it uses metaphor to tie together different aspects of experience into an integrated world view. Riddles do not only have an instructive function; they illicit creative, contextualised, and edifying knowledge. They offer a stark contrast to western intellectual exercises such as the "riddles" posed in intelligence tests, where rules have to be extracted and applied within limited and self-contained contexts.

Peek (1991) and Fernandez (1991) view edification by puzzlement as a fundamental process in the African oral tradition and as underlying the creative resourcefulness of the divination process. "A divination system is often the primary institutional means of articulating the epistemology of a people.... Divination systems do not simply reflect other aspects of a culture; they are the means... of knowing which underpin and validate all else" (Peek, 1991, p. 2). The process of edification by puzzlement may thus be viewed as fundamental to the process of knowing, as well as the transmission of knowledge, in African cultures.

The element of edification through a unification of opposites is also present in myths. Ray (1980) illustrates how myths of the origins of death are concerned with the complementarity of life and death and their significance within a total cosmology. Myths explain the place of humans in the universe, but the knowledge conveyed is less concerned with facts than with providing a feeling of security in the present through a sense of connectedness with the past. Myths always have a social and ethical dimension and display the logic of analogy (Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981). African languages lend themselves to imagery by analogy. "The object does

not mean what it represents but what it suggests, what it creates" (Senghor, 1965, p. 85). "The myth employs certain fundamental moral, social, ritual, and cosmological ideas, and 'projects' them on to the primordial past in order to explain the ultimate origins of the cosmos and life and death" (Ray, 1980, p. 61).

Ritual, Art, and Symbolism

Africans used art instead of writing to represent their thoughts (Abraham, 1962). Most African art is not representational, literary or descriptive, but abstract and symbolic (Kamalu, 1990). Art displays a moral-philosophical orientation and portrays the forces of the universe. Art is "direct, magical, attempting a sort of plastic analogue of onomatopoeia, to evince and evoke feelings the subjects induced in one" (Abraham, 1962, p. 112). Art, like oral literature, serves to provide a synthesis between opposites and to represent the spiritual, as in the wearing of ceremonial masks (Kamalu, 1990; Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981). By symbolising the immaterial it unites spiritual beings with humans (Udechukwu, 1980). "African art was the emotional and intellectual peg on which tribal cultures hung spiritual truth" (Udechukwu, 1980, p. 86).

Rituals, such as those practised at birth, initiation, marriage, and funerals, serve to integrate the individual into the community, but also have an educational purpose. During each rite, the person is introduced to knowledge appropriate to his or her age and status in society. Rituals and feasts serve as moral and social control and surveillance, provide entertainment, and transmit knowledge (Oreh, 1980). Spiritual beings are included in rituals, music, and dance. Through these symbolic acts, humans influence the links with those around them. Life is dominated by the active influence of these links, thus life is interspersed with symbolic acts (Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981).

Rituals and myths are closely related. The ritual is "the myth in action" (Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981, p. 108), promoting spiritual harmony and wholeness (Modum, 1980) by depicting the interrelationships among beings. "It is through ritual that the unexplainable is understood, that chaos is made to be ordered within the logic of tradition" (Richards, 1985, p. 213). Ritual transcends the limitations of space and time, unites humans with the spiritual

(Richards, 1985), and serves as renewal, replenishment, redefinition, and rebirth. It is "a statement of continuity, unity and community" (Richards, 1985, p. 218) and plays an important part in specialised knowledge.

Specialised Knowledge

All African societies designate certain people as having specialised knowledge, such as healers, rain-makers, and rulers. "Specialists are in effect the repositories in knowledge, practice, and, symbolically, of the religious life of their communities" (Mbiti, 1971, p. 193). The duties and kinds of knowledge of specialists overlap to a large extent and vary between different societies, so that a clear classification is impossible (MacGaffey, 1980). In the discussion that follows, the emphasis will fall on specialists whose domain of power/knowledge has specific relevance to psychology. However, these specialists are regarded as experts in almost every facet of individual and community life (Lambo, 1973). In an anthropocentric society, knowledge is essentially for and about humans, and all specialists are ultimately concerned with "psychological" issues.

Kinds of Specialists

Herbalists

Herbalists (also called traditional doctors, traditional healers, or medicine-men) are concerned with the prevention and treatment of sickness, disease, and misfortune (Mbiti, 1971). Herbalists, such as the inyanga in Zulu culture, primarily employ herbal and other medicine (Corin & Bibeau, 1980; F. S. Edwards, 1986), though some use divination as well.

Diviners

Diviners (like the isangoma in Zulu culture) are healers who use divination as part of a healing process (Corin & Bibeau, 1980; F. S. Edwards, 1986). They serve as a medium or link between the living and the living-dead and receive messages from the spirit-world. Divination

is the process whereby a person becomes possessed by a spirit so that the spirit may communicate directly through the diviner (Mbiti, 1971) or indirectly through devices or objects (Peek, 1991). "A divination system is a standardized process deriving from a learned discipline based on an extensive body of knowledge.... Divining processes are diverse, but all follow set routines by which otherwise inaccessible information is obtained" (Peek, 1991, p. 2).

Priests

Diviners and herbalists have religious functions; priests may have healing functions (Mbiti, 1971). Priests may also serve as mediums with the spirit world and perform similar functions to healers. Among the Akan of Ghana, the priest is a source of knowledge and information (Abraham, 1962). In the Yoruba system of Ifa divination, the Ifa priest/ess serves as general sage, diviner, and herbalist.

Training

Healers and priests organise themselves into professional bodies, exercising control over the profession, guarding privileged knowledge, and controlling the training and qualifications of healers. Most healers enter the profession after receiving a call from the ancestors, in the form of a temporary illness, spirit possession or similar psychological state, which is then identified by a healer as such (Bührmann, 1981, 1984; Mbiti, 1971). Some enter the profession by birth. Healers serve a long and arduous apprenticeship. Ifa priests and priestesses are trained in "convents" and their training may last from childhood until their middle years (Makinde, 1988). Training involves the whole person, who gradually gains entry into privileged knowledge (Bührmann, 1984). The healing art is attained "through self-denial, dedication, prolonged meditation and training" (Lambo, 1973, p. 312). Training ends with a formal and public initiation ceremony which earns the healer great respect in the community (Lambo, 1973).

Functions

Healers discover the cause of sickness, personal or interpersonal problems, identify the

person responsible, identify the nature of the disease or problem, apply treatment, and prevent its recurrence. They purge witches, detect sorcery, remove curses, control the living-dead and spirits, and play the role of counsellors, judges, comforters, and supporters during crises (Mbiti, 1971). In addition, healers and priests play a central role in communal rites and important seasonal activities, thus having preventative and integrative functions in the community (Corin & Bibeau, 1980; S. D. Edwards, 1990).

Explanations of Misfortune

Explanations of personal misfortune follow the general view of causality in African society: Sickness, disease, and misfortune are believed to be caused by the ill-will or ill-action of one person/spirit against another, often through the agency of witchcraft or magic (Boussat & Dupuy, 1975; Mbiti, 1971). Minkus (1984) refers to the following causes in order of prevalence: Punishment by ancestral spirits, deities or personal protective spirits; witchcraft and sorcery; the unfolding of a person's destiny; personal carelessness. The central question in explanations of illness is: "Who made me ill? Why am I ill?" (Daynes & Msengi, 1979).

A differentiation is made between disease and illness (the disease within its cultural context, including its cause) and both are treated. Most African healers have detailed knowledge of physical illnesses and employ a classification system to "diagnose" and point to a method of treatment. Physical and spiritual problems are differentiated but viewed holistically (Minkus, 1984). Both are seen as an imbalance or disequilibrium of a person within her total ecological and spiritual system (Brownell et al., 1987; Corin & Bibeau, 1980; Lambo, 1973). This view transcends the body/mind dichotomy which is characteristic of western views of illness (Cheetham & Griffiths, 1982; Cheetham & Rzadkowolski, 1980).

The Process of Healing

Healers use the force of nature and other secret knowledge including mediums, oracles, spirit possession, divination objects, common sense, intuitive knowledge, insight, and hypnotism (Mbiti, 1971). Herbalists use "medicine", whose healing properties are ascribed to their spirit

or inherent power. Charms may be used to secure protection or success. Charms and medicines derive their power from the spirit of their ingredients, their material form, and the ceremony and incantations used in their fabrication and use (Lowery-Palmer, 1980; Minkus, 1984). Medicine and charms always have symbolic power (Corin & Bibeau, 1980) and may be combined with other physical treatments such as purges, immersion in water, or blood-letting (Lowery-Palmer, 1980). Their use is integrated into a process that involves the total person within a total community (Sogolo, 1993).

Researchers have difficulty in describing the process of divination, due to its intuitive nature. Attempts have been made from the viewpoint of Jungian psychology (Bührmann, 1981, 1984; Bührmann & Gqomfa, 1981), systemic psychotherapy (Shuda, 1986) person-centred therapy (Holdstock, 1981a), and psychoanalysis (Lambo, 1972). These studies find similarities and differences between African and other therapeutic systems. All diviners follow certain set routines to obtain information to bear upon a problem.

Some type of device is usually employed, from a simple sliding object to the myriad symbolic items shaken in diviners' baskets. Sometimes the diviner's body becomes the vehicle of communication through spirit possession.... The final diagnosis and plan for action are rendered collectively by the diviner and the client(s). (Peek, 1991, p. 2)

Divination combines an apparent contradiction: It is a mystical process producing concrete, practical results. The diviner is presented with a practical problem, brings forth new, previously unobtainable, exclusive knowledge, usually from a randomising source (which has been likened to a projective technique), orders this knowledge, and, in consultation with the client(s), integrates it with existing knowledge to shape a solution and outline a plan of action. The solution is part of a mutually arrived at narrative of a client's life and a history of the event in question and considers the client's total life situation (Awanbor, 1982; Peek, 1991).

Healing is always a holistic process (Awanbor, 1982; Corin & Bibeau, 1980; S. D. Edwards, 1990; Sogolo, 1993). Bührmann (1981) and Bührmann and Gqomfa (1981) describe how healing rituals serve to integrate the afflicted individual with the community, while serving

at the same time to re-establish the integration of the community as a whole. The ritual may involve singing, the telling of myths, sacrifices, dancing, confession, and the analysis of dreams (Bührmann, 1984; Lambo, 1973). Awanbor (1982) and Lambo (1973) describe all African healing processes as community approaches. Healing occurs through but also for the community.

Cults of Affliction

The practice of specialised healers from inside the community, is complemented and supplemented by a tradition of healing cults of affliction existing at the margins of the established social order (Corin & Bibeau, 1980; Devisch, 1993). Such a cult consists of a group made up of healers, who are all former patients, and provide treatment and training. Symptoms brought for treatment include psychological disturbances associated with the class of spirits that the cult specialises in, as well as problems that have resisted treatment by other healers. Most cult practices involve trance and possession states. These cults principally serve persons who are socially marginal or disempowered within traditional structures, such as women in patriarchal societies, and thereby offer a counterbalance to the dominant powers.

African Knowledge and Power

All power ultimately derives from the life-force. Everything possesses innate force or power. Knowledge is essential in activating the latent power inherent in humans and things (Lowery-Palmer, 1980).

Mystical Power

The life force may manifest itself in magic, divination, witchcraft, sorcery, and other mysterious phenomena (Mbiti, 1971). The distinction between these phenomena is not clear (MacGaffey, 1980; Mbiti, 1971). Researchers tend to impose western conceptions of witchcraft and magic on African societies, which do not necessarily coincide (Hallen & Sodipo, 1986). However, there is agreement that some people have special powers, for instance a "second sight"

or telepathic power, which may be described as an ability to use magic (MacGaffey, 1980; Hallen & Sodipo, 1986). This power may be used by witches or sorcerers to harm others; diviners use the same power to heal (Corin & Bibeau, 1980; Hallen & Sodipo, 1986; Lowery-Palmer, 1980).

In addition to the official experts, some people are endowed with mystical power because of unusual attributes, such as twins or the physically disabled. Attitudes towards these exceptional humans vary from fear, resulting in their being killed, to veneration (Mbiti, 1971). In most African societies, elders are endowed with special powers and heroes may achieve mythical or divine status. Heroes are traditionally distinguished by their magical powers, not by physical prowess (Bird & Kendall, 1980).

Power and Secrecy

All specialists have a veil of secrecy surrounding their knowledge (Makinde, 1988; Mbiti, 1971) and secrecy is included in the code of conduct used by professional associations of healers (Ngubane, 1977). Similarly, witchcraft is characterised by secrecy, the hero in traditional myths cloaks himself and the instruments of his power in secrecy (Bird & Kendall, 1980), and elders maintain their control over lower ranks, especially youths, by virtue of secret knowledge (Murphy, 1980).

One explanation for the secrecy surrounding special powers, is that society fears those who are powerful and may easily accuse the powerful of witchcraft, leading to severe punishment and even death. Thus even diviners are careful not to expose their powers, and attribute these to spiritual beings (Hallen & Sodipo, 1986). If the diviner were to claim personal responsibility for her success, she would risk being identified by society as dangerous. This emphasises the limitations that were placed on claiming personal or individual power/knowledge (Hallen & Sodipo, 1986) by a tightly-knit community, and the power exercised by the "powerless" over the "powerful". Secrecy serves to reinforce the power of specialists but also, paradoxically, to protect these specialists from the power of ordinary society.

Objects as Power

Objects such as charms or amulets may be endowed with power by powerful humans, spirits, or gods, and may be used either as magical protection against evil forces or as harmful agents (Makinde, 1988; Mbiti, 1971; Minkus, 1984). Their power is derived from the spirit inherent in their ingredients, as well as the ritual circumstances and incantations of their use (Corin & Bibeau, 1980; Lowery-Palmer, 1980; Makinde, 1988). Possessions are extensions of a person's personal power and may carry the intentions of the owner (Lowery-Palmer, 1980).

Language and Thought as Power

Language and thought are powerful causal agents that may cause harm or offer protection to others (Lambo, 1972; Lowery-Palmer, 1980; Makinde, 1988; Minkus, 1984). Both thought and language have the power to bring about the state which they symbolise. No object has power without incantations (Lowery-Palmer, 1980; Makinde, 1988; Minkus, 1984). "The power of words, meaning, and bearing on human happiness, misery, sanity, and insanity is enormous" (Makinde, 1988, p. 97).

Speech is powerful: "The word, the spoken word, is the expression par excellence of the life-force, of being in its fullness" (Senghor, 1965, p. 84). The words of senior members of society carry power, especially when spoken during moments of crisis. Formal curses and blessings, especially those invoking deities, are extremely powerful (Makinde, 1988; Mbiti, 1971; Minkus, 1984). A curse may become an automatic force, continuing to destroy until removed by specific ritual procedures. According to Senghor (in Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981), the word is "not only an expression of knowledge, but knowledge itself, ready for action, already action" (p. 113).

African names have power, as they have a descriptive meaning bearing upon the person's life and conferring a specific identity on the person (Mbiti, 1971; Minkus, 1984; Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981). To know a person's name is to have power over him (Lowery-Palmer, 1980). Names are "proverbial" or "definite descriptions" (Kaphagawani, 1990). They may determine

the nature of a person if given at birth, but they may also be changed by society to provide a better description of the person in later life (Kaphagawani, 1990). In the words of Pongweni (in Kaphagawani, 1990, p. 199), names are "long experiences summarised in a cryptic expression. [They] have a function similar to that of proverbs; they are learned, pithy expressions of the knowledge and wisdom of the elders".

The Circulation of Power/knowledge

Ruch and Anyanwu (1981) explain the functioning of the life force with a metaphor of a power system, where the current that passes through the network is more important than the individual power points:

> Nature is a kind of power-grid, connected to a distant power-station. No light-fitting, no transformer, no switch and no motor within the grid is entirely independent of the others. The network of beings-with-force is a network of booster generators each of which contributes its share to the overall power which is both generated and consumed. The various points in this network, however, do not play an equal part, nor do they share equally in the overall force available. There is a clearly defined hierarchy of forces. (p. 151)

This hierarchy corresponds to the ontological hierarchy (Lowery-Palmer, 1980; Makinde, 1988) and the distribution of knowledge within this hierarchy coincides with that of power. The power hierarchy, as essentially a descending analysis of power, tends to dominate the literature and conceals the collaborative nature of power relations and the circulation of power throughout society. An ascending analysis (Foucault, 1980b) reveals a process of mutual control between those lower and those higher in the hierarchy. The stereotype of the diviner imposing his or her power on ordinary humans is easily eroded. "Ordinary" (very powerless according to Mbiti, [1971]) humans do not only accept but also display scepticism towards divination. They carefully select diviners, seek multiple sessions, and may consciously deceive them in order to test their knowledge (Peek, 1991). Their active collaboration is an essential ingredient in the divination process. Society as a whole exercises control over those considered powerful.

Healers who are considered ineffective will not be consulted or may even be punished severely in some societies and heroes can only achieve heroic status by receiving praise from the community.

In all societies, there is a dominating power/knowledge system (Foucault, 1980b) circulating through society. The dominant power/knowledge is rooted in and confirmed by interactions between members of society. In African society, this dominant power/knowledge manifests itself in the ontological power/knowledge hierarchy. However, Foucault stresses that all knowledge systems are continually threatened and renewed from within, by pockets of alternative, resistant, or deviant knowledges. The dominating power hierarchy is cross-cut by some persons of lower status achieving power, for instance women becoming witches or healers in patriarchal societies (Abraham, 1962; Hallen & Sodipo, 1986; Lowery-Palmer, 1980).

All those individuals considered powerful in traditional society may be viewed as potential threats to stability. By virtue of their special power/knowledge, they continually run the risk of being regarded as Other and punished. However, society also functions to integrate these "deviants" by sanctioning their power/knowledge. Once thus sanctioned, their alternative knowledge serves as a source of renewal and creativity within society. This contrasts with the treatment of the Other in the modern era (see chapter 5), which implied, in the first place, their separation and alienation from society (Foucault, 1967, 1977).

Power and knowledge were inseparable in pre-colonial African thought. Both, however, had a metaphysical and communal emphasis that differs essentially from modern individualising power/knowledge. Pre-colonial African power/knowledge is similar to pre-modern forms of power/knowledge in Europe regarding its metaphysical aspect, when

> man coincided with his own consciousness of a power to contemplate or to produce the ideas of all beings, among which man defined himself as living, speaking, and tool-making; this power was experienced as deficient or defective in the eyes of an infinite power that was thought to base [sic] the phenomenon of human power and its

concession or delegation of some part of that same infinite power. (Canguilhem, 1994, p. 86)

A second difference between pre-colonial African and modern power/knowledge is to be found in the personal sanctioning of formal power relations. Although power/knowledge is asymmetrically, that is, hierarchically organised in African societies, "the asymmetrical exercise of power owing to differences in lineage, gender, and/or generation is still interwoven in communicative relations between groups and individuals situated horizontally with respect to one another" (Ingram, 1994, p. 241). The personal, communal sanctioning of power relations contrasts with modern bureaucratic power which depends on impersonal, individualising, legal sanction, and modern scientific power/knowledge, which depends on metanarratives for legitimation. These differences are further explored in chapter 5.

Conclusion

African knowledge, as it exists in recent discourse, emerges from an assumed dichotomy between African and western worldviews. African knowledge is identified as either different from or similar to western knowledge. Its relation to western knowledge is located in its otherness, though efforts are made to bring the Other closer by searching for similarities. Descriptions of the indigenous equivalent of psychological knowledge are located within this discourse around similarities and differences between two worldviews (Kottler, 1990).

Some of the distinctions that shape this discourse are holism/dualism; integration/analysis; spirituality/materialism; life force/material forces; anthropocentrism/scientism; communalism/individualism; circular time/linear time; conservation/progress; closed/open; intuition/rationalism; oral/written; supernatural/natural; magic/science. Similarities are located within these same distinctions, for instance by demonstrating the rational, empirical, theoretical, or scientific nature of African knowledge.

African indigenous knowledge has a partly invisible companion, a shadow that never leaves its side: So-called "western" knowledge. The companion is assumed to be scientific,

rational, empirical, objective, and analytic. It originates from the land of the Enlightenment, where modernism promises a superior power/knowledge. The hegemony of this land is now being questioned and the shadow has been described as the "rotting corpse of a particular complex, multifaceted, projected self-image, that of the Greco-Roman/European 'rational man', a self-image raised to the level of paradigm" (Outlaw, 1990, p. 226). If Outlaw is correct and the shadow is already dead, will its spirit be immortal, trailing African knowledge to infinity, or will it gradually recede to be replaced by a successor?

The following chapter deals with an earlier companion of African knowledge: Islam.

CHAPTER 3

ISLAM IN AFRICA

> Religion, far from being a recalcitrant hallucination
> of continuity, signals an inevitable resilience and
> openness of the present - a series of possible futures
> all potentially applicable and livable to a particular
> people. (Simone, 1994, p. 12)

Although indigenous African religions feature prominently in the relevance discourse in psychology, few references are made to Islam. Boussat and Dupuy (1975), Desfarges (1982), and Vassaf (1987) view differences between Islamic and psychological knowledge as contributing to the irrelevance of psychological knowledge. This irrelevance is further illustrated in descriptions of the destructive interaction between Eurocentric psychology and Islamic traditions within the colonial context by Dequeker, Fanon, Lacaton, Micucci, and Ramé (1955), Fanon (1967d), Fanon and Azoulay (1954), Fanon and Geronimi (1956), and Fanon and Sanchez (1956).

Since its inception, Islam has co-existed with indigenous African religions, has taken root in a wide variety of forms in different parts of the continent, and is still growing in influence (Farah, 1987; Fernandez, 1978; Mbiti, 1971), so that the Muslim populace recently exceeded 40% of the African populace south of the Sahara (Farah, 1987).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the circulation of power/knowledge in African Islam, rather than the origins and doctrines of this religion. The chapter begins with a consideration of the relation between religion, knowledge, and power, which is central to the field of religious studies in Africa.

Religion, Knowledge, and Power

Information on African religions is filtered through the discourses of the anthropology of religion, oriental studies, missiology, colonial doctrine, and African political ideology, philosophy, and theology. These discourses employ the categories and assumptions of western social science, which sets religion apart from and contrasts it with politics, economics, and other institutions. Since many African societies often do not separate these institutions, the adherents of evolutionary theory have declared them to be lagging behind in a process of increased differentiation, that is, conformity to a western secular model. "The derogatory assessment of religion and belief implicit in the evolutionary assumption in modern thought originates with Francis Bacon. It is a function of scientism or the myth of the scientific method" (MacGaffey, 1981, p. 229).

The relative neglect of the role of religious knowledge in the relevance discourse in psychology may be attributed to this habit of secularism, viewing religious knowledge or beliefs as separate from "real" knowledge. A secondary status is ascribed to religious knowledge in terms of an assumed hierarchy of knowledge dominated by scientism (MacGaffey, 1981). "Religion has become an affliction that other people have, a bizarre form of discourse... for which only bizarre explanations come to hand" (MacGaffey, 1981, p.230). The rational discourse of the Enlightenment (Fernandez, 1978) is supposed to ultimately displace the confused discourses of religion or at least relegate them to a separate existence neatly demarcated by the borders of church or mosque.

In contrast, Geertz (in MacGaffey, 1981) defines religion as

a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (p. 231)

This definition stresses the role of religion in creating consensually validated realities and truths

within an accepted cosmology and thus it applies equally to ideology, belief, and social science. All knowledge requires a metaphysical point of departure, since it is selective, and all knowledge tends to replicate itself through conversion processes. Religious as well as scientific knowledge are especially powerful proselytisers as they make absolute truth claims.

In Africa, religion functions not only as a political, economic, and social but also as a psychological force. Religious knowledge forms part of the epistemes (Foucault, 1970), ideologies (MacGaffey, 1981), and indigenous psychologies (Heelas & Lock, 1981) of Africa and competes with psychology for followers. Islam currently has a unique function in creating alternative, local knowledges challenging dominant western secular power/knowledge systems.

The literature on Islam in Africa varies along a continuum according to the interpretation of the power of this religion. One pole represents a view that emphasises the universal hegemony and imposition of Islam on Africa. From this position, indigenous African knowledge has been disqualified and subjugated by Islam. The opposite pole represents a view that emphasises the resilience of indigenous beliefs, the integration of universal Islam into these beliefs, and the revitalising function of local variants thereof. The rest of this chapter will reflect both positions, following the principle of double description (Bateson, 1979) in order to arrive at both a descending and ascending analysis of power/knowledge.

Historical Background

Within a century after the death of the prophet Mohammed in A.D. 632, Islamic religion and culture had swept across Northern and the Horn of Africa. Where it encountered early Christianity there was a prolonged battle, especially in Ethiopia and Egypt, where Coptic Christians remained. As early as the ninth century, Islam penetrated southwards via trade routes into west African societies. In the Sudan region, Islam moved from east to west through Arab traders and conquerors. It probably arrived on the east coast of Africa in the seventh century, where there were already well-established Arab trade settlements. Apart from in what is now Somalia, it only began to move inland in the late 18th and 19th centuries when Arab trade went into the interior (Mbiti, 1971). Its further spread into the continent coincided with the spread of

European colonialism, after which its adherents were doubled (Farah, 1987).

Islam's early entry in Africa has ensured that it has a strong African identity, preceding the major spread of Christianity by centuries. It was spread by Africans to Africans, in contrast to Christianity which predominantly spread through European missionaries. Islam's history has ensured a wide spectrum of integration into African societies. Some North African societies have always formed a part of Islamic-Arab culture and have adopted Muslim political and legal structures. Some societies remain essentially traditional but have integrated certain elements of Islam into indigenous structures (Farah, 1987; Mbiti, 1971). Even these societies, however, have thereby gained entry into, and are being shaped by, the power of a universal community.

The Universal Power of Islam

The term Islam means "submission" (to God). Entry into the religion is gained by acknowledging Allah as the omnipotent and omniscient Creator, the only God, and Mohammed as his messenger/prophet. By submission to Allah, absolute power is granted to His will. Allah is the source of all knowledge and the only truth. The only direct access to this truth is through the Qur'an, as revealed to his prophet Mohammed. This global, unitary truth serves to specify the lives of Muslims. In addition to the Qur'an, Islamic knowledge has evolved a system of law (the Shari'a) governing every aspect of life through detailed prescriptions. It embodies a totalising, rule-governed, judicial power, rooted in a tradition of scholarship. Its body of knowledge reflects a view of a perfect society, ultimate justice and equality, the improvement of mankind, the attainment of social harmony, and personal salvation (Behishti & Bahonar, 1982).

Participation in the universal power of Islam is, however, primarily attained through ritual, which forms part of a "carefully worked out social and ideological programme" (Ruthven, 1984, p. 83). This programme was originally devised to unite the diverse Arab clans into a single social body. Islamic ritual enters into every aspect of daily life and thereby ensures uniformity across cultures. Ritual knowledge is emphasised in the five pillars of wisdom which represent Islam's most basic beliefs and practices (Fluehr-Lobban, 1994; Ruthven, 1984). These include the recital of the testament of belief in Arabic, prayer recital preceded by ritual

cleansing, fasting during Ramadan, obligatory almsgiving, and performance of the Hajj (pilgrimage) (Fluehr-Lobban, 1994). The jihad (striving in the way of God) is regarded by some as a sixth pillar. Jihad is also associated with holy war (Trimingham, 1968).

Global uniformity in ritual embodies an impersonal, totalising, disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977) which links the believer to the Umaa, the global community of believers, through visible tokens of belonging:

On an average the Muslim invokes the name of Allah (God) no less than twenty times a day. No other known prophet of a monotheistic religion receives as much mention in prayer as the Prophet of Islam. More children bear Mohammed name than any other popular name known to mankind. No known body of sacred literature is as thoroughly and systematically committed to memory, or is recited as frequently, as the holy book of Islam. (Farah, 1987, p. 6)

Individuals are recruited into an active role in their own subjugation (Islamisation) through practices which are detailed in the Shari'a and serve as disciplinary techniques of power. These include the organisation and arrangement of persons in space (as in facing towards Mecca in prayer) and time (the Muslim calendar), the exclusion and inclusion of groups (believers and unbelievers), and especially large scale disciplinary techniques, such as prayer:

The physical movements of the Muslim prayer were, in addition to any spiritual dimension, a means of promoting group solidarity.... By subjecting itself at regular daily intervals to a series of identical and repeated physical actions, the Ummaa subsumed the particularisms of tribal or racial identity in a common physical discipline. In the original context of bedouin Arabia, and in parallel conditions elsewhere, the Muslim prayer had an effect similar to the discipline of the parade ground: The new recruits were welded into a single uniform body under Allah's generalship. The psychological impact of prayer was also effective at an individual level: By insisting on the interruption of ordinary mundane activities at least three times each day, it continuously reminded the believer of the superior claims of God and the community. (Ruthven, 1984, p. 83)

The Islamic regimes of prayer, recital, cleansing, and fasting recall Foucault's (1977) descriptions of "bio-power" and the creation of "docile bodies". "A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved" (Foucault, 1984, p. 180). Attention to detail, as in ritualistic movements and documentation of the minutiae of daily actions, may be described as "infinitesimal power over the active body" (p. 181). Disciplinary methods "made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed on them a relation of docility-utility" (p. 181).

Disciplinary power techniques are concerned with meticulous detail. "For the disciplined man, as for the true believer, no detail is unimportant" (Foucault, 1984, p. 184). The requirements of ritual ablution preceding prayer provide an example of the degree of detail involved in the practical application of the Shari'a. "Muslim education is a drill which pays permanent attention to the functioning of vegetative life. Drinking, eating, urinating... vomiting, bleeding, shaving, cutting one's nails... all of them become the object of detailed prescriptions" (Ruthven, 1984, p. 163).

Through the application of the Shari'a, the universalism of the Qur'an shades imperceptibly into the particularities of social life. Islam, as a technique of internal peace and order, implemented "the mechanism of the perfect army, of the disciplined mass, of the docile, useful troop, of the regiment.... The dream of a perfect society was born but it was also a military dream to attain... automatic docility" (Foucault, 1984, pp. 185-186). The dream of Islamic society attracted millions of Africans but thereby integrated them into a previously unknown regime of power which threatened the power of indigenous knowledge.

Islam and African Cosmology

Islam's monotheism is the central tenet of the faith. "Over ninety percent of Muslim theology is concerned with Allah as the one real God who is indivisible in nature" (Farah, 1987, p. 109). Islam's monotheism is familiar to indigenous African cosmology. Allah, like the African conception of God, is a supreme power, not a personal being, and man's relation to this God shows itself in ritual action (Adelowo, 1984). However, Islamic monotheism rules out

lesser deities and the intermediaries between man and God. Submission to local deities and communal knowledge is replaced by submission to a universal God and entry into a universal community of believers (Farah, 1987).

Allah's role as the creator of all things is similar to the role of God in African religions. Angels, unknown in Africa, serve as His messengers and guardians of man. Satan, a fallen angel, is the manifestation of evil, and some angels guard the gates of hell (Farah, 1987). The division of forces into God/Satan, good/evil and heaven/hell contrasts with the universal life force and holism of African religion.

A more familiar duality is that between body and immortal soul. However, in Islam the soul is judged in the hereafter. The concept of the afterlife, separated into heaven and hell, is unfamiliar to African religions, as is the emphasis on individual salvation. However, the Shari'a emphasises family and communal cohesion as well (Fluehr-Lobban, 1994). This cohesion does not, however, apply to the extended genealogy of the clan, but to smaller family units. The community involved is the global community of believers. This implies a new division between believers and unbelievers.

The middle eastern Islamic extended family further differs from the African one in that it embraces both genealogy and physical closeness (Fluehr-Lobban, 1994). Its patriarchal organisation differs from the partly matriarchal organisation of many African societies (Sow, 1985). However, similarities exist in the sanctity accorded to marriage, the practice of polygamy, and an emphasis on kinship (Kyewalyanga, 1976). Islamic societies tend to replicate and extend kinship patterns in their general organisation and communal values are treasured (Fluehr-Lobban, 1994).

In Islamic cosmology, humans are separated from the angels by the jinn, who are similar to spirits and thereby familiar to Africa. However, the spiritual world of jinn is strictly social whereas African spirits are closely aligned to the natural world. "Islam, by emphasising the special relationship and duties of man toward God and his neighbour, denigrates man's sense of union or identity with nature" (Thayer, 1983, p.128).

Although the Islamic emphasis on ritual pervading daily life is similar to indigenous religions, global uniformity in ritual contrasts with the rituals of indigenous African religions which are localised and personally sanctioned. The blending and unity of religious, social, and moral life in Islam corresponds to that in African religions, but the scope of Islamic unity is far wider.

The cyclical time of African religion is replaced by the Islamic calendar, based on lunar months. Whereas African life is marked by rituals corresponding to agricultural events, Islamic ritual events follow their own pattern of daily interruption of activities for prayer and a succession of annual religious events (Thayer, 1983; Trimingham, 1968). Time takes on a strong linear and future orientation, as it marches forward towards judgement and the afterlife (Fisher, 1985). The unity of space and time in African thought is disrupted by Islam. Where the natal village was central, Mecca becomes central. The boundaries of the familiar world are defined by Islam, rather than genealogy and the land. Holy places are sanctified by the holy men of Islam, not the ancestors. The microcosm of the village is replaced with the macrocosm of Islam (Fisher, 1985; Horton, 1971).

Whereas oral knowledge dominates indigenous religions, written texts and literacy are central in Islam (Fisher, 1985). Formal, literate education becomes the vehicle of knowledge, whereas African education is integrated with daily life.

<u>Islamic Knowledge</u>

"Allah, as the Qur'an repeatedly and categorically declares, 'encompasses everything in knowledge'" (Ruthven, 1984, p. 116). Human knowledge can only be partial and is attained through God's revelation by means of signs or miracles. The signs fall into two categories: The miracle of the Qur'an and the evidence of the natural world which can be known directly through perception and reason. The Qur'an demands that this knowledge be actively pursued (Behishti & Bahonar, 1982). While Europe was enveloped in ignorance during its dark Middle Ages, Islamic centres of scholarly knowledge developed advanced scientific knowledge, which

later informed the Renaissance and formed the basis of rationalist and naturalist philosophy in the West.

What one knows is, however, always signs and evidence of the unseen force of Allah. All reasoning should confirm the truth of the Qur'an (Behishti & Bahonar, 1982; Ruthven, 1984). The unity between religion and knowledge is central. All knowledge is moral (Desfarges, 1982; Lambek, 1990). What is true is right and what is right is true. No "objective" knowledge or knowledge outside Islam is possible (Ruthven, 1984). The ultimate cause of every phenomenon is Allah, leading to a certain attitude of fatalism often ascribed to Islam (Fluehr-Lobban, 1994). Spiritual causes are, however, also recognised, including evil and good spirits and the intervention of angels. Divinatory, ritual, mystical, spiritual, and symbolic knowledge is included in Islam, but textual knowledge is dominant.

Textuality

The Qu'ran is the central, sacred text and it is surrounded by secondary texts like commentaries and instruction manuals.

> Islam may be said to be hegemonic in the sense that the sacred quality of the central texts and the necessity or correctness of reciting them in critical contexts are unquestioned. Limited referential aspects of these texts... provide the basis for ultimate reality. (Lambek, 1990, p. 24)

The relationship between these texts, and the meaning or knowledge they convey, is a complex one, varying among texts, readers, and Islamic societies (Lambek, 1990). In principle, Islam's divinely ordained model is equally available to all literate persons and Muslims are not dependent on consecrated specialists to study the rules of the faith. In practice, however, some form of decoding is necessary to understand them, and those who are illiterate in Arabic are dependent on those who are not (Lambek, 1990; Sikander, 1991). The result is that Islamic power/knowledge is distributed according to relative access to the central texts.

The concept of the sacred text presupposes a particular notion of "reading" in Islamic societies. The act of recitation of the texts, rather than the insight gained, is paramount (Wagner & Lotfi, 1983). In societies with little knowledge of Arabic, such as many African ones, the texts have no or very little referential, locutionary meaning . "Meaning is always the power, certainty, truth, the reality of Islam itself" (Lambek, 1990, p. 27), which is attested to by the act of recitation, not the meaning of the words recited (Ruthven, 1984). Recital establishes moral states through the performative force of the texts (Lambek, 1990). Even when texts are interpreted or translated, these may take the form of further recitals. The paradox is that texts remain true, provide guidelines to action and certain knowledge of the world, but the meaning of these texts remains out of reach of many ordinary practitioners.

Language plays a central role in Islamic power/knowledge. The sacred texts and prayers are all in Arabic. Although it is the language of North Africa, to other Africans it is a foreign tongue, "of which most people know nothing except the formulas of prayer" (Parrinder, 1969, p. 217). However, there is widespread belief in the power of written and spoken language as such, resulting in practices such as the wearing of charms consisting of written passages from the Qur'an or even drinking the inky water of holy words rinsed off from a writing board (Fluehr-Lobban, 1994). These practices play an important part in divination and no understanding of the words is necessary for the procedure to be effective.

Specialists

Islam has no official clergy, only an informal hierarchy of holy men, who represent all aspects of knowledge but vary widely in their proficiency (Brenner, 1993).

Islamic states have fostered and utilised religious scholars to act as interpreters of the basic sources of the faith, the Qur'an and Sunna. These scholars, called the Ulumaa, have shaped the Shari'a and have held power by virtue of their association with the state. They formulate fatwa, the official view of the religion, and by extension of the state, on any subject (Fluehr-Lobban, 1994) and act as filters between the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds, approving or disapproving the integration of new knowledge into existing knowledge. "Islam encapsulates

or explicitly devalues other forms of thought and practice so that they need to be legitimated by reference to Islam" (Lambek, 1990, p. 24).

The power of the senior religious scholars and the state does not, however, always extend to rural areas, where indigenous knowledge is more readily integrated and tolerated. Here mystical orders, Sufi brotherhoods, marabouts (holy men), and local Islamic teachers control knowledge and the mystical, spiritual, and curative rather than legal aspects of Islam are stressed (Fluehr-Lobban, 1994). Local holy men provide an important link with the learned centre of Islamic power/authority and act as intermediaries between the local context and the centre (Ahmed & Hart, 1984).

Knowledge and Authority

The central relationship in Islam is that between God (the source of knowledge) and man (the seeker of knowledge). Study is in itself the quintessential act of piety and "awe of the divine... is the prerequisite of knowledge" (Sikander, 1991, p. 88). Scholarship is the basis of authority, yet this authority does not reside in the scholar's control over his knowledge, but in the scholar's recognition of the control of the knowledge over himself. "The situation may be described as inverse to that of the 'postmodern' discovery of the inscription of the author's authority in the text; in Islam it is the text's authority which is enacted in the course of the scholar's life" (Lambek, 1990, p. 27). The acts and way of life of the scholar are important criteria in the eyes of the community for conferring authority. "His personal behaviour must be seen to accord with the purity of knowledge he invokes" (Lambek, 1990, p. 30).

While access to the sacred, though objectified, knowledge of Islam is necessary for wielding religious authority, it is far from sufficient. The informal hierarchy of power/knowledge created by Islamic education is mediated by social relations and power is limited by local public judgement, which depends not only on the acts of the knowledgeable, but also on their general status within society, recitation and teaching skills, age, lines of descent and "genealogical" lines of pedagogical relationships (Gellner, 1984; Lambek, 1990).

In Islamic discourse, principles are frequently invoked but seldom discussed. "The 'who' takes precedence over the 'what', since shared knowledge about the authority of the exegete provides a more substantial basis of communality than does the particular content area discussed" (Simone, 1994, p. 131). In part, this tendency reflects the legacy of Islamic education, where knowledge tends to be organised in terms of specific interpreters as opposed to content areas.

The central, immutable knowledge of the Qur'an is thus mediated through metanarratives of legitimation (Lyotard, 1984), which may account for social conflict in Islamic societies. Different interpretations may be arrived at by different scholars, and the legitimation of these interpretations by the community may depend on a variety of criteria. One group may follow one scholar by virtue of his senior genealogical standing; another scholar will attract a following based on superior knowledge of the texts. "The transition from the unity and authenticity of the Word of God to the multiplicity and disputed quality of the words of men is perhaps the central dynamic problem of Muslim thought" (Lambek, 1990, p. 23). This problem has led, inter alia, to revival movements and wars within Islamic societies, but has also made it flexibly adaptable to local contexts.

Education

Islam has developed its own system of education which is essentially religious (Nduka, 1974). The object of education is submission to and compliance with Islam, not knowledge for knowledge's sake. Although rational knowledge is valued highly, as is testified by a complex tradition of Islamic medical knowledge (Bourdillon, 1990), mystical and revelatory knowledge is included and emphasised in African Islam (Nduka, 1974).

Islamic education traditionally involves verbatim oral mastery of the Qur'an, followed by literacy in Arabic (Parrinder, 1969; Wagner & Lotfi, 1983) in order to study the Qur'an, which is deemed essentially untranslatable (Ruthven, 1984). At post-elementary level pupils receive individualised instruction in a master-apprentice relationship (Wagner & Lotfi, 1983). The local teacher or fundi is part of an informal hierarchy of fundis who usually have some secondary

education and may be able to do some interpretation through acquaintance with secondary sources (Lambek, 1990; Ray, 1976). However,

> interpretations previously validated are usually unavailable to prolonged criticism and discussion about them constitutes another occasion in which deference must be shown. In religious education priority is placed on the length of study. Authority is established in terms of years of devotion accorded to a few works or specific areas... rather than the salience of insight into the scrutiny. (Simone, 1994, p. 131)

One requirement of Islam is dissemination of knowledge. The more one knows, the more you are required to teach. In addition to education, the Islamic teacher and holy man plays an important socio-economic, political, and psychological role in the community. His standing as a formally educated and literate individual traditionally gives him the power to act as notary, legal adviser, culture broker, mediator of disputes, source of medical knowledge, and spiritual healer (Wagner & Lotfi, 1983).

Knowledge and Healing

Like indigenous religion, Islam has not renounced "a concern with the explanation, prediction, and control of space-time events" (Horton, 1971, p. 105), unlike Christianity, which has renounced these to the field of science. Divination is one of the functions of Islamic specialists. Diviners use sand (especially brought from Mecca), rosaries, recital or the Qur'an as oracles (Adelowo, 1984). Belief in witches, sorcery, and bad or good omens are accepted (Adelowo, 1984). Muslim holy men ward off evil forces through amulets consisting of Qur'anic passages (Awolalu, 1985). In addition to holy men, female dream interpreters, diviners, and cults of affliction are found in Islamic societies (Simone, 1994).

Conversion to Islam

The difference between Islam as an impersonal and abstract system with a body of doctrine and a rigid legal code embracing, not merely ritual, but every aspect of life, and

the diversified and complex African systems of life appears so profound that few points of contact seem apparent and the psychological shock of religious change to be as great as for an African converted to Western Christianity. This is not so in practice. (Trimingham, 1968, p. 41)

Various theories exist to explain the conversion to Islam. Trimingham (1968) maintains that contact with Islam is characterised by a series of gradations which act as insulators passing on Islamic traditions gradually. Farah (1987, p. 283) refers to Islam's "non-demanding attitude toward the convert". For instance, Islam's emphasis on individuality was not stressed in Africa but its respect for community wholly embraced. The Islam that was brought to Africa was "a spoken and living Islam, and not a religion taught authoritatively" (Sow, 1985, p. 563). Islam "does no violent uprooting but offers immediate values without displacement of the old. It is not a question of either-or but of both-and" (Trimingham, 1968, p. 42). Islam and indigenous practices exist side by side without undue disruption of either (Arens, 1975).

Horton (1971), Onyanwu (1975), Mbiti (1971), and Sow (1985) stress the superficial integration of Islamic elements into indigenous cosmology, which endures despite Islamisation. What is adopted from Islam will depend on local culture. Onyanwu (1975) maintains that African religion, as an experienced reality, remains unchanged underneath a veneer of Islam. Similarly, Arens (1975) summarises the arguments accounting for Islam's success in Africa as its ability to integrate existing indigenous patterns or tolerate them when syncretism is not possible, as well as structural correlates in the realm of practice or cosmology. "Islam is a religion open to interpretation at many cultural levels, especially in the area of world view" (Thayer, 1983, p. 118). However, Arens (1975) also points out that a sharp break with local traditions often occurs though this is not stressed in the literature.

Fisher (1985) similarly stresses Islam's "internal dynamism" (p. 166) and power to gradually draw the convert into Islamic cosmology, and proposes a three-stage model of conversion. During the quarantine stage, the faith is limited to newcomers, such as traders and their accompanying clerics/diviners. Islam presents an attractive appearance to outsiders. Stage two, mixing, is often initiated by locals enlisting Islamic divination and healing practices: "To

the extent that the Muslim cleric is accessible, and is consulted, to that extent the seeds of religious change, of a new cosmology, have been sown" (Fisher, 1985, p. 158). During this stage, however, the convert still adheres to indigenous beliefs as well. During the third stage, reform, which often follows much later, converts renounce many indigenous beliefs and fully enter the macrocosmic world of Islam. Kasozi (1981) describes such a conversion process occurring in the Ganda culture during the early 19th century.

Parallelism often manifests itself in a division of religion according to gender, men becoming Muslims and women remaining traditional (Fluehr-Lobban, 1994). Men tend to become more deeply involved in Islam, as the participation of women in public ritual is limited in Islam. Non-Islamic cults are often maintained by women, who are dominant in semi-Islamic cults and saint-tomb rituals as well (Trimingham, 1968).

Arens (1975) provides an example of conversion processes in a Tanzanian community founded in the 1920's. This community, like others in East Africa, had a Muslim character from its early days and new arrivals often accepted the faith soon after settling. Despite the fact that the community grew into a poly-ethnic, multi-religious centre, Islam remains associated with wealth, prestige, and integration into the community. Religious persuasion is a significant factor of identity. The manner in which an individual is seen to adhere to an idealised form of Islam is significant in affording him esteem in the community. The adoption of Islam has immediate practical advantages. Each new member of the faith is introduced to the Muslim community through a system of sponsorship. The sponsor assumes the role of father towards the convert and offers not only material but also social support, replicating a true father-son relationship. This system effectively incorporates the client into the kinship network of his sponsor. Islam thus serves as a visa into the social life, prestige, and power of the Islamic community. "Islam is a discursive shortcut. It doesn't require a great investment of energy or time to serve as a link among people" (Simone, 1994, p. 155).

The early phase of conversion where the ruling class is Muslim often centres around prestige and concerns the superficial adoption of Muslim culture and practice of certain transitional rituals. In many parts of Africa, Islam was originally a class religion of rulers,

chiefs, and traders, who formed enclaves of Islam and attracted those aspiring to status. In East Africa Muslim coastal traders gradually absorbed African peoples, forming the regional Swahili culture which became a uniquely African Islamic culture (Trimingham, 1968). However, in most parts it only spread to the interior during colonisation, which opened up new routes of communication and disrupted the social cohesion of indigenous communities. Islam provided a new form of cohesion and solidarity. One attraction of Islam over Christianity was its propagation by non-westerners (Farah, 1987). Islam's system of intellectual culture and literacy became attractive as an alternative to European intellectual culture (Trimingham, 1968).

The power of Islam's divining and magical practices attracted many converts (Trimingham, 1968). Islam also tolerated the parallel practice of indigenous diviners, who in turn incorporated Islamic practices (Kirby, 1992). This tolerance is related to the relation of Islam to the other. According to the concept of <u>tawhid</u> - the essential oneness in the social order of the universe ruled by God - there is no aspect of life hidden from Islam or outside God's will. "Since nothing exists outside of Islam, everyone is potentially a Muslim. It is the responsibility of the Muslim to address the other in such a way that brings the potential for Islamicity to the fore" (Simone, 1994, p. 142). Knowledge of the other is a religious imperative. "Otherness is not an irreconcilable philosophical or political chasm, a problem to be solved, or a sign of an essential plurality. Otherness is instead an opportunity for a broader human fulfilment for everyone" (Simone, 1994, p. 143). Everyone is an incomplete Muslim. Islam absorbs otherness, unlike Christianity which actively creates otherness.

Although Islam tends to be regarded as militant, rigid, closed upon itself, and intolerant towards change, conversion processes reveal a tolerance towards differences, non-competitiveness, and ability to spread itself almost unobtrusively. It maintains unity while diversifying, in contrast to Christianity which continually splits off from itself. As Islam has no formal system of religious bureaucratic control and leadership depends on holy men, who in turn depend on support from local communities (Bourdillon, 1990), it tends to grow in an organic fashion, spreading patterns of belief similar to the repetitive patterns of Islamic design. However, Islamic designs, no matter how intricately detailed and diverse, always converge upon a central point, like Islam itself.

Islam as Local Power/knowledge

Islam's descending power resides in the central authority of Allah and the Qur'an. An ascending view of its power finds a long tradition of Africans appropriating Islam to further their own ends. Early rulers of the empires of West Africa thereby strengthened their power.

> A king who protected Muslims or even converted to Islam became part of the
> international community, giving him considerable advantage over non-Muslim rivals.
> Literacy (in Arabic), the expansion of trade and even the opportunity to dispossess his
> non-Muslim neighbours by launching a jihad against them provided the inducements
> which made Islam an attractive "royal cult" for many West African princelings.
> (Ruthven, 1984, p. 264)

The king's power was, initially, not shared by the people, who remained rooted in indigenous ways until the advent of Sufism, which emphasised Islam's mystical forces. This emphasis made it adaptable to local needs and tolerant of indigenous practices (Awolalu, 1985; Bourdillon, 1990):

> In the voluminous Qur'anic store-house of angels, jinns, and devils, whose number is
> legion, many traditional powers found a hospitable home; and passages from the Qur'an
> are cited to justify their existence as real phenomena.... The supreme deities... could be
> assimilated to Allah. Lesser local deities could be Islamicized or explained away as
> vernacular terms for God's attributes, or as the jinns and spirits of Qur'anic folklore.
> Ancestor cults could be accommodated to Islam by tagging local kinship groups on to
> Sufi silsilas or Arab lineages. By such methods the Somali cattle-herders... acquired
> Quraishi ancestry. (Ruthven, 1984, p. 265)

Many Africans never venture beyond an apparently superficial adoption of Islam and simply retain indigenous practices and beliefs alongside Islamic ones. Others successfully adapt Islam to local beliefs and vice versa. Mbiti (1971) refers to the example of the Wolof, who were converted during the 11th century. The Wolof observe the five pillars but make a pilgrimage to

the grave of a local holy man. Boys receive traditional Islamic teaching but divination, belief in witchcraft and the spirits persist, though the spirits have merged with the jinns. Protective amulets contain written passages from the Qur'an as well as traditional medicines. Rites such as marriage follow a mixture of both indigenous and Islamic procedures. Individuals carry both African and Islamic names.

A similar integration of practices was witnessed by Simone (1994) in the Sudan. Most Sudanese are rural and emphasise the curative and charismatic elements of religion. Sufi brotherhoods and the use of spiritual intermediaries are widespread. Holy men such as the shaykhs use divination to attain revelatory knowledge through tools such as inhaling the burnt ash of the Qur'an, wrapping a piece of the Qur'an in leather or skin, and blowing breath during Qur'an recitation. Illness is construed as stemming from moral culpability necessitating the control of differing social and spiritual forces. "Religious practices are deeply engrained in a cosmology that affirms the omnipresence of various spirits, sorcery, and the practice of magic" (Simone, 1994, p. 182). Female healers are widely sought out by Muslims and Christians alike for their interpretation of dreams.

Around a centre of core ritual practices, social and religious practices vary enormously in African Islam. Adelowo (1984), Awolalu (1985), Bone (1982), Kyewalyanga (1976), and Thayer (1983) provide further examples of societies where Islam and indigenous religion have fused. Although these societies are sometimes radically different from each other, their local knowledge and worldviews are all expressed and objectified in the universal symbols of Islam (Thayer, 1983).

African Islamic Movements

Some of the earliest African Islamic movements were derived from Sufism, which introduced into the rigid formalism of mainstream Islam aspirations towards personal spiritual growth and union with God through mystical ecstasy. In the 15th century, Sufi brotherhoods became popular in the Maghrib. They originally consisted of a master (marabout) and brotherhood of followers but later developed into cults of saints as mediators with the spiritual

world. It is believed that a sacred power emanates from these saints, their tombs, and descendants (Trimingham, 1968). Saints have come to replace the ancestors (Kyewalyanga, 1976). The leaders of saintly families regulate the affairs of the local community and serve as the guardians of sacred knowledge (Ahmed & Hart, 1984; Ruthven, 1984).

Fluehr-Lobban (1994) describes the ritual activities of a Sudanese Mawlawiyan Sufi order, who perform dhikr (remembrance) at the tomb of a local marabout:

> For about two hours before sunset on Friday afternoons the Dervishes form a circular procession to drum, dance, and sing the praises of God, and the Messenger, Muhammad. The Dervishes whirl in rapid bursts of energy, which in the heat of the afternoon sun can bring about an ecstatic trance-like state. The dancers are left alone to recover while the others continue the dhikr until sunset. (p. 39)

This ritual contrasts with the disciplinary rituals of mainstream Islam and Sufi orders such as these tend to have an uneasy relationship to official Islam. However, the power of such orders are integrated into local history, traditions, and expressions of religion, while remaining linked to the Islamic centre.

The Zar cult is a related though more marginal movement, which illustrates the fusion between Islam and ancient tradition. Zar (Sar, Saar or Bori) is a state of possession by a spirit also called Zar, whose malignant powers cause depression, illness, or misfortune in women (Lewis, 1984; Ray, 1976). Zar spirits are described as jinn and thereby integrated into Islamic cosmology. Zar can be expelled only by those who have acquired mastery over the spirits by themselves having been possessed and cured. It is thus a cult of affliction and is practised to this day by urban and rural women in Muslim North African countries and Sudan (Bourdillon, 1990; Lewis, 1984; Simone, 1994).

A female healer presides at the Zar ceremony. Animals may be slaughtered and drumming and dancing induce trance and spiritual possession of attendees as well as the afflicted. Often the possessed act as oracles (Lewis, 1984). Various recognisable spirits appear,

some deriving from early Cushite religions. Although the Zar dance is severely frowned upon by the Islamic centre (Lewis, 1984; Simone, 1994), it bears a close resemblance to the Sufi dhikr dance. There are many "similarities between the attainment of spirit possession (or the release from possession) and absorption in Allah which are the objects of the dance and dhikr respectively" (Lewis, 1984, p. 157).

Zar is supposed to hate men and to be appeased by expensive gifts to its host (Bourdillon, 1990). The Zar spirits exhibit a wide range of social roles involving status, political power, and display in public life, all of which are usually denied to women (Ray, 1976). Zar meetings are characterised by the display of behaviour such as smoking or crude language, which is otherwise unacceptable in Islamic society (Fluehr-Lobban, 1994). In some rituals, women satirise aspects of their lives and their relations with men, including the wedding (Bourdillon, 1990). Zar has been analysed as psychodrama and as spiritual feminism (Fluehr-Lobban, 1994) and clearly has an important function limiting male control. It serves as an area of secret power/knowledge for women in male-dominated societies. Although officially it is only marginally linked to the dominant religion, the Zar cult exists by virtue of Islam, as a form of subjugated, marginal knowledge.

The Zar cult which clearly links with local pre-Islamic religion is so widely distributed throughout the Islamic world that its origins may be even further remote than is commonly assumed and its spread may be part of Islam's movement outwards from the centre (Fisher, 1985). According to Lewis (in Fisher, 1985) even literate Islam contains an extensive

> written apparatus of magical and astrological Islamic lore which is regularly
> disseminated from urban centres of Islamic excellence. These not only provide an
> Islamic base and legitimisation for pre-Islamic mystical beliefs and rituals, but actually
> sometimes introduced these where such "magical" beliefs did not previously exist. It is
> not just oral, pre-Islamic culture which dilutes the unswerving eternal truth conserved in
> mainstream Islam, but also elements in literate mainstream Islam which introduce and
> perpetuate alternative renderings of the Prophet's message. (p. 168)

Thus, while Islam allows continual divergence from its centre of power, it also provides avenues for continual convergence, both from the centre outwards and from the periphery inwards. These movements are not always clearly discernable from each other. However, the African tendency to appropriate Islam's mystical power historically also opened the way for reformist movements to attain power.

> In the peripheral and marginal regions of the Muslim world, where the absence of a literate class of urban scholars left spiritual power, untempered by learning, in the hands of those who were free to exercise it in any manner... conditions... provided the perfect pretext for reformers who sought to purify Islam by bringing local practice more closely in line with Shari'a norms. (Ruthven, 1984, p. 266)

Islamic Revivalism

Islam is a religion of revolution, social justice, and resistance to oppression (Behishti & Bahonar, 1982). The joint path of spirituality, knowledge, Jihad, sacrifice, and martyrdom has always been associated with Islam (Bourdillon, 1990; Brenner, 1993; Simone, 1994). Islamic revival movements are as old as the religion itself. A 14th century Islamic scholar, Ibn Khaldun, developed a theory explaining the cyclical process of renewal through revival movements in North Africa which, according to Ruthven (1984) still holds.

> In the classic tradition... the banner of militant Islam, purged of heretical accretions and restored to its pristine purity, would be the rallying point around which tribal forces would coalesce and, fired by religious zeal, descend upon the cities. Here they would find allies in the 'uluma, guardians of the legal and scholarly traditions, who would ensure the orthodoxy of the new-comers. (p. 99)

After ruling for a few generations, a new tribal revival would replace them. Official Islam is thus a "two-edged sword, upholding the existing political order when this seemed to accord with the commands of God and his Prophet; undermining it, or sanctioning its replacement, when it appeared to deviate too much from the 'boundaries' set by God" (p. 100).

Much attention has been paid to the recent "encroachment" of Islam into politics. Eurocentric social theory tends to interpret recent intensifications of religious concerns and practices as "preoccupations with the past and impediments to modernization. Islam is especially viewed as an inflexible despotism that fosters terroristic single-mindedness or fatalistic passivity in its devotees" (Simone, 1994, p. 5). However, the revival of Islam can also be seen as

> an attempt to restore a developmental process interrupted by colonialism - an effort to reconstruct religion as an aspect of larger efforts.... As such, Islamic movements do not envision so much a return to a glorious mythical past as a determination to relink to their histories and substantiate a sense of identity that is self-sufficient and less influenced by the West. (Simone, 1994, p. 7)

Reformers use traditional sources for the simultaneous pursuit of a modernist agenda and preservation of cultural integrity (Alwani, 1989). Islam plays an important role in attempts to reconceptualise local identity in terms of transnational concepts - "a means of establishing the psychological parameters through which the larger world can be engaged more actively and effectively" (Simone, 1994, p. 8).

Islam has traditionally provided symbols against colonialism in Africa (Colonna, 1984) and has gradually become associated with a challenge to European domination (Ruthven, 1984). This challenge has recently been taken up in an international trend of Islamic revival movements to oppose western culture, which is criticised for its materialism and secularism (Sikander, 1991). Behishti and Bahonar (1982) describe the Islamic revolution of Iran as "a rebellion against modern barbarism which has fettered the world with its materialistic and animal values" (p. 11). Western knowledge systems, especially the social sciences, are targeted for their role as mediators of oppressive power relations. European faith, including the faith in science, is criticised for its lack of submission to God and its belief that man is God (Sikander, 1991). This international trend is also found in Africa, where a new generation of Muslim movements has risen (Brenner, 1993).

These recent revival movements also challenge the power/knowledge hegemony within Islam. There is a tension between the Uluma and new leadership of Islamic movements (Abaza, 1993; Brenner, 1993). The new leaders are self-taught, rely directly on the sources, and encourage independent collective religious study, undermining the monopoly on knowledge that the Uluma once held. There is a move towards the "democratization of access to and use of religious knowledge" (Fluehr-Lobban, 1994, p. 159). The young, western-educated as well as Islam-educated Africans are unified in their quest for a new synthesis of Islam and the secular world, but also show a concern for the Islamisation of all knowledge (Abaza, 1993). The themes of African unity and even black identity have become blurred with the Ummaa (Brenner, 1993; Simone, 1994).

Conclusion

A descending analysis of power in Islam reveals the imposition of a structural hegemony, a regime of truth (Foucault, 1980b), "with the sacred texts providing the final authority and baseline reference for people's actions" (Lambek, 1990, p. 35). This authority is represented in the knowledge appropriated by learned scholars, who act as the texts' mouthpieces and formulate rules governing the conduct of believers. However, an ascending analysis of power reveals that this authority resides not only in its connection to the central texts but is always constrained and informed by local knowledge. A "subversive recodification of power relations" (Foucault, 1984, p. 64) continuously takes place at the local level, which informs the centre.

African Islam's greatest threat has come from western secular knowledge. Although Islam's disciplinary power techniques are similar to that of the 19th century European Enlightenment, and its knowledge system stresses literacy and rational knowledge, its mysticism and adherence to revelational knowledge constitutes a unity between religion and knowledge that differs from western knowledge. Whereas Islamic power/knowledge emanates from and returns to a central, fixed, absolute truth, in a continuous cyclical fashion, western scientific knowledge tends to march forward towards such a truth, forming hierarchies of aspiration. Whether Islamic knowledge's process of cyclical inclusion is powerful enough to withstand the onslaught of western secular knowledge is still an open question. Psychology, as agent of

western power/knowledge, has remained largely outside the confines of Islam. Despite recent attempts to integrate the social sciences into Islam (Alwani, 1989; Langgulung, 1987; Sardar, 1986), "more than perhaps any other discipline, the undertaking of psychology posits the greatest source of discordance with Islamic thought" (Simone, 1994, p. 152). According to Simone, however, the possibility exists that it may play an empowering role within the confines of recent, revivalist Islam.

Islam has served as a "rubric under which African thought has attempted to alter and to preserve itself simultaneously" (Simone, 1994, p. 4) and may be seen as a vehicle for symbolic reconstruction. Christianity has become another such vehicle.

CHAPTER 4

CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICA

> There are no relations of power without resistances;
> the latter are all the more real and effective because
> they are formed right at the point where relations of
> power are exercised. (Foucault, 1980b, p. 142)

Psychology's relevance discourse pays little attention to Christianity. Reference to Christianity by psychologists is mostly confined to brief mention of the prophet/healers of the African independent churches (Brownell et al., 1987; Cheetham & Griffiths, 1982), reflecting the scientism of this discourse. At the time of its inception, Christianity was a powerful force in Africa. It was later to become a major conveyor of western knowledge systems during colonisation. It has become integrated with the epistemes (Foucault, 1970), ideologies (MacGaffey, 1981), and indigenous psychologies (Heelas & Lock, 1981) of Africa and competes with psychology for followers. Christian religious movements, like Islamic ones, have a unique function in creating alternative, local knowledges challenging dominant western secular power/knowledge systems. South Africa has the strongest following of African independent churches on the continent, so that 46% of South African blacks belonged to African initiated churches in 1991 and this figure is expected to grow to 50% by the turn of the century (Krüger, Thorpe & Anderson, 1993). These movements have proven to be more successful than psychology in proselytising. It is worth pondering the reasons for their success.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the circulation of power/knowledge in African Christianity. It will focus mainly on the Christianity that was brought to Africa by missionaries, and the way Africans appropriated this knowledge, rather than the universal features and dogmas of Christianity.

As with Islam, the literature on Christianity in Africa varies along a continuum where one pole emphasises the imposition of Christianity and the subjugation of indigenous African

knowledge, and the opposite pole emphasises the resilience of indigenous beliefs and the revitalising function of African variants of Christianity. The chapter will again follow the principle of double description (Bateson, 1979) to provide both a descending and ascending analysis of power/knowledge. It starts with a brief consideration of history.

Historical Background

Long before the start of Islam in the seventh century, Christianity was well-established all over North Africa, Egypt, parts of the Sudan, and Ethiopia. However, Islam and political pressure drastically reduced this ancient church, so that it survived only in Ethiopia (where it is still the state religion) and in the closely related Coptic church in Egypt, Uganda, and the Sudan (Mbiti, 1971; Parrinder, 1969).

In the 15th century Portuguese brought Roman Catholic missions to southern coastal areas. They were followed by other European churches, but these mainly served European traders and made little impact upon Africans. When Christian slaves began to return to West Africa towards the end of the 18th century, Christianity spontaneously spread in West Africa, but it was only during colonial expansion from the 19th century onwards that Africans were converted on a large scale (Mbiti, 1971; Parrinder, 1969). Christianity and European colonial rule came to be viewed as synonymous by most Africans and the missionary and colonial enterprises largely coincided in the European thought of the time (Mudimbe, 1994; Pieterse, 1992; Sogolo, 1993).

Christianity, African Cosmology, and Knowledge

It is difficult to contrast Christianity with African religions, as it was translated into various versions which differ to various degrees from its central doctrines (Sogolo, 1993). However, most Christian conceptions of God places Him squarely in the realm of the supernatural. The universe is seen as inhabited by two distinct kinds of entities, some of which are governed by the laws of nature while others transcend such laws. God happens to be at the apex of the latter, and human life, though situated in the natural world, is viewed as a

preparation for another, metaphysical world. Such a bifurcation between the natural and supernatural worlds does not apply within indigenous African cosmology (Sogolo, 1993). However, Mbiti (1971) argues that the Christian concept of God that was imported to Africa was partly reconcilable with Africa's concept of God. On the other hand, the Trinity, a personal relationship with God, judgement in the hereafter, and its transcendence through Christ were all unfamiliar notions (Fisher, 1985; Sogolo, 1993). Lesser deities and veneration of the ancestors were ruled out. The role of intermediaries between man and God were unacceptable, but Catholic saints and Christ assumed roles that may have been similarly perceived. The emphasis on individual, personal faith and salvation differed from the communalism of African thought.

Dualisms such as good/evil, body/soul, heaven/hell, believer/unbeliever, and religious/secular, differed from the holism of African cosmology, and were even more distinct than in Islam. Both/and thinking was replaced with either/or thinking. The African world of spirits, magic, and divination was recognised but viewed as a manifestation of evil and wholly rejected (Awolalu, 1985; Sogolo, 1993). Healing and education were not integrated into religion, but relegated to separate medical and educational establishments. Religion was divorced from the natural and physical world and God did not intervene in daily affairs.

Cyclical time was replaced by linear time and the idea of progress in terms of salvation introduced (Fisher, 1985). Religious space was separated from daily life and centred in church (the community of believers) and individual consciousness (personal salvation). The local microcosm was replaced by the universal macrocosm of Christianity as well as the internal consciousness of the individual.

As in Islam the existence of communal rites of worship and transition were familiar, but personal, individual worship and the central role of written, sacred texts were new (Fisher, 1985). Individual salvation and the community of believers undermined kinship and communal ties. The community was divided into converts and unbelievers (Awolalu, 1985). In contrast to Islam, Christianity strongly opposed polygamy and centred on smaller families. Protestantism introduced middle-class culture, strict family morals and puritanism (Bastide, 1967).

The implicit epistemologies of Christian dogma largely coincided with those of the dominant epistemes of western thought, which will be discussed in chapter 5. During the Middle Ages, all knowledge was religious, as in Islam. The knowledge that was brought to Africa by missionaries was, however, a combination of the pre-modern and the modern, and religious knowledge was separated from secular knowledge. An important separation that was imported was that between religion and healing, which in both indigenous and Islamic knowledge were united. The church focused exclusively on "other-worldly" affairs and humans' relations with God, rather than on influencing this-worldly events (Horton, 1971). Knowledge of God was attained through the revelation of the Scriptures; knowledge of nature and the world through rational and scientific means (Sogolo, 1993).

Whereas in Catholic and Orthodox churches there was an emphasis on ritual, symbolic, and iconic knowledge, which was similar to African religions, textual knowledge was central in Protestant ones (Fisher, 1985). Calvinism strongly emphasised reason, which should not be blinded by superstition or sin (Bastide, 1967). Mission Christianity was dominated by a rational theology. Knowledge had to be systematic, objective, and logical (Onyanwu, 1975). Paradoxically, the church demanded both rationality and faith, which is essentially a-rational. Faith was an individual, internal subjection to revelatory knowledge and was centred in the individual's relation to God.

In contrast to Islam, the church embodied a distinct power/knowledge hierarchy in bureaucratic structures and was divided into different denominations, so that many contrasting and confusing images of Christianity and knowledge thereof were imported, each stressing its own claims to absolute truth, each transmitting particular aspects of European culture and knowledge, and each displaying severe antagonism to dissent from its norms (Awolalu, 1985; Crane, 1964; Sogolo, 1993). Whereas Islam was tolerant towards indigenous practices, the mission church almost wholly rejected the African worldview (Crane, 1964). According to Sogolo (1993), a central characteristic of missionary Christianity in Africa was its authoritarianism. Humans were required to surrender all, including all African deities, to a supreme God. Christian morality was viewed as the only morality. Whereas Islam unified and included, Christianity divided and excluded.

The Missionary Enterprise

The Christianity that was imported to Africa was the Christianity of European domination. Its introduction coincided with massive social upheavals brought about by European imperialism, commerce, industrialisation, modernisation, science, administration, and political systems. Missionaries carried not only the Bible, but all the signs and symbols of European knowledge. Christian life was part and parcel of the "universal civilisation" of Europe, as reflected in the words of Pope Alexander VI (in Mudimbe, 1994) in as early as 1493:

> Among other works well pleasing to the divine majesty and cherished of our heart, this assuredly ranks highest, that in our times especially the Catholic faith and the Christian religion be exalted and everywhere increased and spread, that the health of souls be cared for and that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself. (p. 30)

The implicit opposition in the passage between civilisation and Christianity, on the one hand, and the barbarity/paganism of Africa which awaits forceful conversion, on the other hand, has its roots in earlier western conceptions of Africa and Africans. It is necessary to briefly archaeologise these conceptions, as they form part of the episteme informing missionary discourse. The missionaries were armed with an implicit body of knowledge concerning a mythical Africa created by the West over previous centuries, which often proved more influential in their contact with Africans than knowledge of the Bible itself.

Early European Images of Africans

In Ancient Greece, Africa already had a composite image: The known North Africa, which formed part of the multicultural world of antiquity, and the wild, unknown Africa. In the Christian period, the colour black began to acquire negative connotations, as the colour of sin and darkness. Although originally it was not linked to skin colour, it gradually acquired that connotation, mainly during the Middle Ages, when Europe lost direct contact with Africa and the symbolism of the "black demon" was transferred to both the Muslim and the African. In the

late Middle Ages, a turnaround occurred: The Ethiopian churches aligned themselves with Europe against Islam, and a positive image of the black saint and madonna entered western iconography. The African became "the highly honoured representative of a remote Christendom" (Pieterse, 1992, p. 29). However, the 18th and 19th centuries were dominated by extremely negative images of Africans. They had become savages, barbarians, and heathens.

Savages and Barbarians

"The prehistory of the savage belongs to Europe itself. The underlying idea seems to refer to the distinction between... cultivated and uncultivated land or 'nature'" (Pieterse, 1992, p. 30). To nature belonged the forests and the wilderness where, during the 9th century, Europeans lived in small feudal villages, separated by natural vegetation. These regions, dominated by the forces of nature, were mysterious and numinous, "the domain of beings on the border-line between human and animal, myth and reality" (Peterse, 1992, p. 30). The European was the first savage, and in the eyes of the Greeks, became the first barbarian.

The Greeks differentiated between barbarians, originally non-Greek speakers, but later referring to "base" and "rude" strangers, and civilitas, Greeks, who were cultivated and lived under law. For the Romans, as for the Greeks, barbarians and savages were those outside the empire. Europe's barbarity was eventually tamed "through a process of subjugation..., in which missions and Christianization, pacification and exploitation formed a colonial scenario similar to that of the later imperialism overseas. To put it differently, the nation-states were the first empires" (Pieterse, 1992, p. 31). By the 16th century, few savages were left in Europe. They had been civilised.

During the Renaissance, the European notion of savagery was exported and transferred to non-Europeans. By the 19th century it had become routine in descriptions of Africa and the New World, which had become the philosophical and political counterpoint to Europe. Africa became a domain of alterity to where the unattractive aspects of Europe's present and recent past were banished. Africans became "savages" and Muslims, by virtue of a slightly higher status, "barbarians".

Europe's introduction to Africans and anthropoid apes via travellers' tales coincided historically. Increasingly, savages were likened to animals. In the sciences of the time, they became the missing link between apes and humans in the great Chain of Being. Their assumed biological and racial inferiority served as partial justification of the slave trade (Pieterse, 1992). The scientific classifications of race produced in the 18th century were often, however, metaphoric reproductions of earlier Biblical categories and metaphors. "Faith and reason ultimately achieved the same answer, a verdict regarding the status of Africans perfectly convenient to Europeans, Christian or otherwise" (Peterse, 1992, p. 44).

Slavery and the Children of Ham

Christianity offered an additional and popular justification of slavery in the tale of the descendants of Ham. Ham's descendants were cursed by Canaan to be servants. Medieval tales depicted Africa as the continent of Ham's descendants. During the time when European slave trade had achieved considerable proportions, the children of Ham became increasingly associated with blackness. The scene was set for the master/slave relationship to be further specified as the white European / black African relationship.

Terra Nullius and Tabula Rasa

In 1830, Hegel depicted the African as "man in all his wild and untamed nature... you must abstract all elements of respect and morality... - there is nothing remotely humanized in the Negro's character.... Nothing confirms this judgement more than the reports of the missionaries" (Pieterse, 1992, p. 34). The superior condescension dominating European views of Africans manifested itself in a discourse of negative comparison. The 19th century savage was determined by "absences: the absence, or scarcity, of clothing, possessions, attributes of civilization" (Pieterse, 1992, p. 35). The savage became a tabula rasa, waiting to be inscribed with European faith, history and civilisation. He was waiting amidst the wilderness, an undefined, mythical space, uncultivated and undomesticated. His land became vacant space, terra nullius, waiting for appropriation and cultivation through colonialism.

The concept of terra nullius was decreed by the Pope, in the name of God, in Romanus Pontifex, a papal edict of 1454. The Pope considered the total planet the franchise of the Church. He granted Christian kings the right to invade and conquer lands, expel non-Christians from it, and, when necessary, to fight and subjugate them "in perpetual servitude" (Mudimbe, 1994, p. 33). This edict provided the basis for both colonisation and slavery. Non-Christians had no right to an autonomous political existence or ownership of land. Although the Reformation later challenged the Pope's power to grant lands to European monarchs, religious conversion was still concomitant with colonial appropriation of land.

Tales of Exploration

The missionary's precursors and contemporaries in Africa from the 15th to the end of the 19th century were the soldier and the explorer. The soldier was more visible than the explorer. He built castles and forts, managed trading posts, participated in the slave trade, and later implemented colonial power (Mudimbe, 1988). He visually embodied the power of European technology and force.

The explorer compiled information on the continent, which confirmed and set the tone for Europe's and the missionaries' views on Africa as the Dark Continent. Whereas travellers in the 16th and 17th centuries had commented on Africa's rich courts and extensive, well laid-out cities, 19th century tales of exploration became blind to agricultural cultivation, social organisation, existing trade routes, and even the African himself, who was absorbed into the background of the overwhelming natural landscape. Nature dominated narratives of exploration and served as a backdrop to the heroic efforts of the explorer. The mythical meeting between Livingstone and Stanley, embodied in the famous phrase "Dr Livingstone I presume?", typifies the exploration myth. The two Europeans are pictured alone in a world of untamed nature; their huge entourage of African and Arab bearers, guides, intermediaries, and interpreters, in sum, local experts, are mentioned only in passing, if at all, as passive bystanders, spectators, stage props, or obstacles to progress (Pieterse, 1992).

The journeys of exploration, which coincided with early missionary work, were

documented as a "'pushing forth of the frontiers of ignorance' and as 'adding to the store of knowledge in the world'" (Pieterse, 1992, p. 64), assuming no knowledge existing outside the boundaries of Europe. Africa was a "dark recess, much akin to a bodily interior" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 90), waiting to be laid bare by the probing gaze of the European observer. The language of empiricism that was born from clinical pathology at this time (Foucault, 1973), was transposed to geography. "To know was to raise to the light of scrutiny the dark secrets of life lurking in the body's interior" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 90).

The explorers were not only representatives of empirical knowledge. They came, in the words of explorer/missionary Livingstone in 1867,

> as members of a superior race and servants of a Government that desires to elevate the more degraded portions of the human family. We are adherents of a benign holy religion and may... become the harbingers of peace to a hitherto distracted and down-trodden race. (Pieterse, 1992, p. 65)

The image of the savage and the heathen had merged with a Christian vision of "fallen creatures" waiting to be rescued from ignorance, pagan ways and, since the rise of abolitionism, from slavery.

The Noble Savage and Abolitionism

During the exploration of the New World, the savage, who was assumed to live in a state of nature, gradually became attractive, and attained the status of the "noble savage". As Europeans became more aware of the vices of European civilisation, embodied at the time in the court of Versailles, the savage came to represent life in a lost paradise, a unity with nature, unimpeded by reason; a nostalgic longing for Europe's own past. The innocent savage was born in the romanticism of the 18th century as a reaction against bourgeois society. It went hand in hand with infantilisation. The natural Other, nature personified, was less than fully human, like a child (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991). Admiration for the noble savage was always ambivalently coupled with the need to "correct" their "errors", in the same way that children

needed correction. The noble savage, the suffering innocent, still contained the threat of degeneracy and the Fall (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991), which had to be contained. The image of the noble, innocent savage was extended to Africa, which became a continent despoiled by slavery and ignorance.

The noble savage fitted neatly into the discourse around the abolition of slavery. The advent of the industrial revolution had made slavery redundant because it was less productive than new forms of individualising power. However, the church actively fought for abolition. All humans were viewed as potentially equal within the confines of the faith. The freed slave became the potential convert. Abolition had humanised the African. This was, however, a far cry from emancipation.

The central icon of abolitionism, the figure of the black kneeling, hands folded and eyes cast upward, carried a clear message. It made emancipation conditional - on condition of conversion, on condition of docility and meekness, on condition of being on one's knees. (Pieterse, 1992, p. 60)

Missionary Discourse

"One might consider that missionary speech is always predetermined, preregulated, let us say colonized. It depends upon a normative discourse already fixed" (Mudimbe, 1988). Missionary speech evolved within the framework of what Mudimbe calls the "authority of the truth" (p. 47) or God's assumed desire for the conversion of the world. "This means, at least, that the missionary does not enter into dialogue with pagans and 'savages' but must impose the law of God that he incarnates" (p. 47). The native, living under Satan's rule, has to be transformed to conform to the norm set by God's truth, embodied in the missionary.

From the perspective of the Christianity of empire, the traditional African way of life was construed as paganism, unfaith, ignorance, misconception, and evil. Paganism is not a passive state, but a state of guilt, of rebellion against God, and of fall beneath the threshold of humanity (Eboussi Boulaga, 1984). It is the error of fetishism and animism, accompanied by

aberration and imperfection. To Christianise is to tame a degraded being, to rear it to a normal state through education. In missionary discourse, the pagan is in distress. "The most striking thing about Africa is its misery, moral as well as physical. Slavery, ignorance, superstition, immorality rage about in the most unbridled fashion" (p. 20). Africans are viewed as morally immature. Their animality and instinctualism have to be bridled

> by constraint and discipline.... This constraint is imposed upon them as it is imposed upon children or the infirm: for their own good. Indeed it is themselves they must be shielded from, for they have in effect forfeited their rights and become incapable of their responsibilities. They are morally incompetent.... Hence the authority exercised over them is twofold: natural and religious, in indissolubility. It is the authority at once of reason and revelation, of civilization and of faith, the former being both condition and product of the latter in each pair. For what is original and unique with Christianity is that these tandems are unified and circular. Here we have the reason why evangelization and colonialism are inseparable. (Eboussi Boulaga, 1984, pp. 20-21)

Eboussi Boulaga (1984) proceeds with a further analysis of missionary discourse. It is heir to both Greek reason and Judaic revelation. By virtue of this double qualification "it is the critic of the unreason of the other religions and the denunciation of their mythological nature. Its own proper element is language and history - not the obscure regions of the cosmos or the imagination" (p. 30). It addresses the pagan in the language of derision. "The gods die of ridicule... the spirits vanish like the dreams of night" (Eboussi-Boulaga, 1984, p. 30) in the face of the only correct image of God. Where derision appeals to a sense of shame, the language of refutation is addressed to reason. It convinces through lines of causality, origin, and finality. It unmasks the "swindlers": Witch-doctors, secret societies, and elders. Its formal logic and ontology is invoked to demonstrate the incoherencies of indigenous beliefs. It is ironic that it attacks these beliefs from a position of materialistic reductionism: The knowledge of traditional religion is viewed as "a technique of impotence, which supplies, for lack of objective knowledge by beliefs, that 'knowledge' of weak minds who 'think' only by association of images, as children do" (Eboussi-Boulaga, 1984, p. 50). Christianity had itself previously been subjected to the same description, but had since assumed the status of rationality. It had outgrown its

mythological past, which had become objective fact in history.

The arguments of refutation are clarified in the language of demonstration: The exposition of the faith "in all its order, coherence, and transforming power" (Eboussi-Boulaga, 1984, p. 33). The themes of demonstration are the worship of God, sexual and family morality (including monogamy), private property, and the work ethic. The truths to be believed include a view of the person as divided into body and soul. Rote learning and abandonment to the knowledge of the church ensure salvation of the soul. The hospital looks after the body. Demonstration of the truth aims at demonstrating the reasonableness of the faith, which can be understood only by education to reason itself.

Mudimbe (1988) identifies an evolutionary thesis underlying this discourse. The native is supposed to undergo a radical transformation, from primitiveness to civilisation; from illness to health; from disorder (madness, satanic illusions, and corruption) to order; from darkness to the light of God. Similar reasoning underlied newly invented treatment methods applied to the mentally ill and the delinquent in European institutions. Whereas, previously, these Others were punished or alienated by society, they were now viewed as lesser developed, morally and rationally, and thus in need of programmes of improvement. The site of improvement was within the individual; the measure thereof, the norm set by the regime of truth; the methods, discipline, domestication, reasoning, demonstration, and refutation (Foucault, 1973, 1977).

Missionary discourse centres around a middle-class Christian truth. Faith becomes a personal struggle; it is interiorised and "psychologized" (Eboussi Boulaga, 1984, p. 62). The key to both knowledge and salvation is to be found inside the individual person (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991). Christianity entails a unique form of power, which Foucault (1982) terms pastoral power (p. 214). Its aim is to assure individual salvation in the next world. It is a form of power "that is prepared to sacrifice itself for the life and salvation of the flock" (Foucault, 1982, p. 214) and serves each individual, in particular, during his or her entire life. The knowledge of Christianity carries the power to individualise and foreshadows the development of secular knowledges of the individual. These knowledges have become more important since the industrial revolution.

Comaroff and Comaroff (1991) point to the importance of the industrial revolution in British missionary discourse. The industrial revolution had replaced agrarian societies in Europe and its negative effects came to be felt. The lower classes had turned increasingly to religion, which, like capitalism, preached an ethos of self-improvement and upward mobility. English missionaries sought to evangelise and civilise by personal example (itself an expression of bourgeois values), and the pathway along which they were to lead the heathen ran through their own society as they would have wished to see it:

> A neat fusion of three idealized worlds: the scientific, capitalist age in its most ideologically roseate form, wherein individuals were free to better themselves and to aspire to ever greater heights; an idyllic countryside in which... hardworking peasants... produce gainfully for the market; and a sovereign Empire of God. (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 59)

In a world where secularism was threatening the church and it was forced to offer a message of hope to those oppressed by industrialisation, it turned hopefully towards Africa to create a new society.

Conversion to Christianity

Missionaries varied along a spectrum of relations with the state. At one end were those who were closely aligned with colonial powers; at the other end, those who actively fought against it. They provided converts with a liberal education that opened a space for resistance to colonial power. As liberation movements got under way in the early 20th century, many churches lent them their support (Bourdillon, 1990). However, at least initially, the mission was viewed as an extension of colonial rule. Its paternalism and condemnation of local practices could not have been welcome. Why did it attract converts?

Though missionaries were often marginal to their own culture, they conveyed its symbols, technology, political power, and opportunities for wealth (Bourdillon, 1990; Ray, 1976). Christianity's strong ties with western education and health services made it the religion

of the educated and westernised (Bourdillon, 1990; Mbiti, 1971; Oduyoye, 1986). Its attraction was not in and for itself but by association with the power/knowledge of the West (Horton 1971). Converts were attracted to education as an avenue to white-collar work as well as vocational and industrial training offered by some churches (Middleton, 1983). Many missions offered economic assistance in the purchase of new agricultural and domestic technologies (Bourdillon, 1990). Often access to these services was incumbent on membership.

Conversion went with an expansion of scale from the narrow local viewpoints of small communities to wider horizons brought along by the opening of the continent to global concerns. Local deities whose power was gradually assumed to extend only to local affairs, became increasingly less important, while the universal God, whose power extends over a larger field, became more important (Horton, 1971).

As with Islam, Christianity's acceptance was highly conditional and selective (Fernandez, 1972; Horton, 1971), but Christianity was more intolerant of syncretism and parallelism. It was not prepared to learn from Africa and conversion was a one-way process (Oduyoye, 1986). Where Islam adopted a both/and approach, Christianity adopted an either/or position. Converts frequently had to live in missionary villages, divorced from their context (Gray, 1978; Oduyoye, 1986), and though this practice of social isolation was later withdrawn (Middleton, 1983), conversion demanded the rejection of indigenous culture and the adoption of western culture.

The first converts were ex-slaves, widows, other women, orphans, those carrying taboos and runaways - disempowered persons of ambiguous social status (Gray, 1978; Middleton, 1983). Family ties converted the second generation. Lesser royals who were sent to the church to be educated became the first black pastors and evangelists.

However, it is doubtful whether the term "conversion" applies to the interaction which took place between Africans and missionaries. The concept of conversion is itself a creation of missionary discourse (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991). It implies a rational, voluntary choice by an individual between different, discrete faiths, which are in turn, separate from the rest of life. The process whereby elements of Christianity were absorbed into the lives of Africans is of a

different order. It was a total and complex response to the imposition of a new social and epistemological realm. This will be illustrated in the following two sections, which offer descriptions of the process whereby missionary power/knowledge infiltrated two societies converted by different denominations, one Catholic, one Protestant.

The Missionary Domestication of the Congo

In 1876, Leopold II, King of Belgium, decreed that the central African area later called the Congo become a part of his kingdom. The Vatican, having lost power in Europe, proposed the simultaneous evangelisation of the area. Church and state were united in Belgium and they descended as a unity upon the Congo (Gray, 1978). The Belgian Catholic missionaries brought with them an elaborate ecclesiastical administration based on a hierarchical bureaucracy. By 1911, there were ten ecclesiastical regions, each with its own tradition. The geography of the Congo had been turned into "a kind of spiritual checkerboard on which each unit or square was occupied by a definite religious style" (Mudimbe, 1994, p. 110). All geographical features of the land (like all converts) were given European names (Bujo, 1992). Local regions of authority and community boundaries were disregarded and superseded by these "dividing practices" (Foucault, 1977). Church affiliation would be the new common identity.

Each ecclesiastic region consisted of various missions, re-enacting a medieval pattern: "A religious centre is called to transform an area" (Mudimbe, 1994, p. 113). Converts were relocated to missionary villages, and each centre's church, residences, schools, and hospitals projected a vision: The values and knowledge of Europe. Power entered through the reorganisation of space. It was a visible, monarchic, juridical power (Foucault, 1980b).

After the space, which they reorganized according to a new memory exemplified in the Church, the missionaries rapidly command time and its categories. There will be a religious economy of days, weeks, months, years, espousing a liturgical calendar, and also specific daily ritual arrangements. As an entity, the village comes to life at dawn, morning prayers follow the mass, and immediately after comes "Christian instruction". Men, women, children, Christians, catechumens, each group has its program, its teacher

and its message. The afternoon is devoted to a different labor - agriculture or construction... till 6:00 p.m. curfew, recreation. The missionaries have regulated everything. (Mudimbe, 1994, p. 11)

The project of conversion was "a politics that disciplines beings, space, and time in the name of unspoken models" (Mudimbe, 1994, p. 112). The mission embodied the imposition of a disciplinary, totalising power, born of 19th century European Enlightenment. It was the disciplinary power of prisons, hospitals, mental institutions, schools, and factories (Foucault, 1977). It was exercised in the name of humanitarian concerns, in the interest of the social body, as exemplified in the abolition of slavery.

An important function of the missions was to buy the freedom of slaves from Arab traders. The freed slaves became the first converts and provided labour for the building of the missions, which earned them a religious education, baptism, and citizenship in the mission-city. Mudimbe (1994) questions whether their lives had radically changed after being freed. They had entered the bottom level of the church hierarchy. This hierarchy is visually present in the mission church: The altar and its space is reserved for the clergy; the next space is reserved for whites; the greater nave, for black Christians; finally, the lower nave for catechumens, so that, in the words of one of the missionaries, "they can feel excluded from the celebration of the most sacred mystery and thus experience better their inferiority vis-à-vis the Christians" (Mudimbe, 1994, p. 112). This inferiority was further reinforced by attacks on indigenous religion. Church and state united in a full-scale attack on all indigenous customs: Polygamy, ancestor-cults, offerings to spirits, dancing and hunting ceremonies, all transitional rites, and carvings representing spirits were outlawed (Bujo, 1992).

From the end of the 19th century, when the first black priests were ordained, conversion was conceptualised as a collaboration between the white fathers and their pupils. Detailed policies were formulated to guide the education of these pupils. They were to be socially engineered into an orthodox unity; dependent upon the sponsorship of white superiors and a foreign centre of authority. Norms were formulated for their selection on the basis of intellectual, moral, and spiritual capabilities. They were to be observed, studied, and selected

very early. A detailed "psychology" of selection was formulated.

"The chosen ones submitted to a new system of life, completely isolated from their ordinary milieu" (Mudimbe, 1994, p. 120). They entered a monastic boarding school, and were thus physically isolated from society. It was designed to "adapt" to "the psychology of the African", which, in practice, meant that the buildings were from mud. Culturally, students were to be situated somewhere between blacks and whites on the social scale, to prevent them from becoming "pretentious, demanding, and marginalized" (Mudimbe, 1994, p. 121) in the white world. Educationally, they were to be taught both secular and theological subjects in Latin. In short, they were to receive a replica of the training of Catholic priests in Europe, without the benefit of previous acquaintance with its cultural context.

"Through a long period of acculturation, an average of fifteen years, the candidate learns, in the Foucauldian sense, how to become 'a docile body'. The seminary structures itself as a 'panopticon' through three main factors: the space, which reproduces a monastic model, the repartition of time, and the constitution of transparent consciousnesses" (Mudimbe, 1994, p. 121). The individual consciousness of the seminarian was developed in three ways: Thrice-daily self-examinations, an elaborate system of spiritual auto-surveillance, and spiritual direction in the form of confession, under guidance of a spiritual master. Progress was carefully monitored and meticulously documented. Of the first two hundred Africans who were selected for the programme, ten succeeded. The bishop called it "a miracle of grace" (Mudimbe, 1994, p. 123).

Foucault (1984) describes confession as one of the earliest techniques of self-discipline that made the bourgeois subject and his conscience into a locus of evaluation and surveillance. The pastoral power of Christianity "cannot be exercised without knowing the inside of people's minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets. It implies a knowledge of the conscience and the ability to direct it" (Foucault, 1982, p. 214). Individuals were not only created but recruited into an active role in their own subjugation through techniques detailed in a science of conversion. This science contained the rudiments of what was to become the role of the social sciences in the domestication of Africa: The creation

of docile bodies "to be subjected, used, transformed, and improved" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 180). Another dream of a perfect society brought "automatic docility" (p. 186) to its followers.

The dream did succeed in that it produced a new generation of évolués, a western-educated middle class falling between the colonials and the masses. By 1947, the évolués had, however, started questioning the political and social dominance of the colonists in their publications. The relationship between the white Father and his protegé had taken an unforeseen turn. Missionary discourse reformulated itself accordingly. Informed by anthropology, it started speaking of ethnic differences and cultural accommodation. A new policy was drawn up to contain the potential revolt: A more equal relationship between missionary and student; a joint commitment to a search for a new social order. Euphemisms entered the language; the terms "savages" and "heathens" were no longer heard in public (Mudimbe, 1994).

The church had succeeded in its mission of enculturation, but had thereby, paradoxically, furnished a tool for dissent, which later grew into nationalism and eventual decolonisation. The évolués became the new leaders and intellectuals. Their dissent, however, was fought in the arena of the dominant knowledge. Through dissent, they had entered the hegemony of the missionary truth.

It was from the Congo that one of the first intellectual voices reclaiming the value of indigenous thought, rang out. In 1945, Father Tempels, a Belgian Franciscan missionary, published Bantu Philosophy, which was to become the first in a series of similar ethnophilosophical studies. Though respectful of "the philosophy of the Bantu", the ultimate aim of the study was to furnish information to improve the effectiveness of missionary work. Missionary discourse had excavated a subjugated knowledge but thereby extended its hegemony. Indigenous knowledge had become the object of science. A seed had, however, been planted which later grew into African theology (Bujo, 1992) and African philosophy (Hountondji, 1983).

The legacy of missionary discourse can still be read in the discourse of some African

leaders. The formal alliance between church and colonial government during colonisation has led to so much resentment among the évolués that, to this day, conflict between church and state is characteristic of Zairean politics (Gray, 1978). President Mobuto is actively opposed to the presence of western churches in Zaire (Mushete, 1978). However, the structure of missionary discourse is to be found behind the "apparent disorder, changing themes, contradictory ideological appropriations... and structural madness" (Mudimbe, 1994, p. 145) of Mobuto's discourse, which has been termed a political religion (Fernandez, 1979, p. 289). Mobuto speaks in Messianic and mythical tones of absolute norms of truth and of a history marching towards salvation from colonialism. He gives cultural and doctrinal lessons regulated by major principles. It is as a teacher and "guide-Messiah" (Mudimbe, 1994, p. 148) that he inaugurates projects of social transformation. His regime explicitly aims at a total displacement of the values of the previous regime. His statements are divorced from social reality and exist in a separate realm of unquestionable truths. Mobutoism is a language of reason closed upon itself; of derision, refutation, and demonstration; of evolutionary paradigms and revelation.

Conversion and Conversation in Bechuanaland

The Christianity that was imported to the people who were later to be designated by the ethnic category of "Southern Tswana" was that of British Nonconformist Protestant missionaries. In contrast to the Catholics in the Congo, they were critics of the more obvious colonial abuses by the state (Gray, 1978). In Britain, missionary societies were at the heart of the humanitarian movement. They came from the post-enlightment world of liberalism, where self-contained, right-bearing individuals had the innate capacity to construct and improve themselves through the powers of reason. Self-discipline, in the form of punctuality, cleanliness and preparedness for hard work, fed the factories and oiled the machine of industrialisation. The social values of bourgeois ideology were internalised in personal virtues embodied in self-control, self-denial, self-esteem, self-sacrifice, self-possession, and self-improvement (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991). Despite its humanitarianism, this Protestantism was rooted in industrial capitalism, bourgeois culture, and religious individualism. Rational, methodical, self-willed duty provided the means to salvation.

Armed with such knowledge, the missionaries arrived among the Tswana in the early 19th century. They already had competitors in an existing battle between the British government and the Afrikaners to gain control of black populations. The missionaries fought both the Afrikaner domination of blacks (which was rooted in a Christianity that later supported apartheid) and the greed of British imperialism. Caught in the middle, they tried to force the issue of "native" social and legal rights on both parties, gradually becoming their representatives in a white world. In Britain, they had been the representatives of the oppressed lower class; in Africa they assumed the same role (though more paternalistically) towards the "noble savage". However, from the point of view of the Tswana, they were representatives of the white world, and while pursuing their liberal traditions, they drew the Tswana into the web of their knowledge.

Gifts of Knowledge

Knowledge was, above all, attained through literacy and the Bible, which was the path of "self-improvement and salvation, revelation and refinement, civilization and, finally, conversion" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 64). Literacy and education not only led to material gain, but developed the mind and reason, and promoted the cultivation of an inner-directed, reflective self. The first contacts between missionaries and the Tswana embodied these values. Missionaries would display the Bible to an entourage of curious Tswana, and proceed to read and preach from it. Gifts would be presented to their ruler, as recounted by the Reverend Campbell in 1813:

> I said that I had brought a small present for him, as a token of friendship - while opening it he remained silent, not moving even his head, only his eyes towards the parcel. I then took from it a gilded copper comb and put it into his hair, and tied a silver spangled band and tassel round his head, and a chain about his neck, and last of all presented him with a looking glass. (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 170)

The material gains of European culture are represented in trinkets of no real value, and the looking glass opens the way to self-reflection. It is ironic that the chief would return the

compliment by presenting the missionary with a gift of cattle, the most highly valued material, cultural and symbolic asset to the Tswana. The looking glass, representing to the Tswana the mysterious powers of whites, later became an object of divination. It was used by witch-finders to identify those "whose offence was the assertion of unbridled self-interest in violation of the common good" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 189).

While the missionary was focusing on his preaching, the Tswana were awed by the objects and technologies that accompanied him. These objects were viewed as extensions of his power. A church clock, with wooden hands moulded in the form of soldiers, became an object of alarm to the Tswana, who argued about the powers of the soldiers to attack them. By association, the missionary was accused of plotting to take them into bondage. The missionary cut down the wooden figures, in an effort to "rationally" demonstrate their harmlessness, but to no avail. The controversy was settled only when the clock became a gift to the chief. This incident contains the major elements of the struggle for power/knowledge between the two parties. In the world of the missionary, the clock represented order and objective time; time was money, to be spent or used, wasted or owned. To the Tswana, the clock contained "white power", the ability to breathe life into inanimate material. This power was extremely seductive, but it was also (realistically) perceived as part of an ominous order of domination. The only way to fight this power was to appropriate it, and thereby enter into it.

Invisible Hegemony

The earliest conversations between the missionary and the Tswana centred around such symbols of power/knowledge. Both parties were struggling to gain control over the terms of the encounter. "The earliest objects of this struggle were the forms that the churchmen sought to impose on the conversation itself: among others, linguistic forms, spatial forms, the forms of rational argument and positive knowledge" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 199). The overt content of the conversations had to do with the substantive message of the mission conveyed "in sermons and services, lessons and didactic dialogues" (p. 199). The gospel, delivered thus, initially made little sense to the Tswana and was mostly ignored or rudely rejected. Other kinds of knowledge were, however, gradually absorbed, in struggles in the domains of material and

symbolic values and language and representation.

Both parties tried to appropriate the space of the encounter. The missionary would aim at building the mission in the heart of the social order, beside the ruler, as church and state stood side by side in Britain. The chief would banish the mission to outside the social centre, but close enough to be the source of valued goods and skills. One missionary eventually gained access to the centre only after giving the chief his own gun - the most condensed source of European power. In the short run, the chiefs controlled space, integrated the missionary into the village and proudly displayed him to visitors as a symbol of their power. In the long run, as elsewhere in Africa (Mudimbe, 1994), two distinct spatial domains developed, separated by a no-man's land.

The battle around material versus symbolic values was fought around the control of water, a scarce commodity. The control over water was a crucial aspect of the sovereign power of the ruler. The annual rains were a force bestowed by the ruler upon the land after the necessary rites performed by the rainmaker. The effectiveness of rites of rainmaking depended upon harmonious relations between the living and the dead. The missionary would dig irrigation trenches and wells, technically managing what the Tswana regarded as sacred, while propounding that only God had authority over rain. Long arguments would ensue, with missionaries logically explaining, in the name of both God and Science, the absurdities of rainmaking, and the Tswana patiently explaining that their social order would collapse without it. Rainmakers began to blame the mission when their efforts failed and the mission started holding special rain services, claiming success as proof of victory over Satan.

These conversations represent a process whereby the Tswana, like Africans all over the continent (Fernandez, 1972) were gradually drawn into a position where they had to defend their practices on rational terms. They were forced to stand outside their own knowledge and describe it to themselves. They became self-conscious about their own way of life. Imperceptibly, they were drawn to the looking-glass of European knowledge. They entered European discourse by arguing about the effectiveness of rainmaking, which is not about effectiveness but about the cohesion of the cosmos. Increasingly, they came to share the

missionary's view of essential differences between two opposing cultural and ethnic worlds, where, traditionally, they would view cultural differences from a relativist position with equal sharing between parties. They internalised the terms upon which they were being challenged. They were "seduced into the modes of rational debate, positivist knowledge, and empirical reason" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 213). The hegemony of a modern, invisible, dividing power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980b) had entered their world. At the same time, they were confronted with the seductive power of the visible word.

The Power of the Word

Missionary knowledge was powerful in terms of the sanctity of the written word. Behind the missionary lay his sacred texts, the ultimate repositories of eternal, global truth. In Tswana culture where words had mystical power, literacy was, initially, understood less as a learned skill than as an innate mystical capacity. "Given the rhetoric of the evangelists and the awe with which they spoke of the divine truth, it is not surprising that [the Book] was perceived as a strong medicine, an infusion that bewitched all who imbibed it" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 228). Treatment by covering bodies with script and newsprint later became a regular part of healing rites among illiterates. The Book was seen as an instrument of divination and its power was appropriated through a "systematic misrecognition of European signs and meanings on the part of people whose own cultures did not segregate the word from the world or the concept from the concrete" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 229).

According to Fernandez (1972), Middleton (1983), and Turner (1979) such misrepresentations are common in societies who are presented with selective elements of western culture (be they Bibles, church clocks or irrigation ditches) which have been abstracted from the context in which they are understood and from which they have received their power. The real source of the powers are never fully seen in the recipient area. Since for most primal cultures the ultimate sources of knowledge and power are mystical and spiritual, they search for the real source of power in western religion, mostly in the Bible. The expectation is created that access to this knowledge will ensure entry into all the powers of the whites, including material benefit. When this expectation is not met, it is believed that there exists further secret

knowledge which has been withheld. Many religious movements are built around prophets who claim to have access to secret, revealed scriptures that supplement the Bible.

The power of literacy attracted many Tswana to the church. The Bible was translated into Setswana by the missionaries, who thereby unwittingly extended their power by reinventing the language before handing it back to its owners in written form. Bold mistranslations as well as subtle acts of appropriation occurred. The word "demons" was translated to badimo ("ancestors"); "Christian believer" became modumedi ("one who agrees") (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 218).

Schools were built and a regime of instruction, veneration, and surveillance imposed on converts. Space and time were reorganised, the sacred separated from the secular, work from leisure, the inner from the outer, the soul from the body. The first converts were the marginal and the powerless: Outsiders; minor royalty; women. They were followed by a large group who became "nominal" Christians, retaining traditional religious practices while harnessing mission resources and undermining its order and discipline. From schools like these emerged the future intellectuals, leaders of the revolution, and black theologians.

Many years later, a Tswana herbalist/faith healer and zealous member of and evangelist for the Methodist church described the legacy of the missionaries as follows: "The missionaries have not taught us anything new about God and his workings with man and the world.... All they have taught us... is tlhabologo (civilization, meaning, in fact, material progress in the style of the West)" (Setiloane, 1978, p. 402).

There were also those who took from Christianity what they needed and integrated it into existing knowledge. As early as 1837, an indignant missionary wrote of a former candidate for baptism who had "pretences to immediate communion with the divine Being" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 248). She had attracted a large following by creating a divination rite, "a brilliant bricolage of Christian and indigenous words and objects; she chanted fragments of the Lord's Prayer, hymns, and scriptures while laying out an orderly arrangement of patches torn from the Baptismal gown" (p. 248). An African independent church was born out of a

subversive recodification of power/knowledge. Christianity had been become a local healing power.

Christianity as Local Power/knowledge

Africa has appropriated Christianity in a way that is similar to its appropriation of Islam in that commitment to it ranges from full to superficial (Horton, 1971). "Africa today is a field of multi-religious activity that induces tolerance of different ways and beliefs. In the same family in the tropics it is possible to find Christians, Muslims and pagans" (Parrinder, 1969, p. 235) and the same person partakes in different religions because family loyalty is stronger than religious loyalty (Middleton, 1983).

Africans are converting Christianity into their cultural world without abandoning indigenous religious experiences (Onyanwu, 1975). Parallel practices depend on personal need (Awolalu, 1985). Different religious specialists are visited according to the nature of a personal problem: Cults of affliction, indigenous diviners or Christian prayer may be invoked (Gray, 1978; Middleton, 1983; Whisson & West, 1975). People may visit traditional shrines and healers for personal concerns; for a sense of community and social status, they go to church. Bourdillon (1990) points out that in traditional society, people could choose among a variety of specialists and cults, all associated with different powers, to deal with problems in their lives. They "tap the power of Christianity" when and if they choose and turn to more traditional powers for personal and family problems. Consistency over time is not important.

Africans do not only selectively partake in Christianity, but have appropriated Christianity from within, by establishing their own independent churches as well as transforming the theology of the mission churches. They are following the example of the early Ethiopian and Coptic churches. At the time of the inception of the Ethiopian church, it produced famous Christian scholars and theologians and formed part of the orthodox Christian world. Centuries of later isolation from the rest of Christiandom, however, ensured that it developed a uniquely African expression (Mbiti, 1971). There is currently a growing tendency to establish a closer link between ancient and new forms of African Christianity (MacGaffey,

1981). The old forms have become models for some African theologians. Similarly, the names of independent churches, often incorporating Zion or Ethiopia, reflect a desire for recognition as independently linked to the earliest roots of Christianity (Bourdillon, 1990).

African Theology

Christianity opened the way to opposition to western domination in Africa. Mission educated Africans appropriated the rationality and humanitarianism of the mission churches in their struggle for liberation (July, 1968). The new nationalists associated foreign religions with colonialism and many wanted to see them abolished in Africa and traditional religion re-instituted (Awolalu, 1985). At the same time, African clergy were moving towards indigenisation and beginning to practise their own theology.

Liberation (or Black) theology in South Africa, was inspired by its North American counterpart (Tutu, 1979). It was concerned with both indigenisation and liberation from oppression. "Our concern is not merely to liberate people; it is also to liberate the Gospel" (Boesak, 1979). The growth of liberation theology was closely related to the rise of black nationalism (Mphahlele, 1977; Mudimbe, 1983) and the Black Consciousness movement, which originated in the schools of theology of black apartheid universities (Tutu, 1979). According to a report of the Commission on Black Theology of the South African Student Organisation of 1971 (in Kotze, 1974) Black theology "means taking resolute and decisive steps to free Black people not only from estrangement from God but also from slave mentality, inferiority complex, distrust of themselves and continued dependence on others culminating in self-hate" (p. 52). Black theologians unanimously rejected white churches, especially the Dutch Reformed Church, which was believed to have been designed to oppress blacks and support apartheid.

The complex and contradictory role of Christianity in the liberation struggle is illustrated in the South African national anthem, Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika, which was composed at Lovedale College, a mission institution, in the 1890's. This Christian hymn became a symbol of liberation, sung by multiethnic, sometimes secular, and often radical groups of people, beseeching the Holy Spirit to intervene on the side of the "Nation of Jesus", in the idiom of a

Victorian moral army (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991).

Elsewhere in Africa, theologians struggled for the establishment of an organic and original connection between political independence, cultural autonomy, and Africanised churches (Mudimbe 1983). Mission Christianity was criticised on methodological, ideological and philosophical levels. The work of anthropologists and missionaries on indigenous religion was rejected and new studies appeared, searching for similarities between indigenous religions and Christianity (Mudimbe, 1983). Various attempts have been made to adopt African elements into Christian theology. The ancestor cult is connected to the cult of Saints, communal solidarity to the Mystical Body of the church and ancestors to Grace (Nyamiti, 1978). Similarly, Bujo (1992) proposes a theology where Christ becomes the proto-ancestor, and Crane (1964) proposes the unification of initiation and baptismal rites and a greater emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit such as healing, prayer, and exorcism.

Catholic churches have shown earlier and stronger tendencies to indigenise through a policy of finding local cultural "stepping stones" that lend themselves to implantation. The ritual aspect of Catholicism is amenable to adaptation and its central objects tend to take on a meaning equivalent to that of indigenous charms (De Craemer, Vansina & Fox, 1976). Protestants, more concerned with inner states than outward forms, were more reticent to adapt, but recently there has been a move to include the ancestors in the celebration of All Saints day in the Anglican church and Protestants have proposed strong arguments that Christianity is a continuation and perfection of traditional religion (Mudimbe, 1983).

Most, if not all, African churches now integrate traditional devotional practices such as drumming, clapping, and dancing (Awolalu, 1985; Kyewalyanga, 1976). However, one area where the established church differs from Islam, indigenous religion, and the independent churches, is its hesitancy to become involved in healing divination. An awareness of this fact has led some leaders in established churches to start healing ministries, but these still meet with strong opposition (Bourdillon, 1990). One missionary, Kirby (1992), who decided to undergo training in divination, reports as follows on the reaction of a Ghanaian community after his initiation as a diviner: "Most villagers... seemed quite at home with the idea.... I recall the

impression that it left on one old man who said: 'Father, I didn't know you were interested in religion!'" (p. 337).

MacGaffey (1981) concludes that indigenisation is difficult to attain as the demands of theological universalism oppose those of cultural relativism and African clergy are still heavily dependent on external financial assistance. However, Mudimbe (1983) is of the opinion that since 1960, the church has largely been Africanised. Theologians are now focusing more on the universal essence of Christianity which transcends cultural differences. Recent work reflects a serious reciprocal dialogue between Christianity and the African heritage which is transforming both (MacGaffey, 1981). African clergy have demanded and earned for themselves "the right to think Christianity" (Mushete, 1994, p. 16). Whereas westernisation and Christianisation went hand in hand in the missionary era, these are separated in current African theology. Christianity is viewed less as a unitary universal knowledge and more in its multiple and various local manifestations, implying that it can speak in many different cultural languages. The knowledge of Christianity is not seen as a fixed, given truth, to be accepted or rejected, but as a process of growth in communion (Oduyoye, 1986). Evangelisation has acquired a new meaning: The evangeliser gives as well as receives not only cultural knowledge but understandings of the Gospel and the faith itself. There has been an inversion of the missionary idea that Africa needs Europe; it is now Europe that needs to be informed by African theology, in order to overcome its own impasse of rationalism and for the sacred to be restored to the faith (Agossou, 1977).

These African initiatives are not concerned with the propagation, expansion, and explanation of an alien religion in Africa but form part of a global trend in Christianity to transcend a purely western, parochial understanding of Christianity (Gray, 1978). What used to be the margins of Christianity have become central to the faith and its development. Whereas Christianity is declining in the West, the "meteoric rise of the church in Black Africa" (Barrett, 1970) has become a growing edge. "We no longer speak of Christian 'adaptation to' black Africa, but rather of 'incarnation within' black Africa" (Fisher, 1985, p. 169).

The Independent Churches

The originality of African Christian knowledge is most apparent in the popular religious movements which have been termed separatist, messianic, nativistic, syncretic, and independent. "None of these labels is much good because each implies a particular, limited way of looking at phenomena so many-sided as to defy such characterisation" (MacGaffey, 1981, p. 243). The term "independent churches" is used here to differentiate between these movements and the more orthodox African churches which developed out of the mission churches, though it is recognised that this distinction is by no means clear-cut. It does allow, however, for comparisons to be made between the two, showing that, in South Africa, independent churches are growing (especially in urban areas) at the expense of the older mission churches (Krüger et al., 1993).

There is a tendency in studies of independent churches to reduce them to traditional religious rites covered with a veneer of Christianity to appear respectable (the assumption of the unchangeable nature of the African, who lacks history), or as impure, immature versions of proper churches, implying that they will grow up to become respectable (the evolutionary and infantilising assumption), all traceable to missionary discourse. In the same way that the term conversion is inadequate in the African context, theological terminologies such as "church" or "syncretism", do not convey the complex reality that underlies these religious movements. Theological descriptions tend to focus on the practice of spirit possession and neglect its context of healing. Similarly, the terminology of psychiatry and psychology tends to reduce these churches to indigenised faith healing institutes or religious hospitals and their prophet/healers to traditional healers in religious disguise. The independent Christian movements or churches are total, contemporary responses to complex social, political and epistemic contexts.

Origins

Missionary paternalism and over-domination were instrumental in the formation of independent African churches (Ray, 1976). Africans were relegated to the bottom of the bureaucratic hierarchy of power of the clergy. They rebelled against the contradiction between

this hierarchy and the proclaimed equality of men before God (Awolalu, 1985). Liberty, equality, and fraternity was preached in the name of Christ, but not in culture and politics (Oduyoye, 1986).

The way in which the healing and political functions of independent churches have come to be associated is illustrated in the origin of the Kimbanguist church in Zaire, one of the most influential religious movements in Africa. When an influenza epidemic broke out in 1918, Simon Kimbangu, a Baptist missionary, was called by Christ to heal and convert. He left the mission and attracted a large following through healing ceremonies and sermons. He accomplished what centuries of missionary work could not: To convince people to abandon the charms of spirit cults. His work created such a sensation that the government took notice. Thousands of Congolese left their jobs to undertake pilgrimages to Kimbangu, hospitals fell vacant, and Catholic missions started to lose converts. Radical leaders urged people in Kimbangu's name not to pay taxes and to abandon their work. A nationalist movement was sparked. Kimbangu was sentenced to death by the King of Belgium and the movement was banned until national independence (Ray, 1976).

Independent churches are, however, seldom directly involved in politics, and have been criticised for this. They have offered structures by which new social and political roles can be learnt (Fernandez, 1978), as well as an alternative social structure for those estranged from the mission churches. Mission Christianity did not satisfy their religiosity. It came to mean "simply a set of rules to be observed, promises to be expected in the next world, rhythmless hymns to be sung... and a few other outward things" (Mbiti, 1971, p. 233). It failed to be integrated into the whole of life. When traditional structures of solidarity were shaken by modernisation, industrialisation, and urbanisation, independent churches offered alternative communities. According to Appiah-Kubi (1979) political, social, and other factors are less important in the emergence of independent churches than the spiritual hunger for healing, divining, prophesying and visioning. These churches fulfill what is most lacking in the missionary churches: A form of worship that satisfies spiritually as well as emotionally (Awolalu, 1985).

Horton (1971) offers a similar explanation: Indigenous religion was a "this-worldly

affair", concerned with explanation, prediction, and control of space-time events, as well as communion in religion. Early Christianity functioned in a similar vein. However, by the end of the 19th century the mainstream of western Protestant Christianity had "dropped all pretence of providing a theory of how the world really worked, or a recipe for controlling the course of affairs; and theologians and pastors concentrated on the encounter with God as the supreme and archetypal social relationship" (Horton, 1971, p. 96). It had become an "other-worldly" religion offering, in this world, only communion between humans. It was the disappointment of converts with this other-worldliness, that led to the creation of independent churches. Horton's explanation has been criticised for its Eurocentrism (MacGaffey, 1981) but there is general agreement that most members enter these churches with problems to be solved (Bourdillon, 1990). Although protest against domination was a prominent feature in the early independent churches, especially in South Africa, healing later became their central feature.

Membership

Independent churches appeal to the socially dislocated, the marginal, and the powerless. Women are far more strongly represented in leadership positions within these churches than in the orthodox churches (Fernandez, 1978). Although these churches have traditionally been associated with the uneducated lower classes, they attract a wide variety of people from illiterate to literate (Bourdillon, 1990). Jahoda (1971) describes the emergence of independent churches that cater for the educated, westernised élite, belying the common view that scientific education has a shattering effect on indigenous beliefs in spirits and witchcraft. In fact, Jahoda's research demonstrates that belief in witchcraft and modernity varies independently. The new independent churches offer the best of two worlds: "Some of the valued Christian forms together with an up-dated version of traditional elements, including both protection from harm and help for success in life; and all this in the setting of lively and emotionally satisfying services" (pp. 30-31).

Structure

Patterns of authority vary in the independent churches but the roles of prophet, elder and

pastor occur frequently. The prophet has divinely inspired dreams and visions, diagnoses problems through prayer, and is the spiritual expert. His or her authority is granted by revelation. The elder deals more with social relationships among members. The pastor is concerned with church administration, the conduct of services, the interpretation of the Bible, and church doctrines. Authority is granted by training and efficiency. A combination of offices may be held by one person (Fernandez, 1978).

The role of the prophet varies from those that resemble Old Testament models of religious individualism to those who resemble African heroes and African charismatic traditions. The prophets' personality and charisma play an important role in many movements but all speak of themselves in humble vein - as media of revelation. Their career paths are similar: They receive a calling through disease or a crisis of affliction. This is followed by messages or directions received from supernaturals, recovery, and a confirmation of powers of healing. This career path is similar to that of indigenous priest/healers and not to be confused with the western idea of seeing into the future (Fernandez, 1978). Many prophet/healers are converted traditional healers (Bakker, 1989; Whisson & West, 1975).

Independent church movements function similarly to cults of affliction. Members are related by affliction and the group provides an incorporating structure where other resources were unavailable or have failed. In fact, according to De Craemer et al. (1976) African religious movements fall on a continuum between indigenous cults of affliction and formal Christian churches. These authors assert, as does Fernandez (1972) and MacGaffey (1972), that the core elements of Central African pre-colonial culture have remained remarkably intact. One part of this core culture that evolved and spread was religious movements, some of which became decidedly Christian. Their symbols and rituals include those of the church which have familiarity in terms of traditional religion: Candles (fire), baptism (water), the temple (shrines and places of initiation), and hymns (music) (De Craemer et al., 1976).

Healing and Community

Healing is the central activity in independent churches (F. S. Edwards, 1983; Fernandez,

1978). Their healing knowledge, which is similar to that found in indigenous cults of affliction (Devisch, 1993), has been described as

> the wisdom of taking illness and disease and turning it into social order: It is the same wisdom to be noted in the prophet's own career: the transformation of the sufferer into the healer, of encountering the solution in the problem, of making community out of suffering isolation. (Fernandez, 1978, p. 210)

Conversion is always the result of actual treatment of sickness or misfortune (Horton, 1971). Converts acquire new identities and shed previous selves to enter the fraternal community (Devisch, 1993). In the breakdown of kinship and relations, churches act as purveyors of new forms of moral accountability. They treat spiritual, personal, and physical problems, as well as new "diseases of money" (the frustrations of capitalism and the vices of possessive individualism), and "diseases of the city", which are problems related to the experience of the contradictory social realities of urbanisation and capitalism (Devisch, 1993).

Revelation and healing occur through the Holy Spirit, via dreams, visions, divination or possession (Bourdillon, 1990), which are induced by ecstatic singing, drumming, clapping of hands or dancing (Awolalu, 1985). Treatment methods include prayer, fasting, the ritual use of holy water, candles, sacred oils (Awolalu, 1985), and many others (Bakker, 1989). Healing combines indigenous and western rites, is done individually and communally, and forms part of all devotional services.

The psychology practised by the independent churches is simultaneously an individual, family, and community psychology. The churches offer alternative communities to the dislocated, as well as serving a function similar to community mental health centres, supplementing western medical and mental health services (Bakker, 1989; F. S. Edwards, 1983). They provide the equivalent of psychotherapeutic services, integrated with the spiritual and religious worlds. In addition, some of these churches offer the equivalent of economic development and community projects (Bourdillon, 1990). "There are obvious attractions in joining a community which provides meaning in the face of ambiguity, power in a situation of

powerlessness, and healing in an environment which undermines social harmony, and psychological and physical health" (F. S. Edwards, 1983, p. 178).

Wholeness

The independent Christian movements are ultimately about the restoration of wholeness. Fernandez (1986) describes African religious movements as revitalising because they provide access to the experience of states of relatedness, whereas modern secular life is characterised by atomisation and individualisation. The experience of wholeness has become a subjugated knowledge. In western thought, it belongs to the realms of the past or of "lesser developed" cultures. However, it is central to independent Christian movements, who provide members with "a kind of conviviality in experience" (Fernandez, 1986, p. 162).

Fernandez (1986) argues that the conviction of wholeness is essentially an extra-linguistic experience, a product of certain kinds of imaginative - that is visualising or pictorialising - activity. One of the largest problems facing scholars studying religious movements is the difficulty of conveying their functioning linguistically. It is not possible to discuss theology with Kimbanguists, as was discovered by Martin (in Fernandez, 1978) who had to establish whether Kimbanguists qualify for admission to the World Council of Churches. Kimbanguist theology is lived, sung, and acted in unformulated images. Similarly, Devisch (1993) abandoned a narrative account in favour of bodily and cultural images in studying a healing cult.

The knowledge of wholes is a knowledge of form, images, patterns, relationships, and flashes of illumination. Its organising images are embodied in ritual performances, relating microcosm to macrocosm, inner things to outer things, centres to peripheries, upper to lower, past to present. The experience of wholeness in these religious movements can best be conveyed by images, such as in the following rite practised in Togo and Dahomey:

> Picture a wide beach of white sand under a brilliant sun, next to a dark blue sea. Here, under a cluster of palm trees, is a group of Celestial Christians in their resplendent white

and gold uniforms, kneeling around a deep hole dug in the sand, at the bottom of which a small trace of ocean water has seeped up. Close by are bottles of holy water and fruit to be poured and placed in the hole as an offering, after which the Bible will be read and prayers will be said. Then the hole will be filled in with the whitest sand and the group members, covering themselves with the whitest sheets, will lie on their backs and go to sleep around the hole. The divine force of the heavens, which they worship, and the sea and earth, which they have just propitiated, will now ebb and flow through them without disturbance and with purificatory and healing power. (Fernandez, 1986, p. 166)

The Celestial Christians see themselves as channels between earth, sea, and sky. They are healed/made whole when they become pure conduits who do not impede the flow of these forces in their endless circulation. The images embedded in this and other descriptions of independent churches (Bakker, 1989; F. S. Edwards, 1983; Mbokazi, 1990) contrast sharply with the military, regulatory, disciplinary images of mission Christianity quoted earlier in this chapter. The healing images are elementary and primordial. They reflect the reclamation of a kind of knowledge that has been subjugated by rational Christianity. This knowledge is concerned with healing, wholeness, and holiness. Its power is spiritual, sacred, communal, and mystical. It continually reinterprets the relation between the seen and the unseen in new and invigorating ways that are drawn from what is culturally familiar but include the power of the Spirit of a universal God (F. S. Edwards, 1983, p. 192).

Conclusion

The power of mission Christianity had many different faces: Feudal, classical, and visible in some cases; modern, internal, invisible, and individualising in others. It was repressive and prohibitive; it reduced voices to silence (Foucault, 1980b). However, it was also extremely seductive, productive, and durable. "What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 119).

The missionary narrative of difference viewed indigenous practices as manifestations of evil powers from which Africans had to be saved. Yet "what the missionaries identified was not only a space of salvation but a domain of forces and powers that they believed operated autonomously from Christianity.... What was being identified was a space where European impositions could be fought" (Simone, 1993, p. 99). In this space of otherness, Africans maintained the integrity of their worlds by creating new knowledges from a collage of resurrected and dominant knowledge.

The narrative of colonisation contained the seeds of its own disempowerment. Christianity, as one aspect of an ideology of universality, was able to convert many Africans to its point of view. However, "the indigenous set their own terms for connection to this universality, interpreted its dogmas in their own way, and thus undermined the attempt to re-engineer cultural practices - which was at the heart of the Christian mission" (Simone, 1993, p. 98). An instrument of colonial power had became a voice of liberation, transformation, and revitalisation.

It may be premature to consider at this point, still close to the echoes of missionary discourse, the calling of the psychologist, who properly belongs to the next chapter, the Enlightenment. For psychology has long ago outgrown its religious origins; has discarded the soul and adopted the psyche. We will leave religion to theology and Africa to anthropology, as is proper in the religion called Science, and rather conclude with a consideration of the calling of the anthropologist -

It is a calling that is ever ready to abandon centredness and look for what is revealed in peripheries. It is a calling with a tolerance of ambiguity amidst its striving for method. For those who have lived the complex interaction of religious cultures there are... many varieties of ambiguity. (Fernandez, 1978, p. 230)

CHAPTER 5

AFRICA ENLIGHTENED

> With the death of God, proclaimed by Nietzsche at
> the turn of the century, man came to be the measure
> of all things, and psychology became the
> secularized religion of modernity. In modernity the
> loss of belief in an absolute God had been
> succeeded by the modernist declaration of faith: "I
> believe in one objective reality". Religion as a
> truth guarantee was replaced by the new sciences,
> the priests as truth mediators were substituted by
> the scientists. (Kvale, 1992b, p. 54)

This chapter describes the manifestations of post-enlightenment western secular knowledge in Africa, including the social sciences and psychology. The relevance debate attaches particular importance to the complicity of psychology in oppressive power relations in Africa, due to its colonial origins. This chapter attempts to archaeologise such a view of psychology, by explicating the conditions of possibility of psychological knowledge and specifically its complicity in modern forms of power.

All hegemonic power/knowledge systems contain resistances which feed back into the dominant knowledge (Foucault, 1980b). In Africa, certain aspects of western knowledge insinuated themselves "into the warp and weft of an emerging hegemony" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 12), while others gave rise to novel forms of resistant knowledges. This circular process of imposition and resistance will be artificially separated between chapters 5 and 6, for purposes of a double description in terms of power. This chapter deals with the imposition of western knowledge on Africa and emphasises its hegemony and the complicity of psychology therein. Chapter 6 describes resistant knowledges emerging from Africa and the resistant role of psychological knowledge.

The first section of this chapter archaeologises the prevailing epistemes in western thought during its historical interaction with Africa, describes the nature of knowledge produced after the Enlightenment and situates psychology within modernism. The second section focuses on the forms of power which produced both colonialism and psychology, and highlights psychology's role as technology of power. The third section locates modern power/knowledge in Africa and extracts psychology's early career as technology of power in the African context.

Knowledges of Enlightenment

Before the Enlightenment in Europe, all assumptions about the nature of reality were essentially theistic and it was assumed that the dynamics of the physical cosmos exceeded human comprehension (Young, 1992). The early Enlightenment scientists and philosophers questioned this assumption and assumed that the human mind was equal to comprehending the laws of the physical cosmos. Theism was dissolved into deism and rational knowledge was legitimised in opposition to the dictates of kings and priests (Lather, 1992).

The central ideas of the Enlightenment were the primacy of rational thought, the liberation of humans, and the idea of historical progress. Emancipation and progress were to be obtained by accumulating knowledge through scientific research. This Enlightenment code of values is still predominant in western intellectual projects of the late 20th century (Lather, 1992).

The Enlightenment union between rationalism and humanism has historically assumed many different forms. Each form imposes a definition of what is human, on all men and women, and each is per definition normative (Bernauer & Mahon, 1994). In western society, the norm has usually assumed a white, male, rational, heterosexual, bourgeois form, marginalising other races, women, other knowledges, other sexual orientations, and other classes and thereby creating a domain of otherness which includes Africa.

The era of Enlightenment confronts us with several contradictions. It is on record as the "age of reason", when scientific thinking advanced - but this also meant the

rationalization of old prejudices. It was the time when the debate on slavery was taken up and human rights were first mentioned - but the science of race took shape in this period as well.... Enlightenment thinking was also interwoven with European expansion and as such imbued with cultural arrogance and coloured by political and economic interests. The Enlightenment was in reality a far more heterogeneous period than the image of "enlightenment" allows for. (Pieterse, 1992, p. 45)

Epistemes of Enlightenment

The Renaissance Episteme

Foucault (1970) describes the knowledges of the Renaissance in terms of a "prose of the world" (p. 17); a unity of words and things in a network of correspondences and resemblances. Knowledge in 16th century Europe was a knowledge of the connections between things. Four kinds of resemblances connected everything in the universe: The first is the resemblance between things connected in space or resemblances born of proximity. Thus, "in the vast syntax of the world the different beings adjust themselves to one another; the plant communicates with the animal, the earth with the sea, man with everything around him" (Foucault, 1970, p. 18). The second refers to resemblances based on simulation, and includes analogy. The third is sympathy, a sort of free association. The fourth is antipathy, which confers identity on separate things. Words and things were joined together and linked to a divine order. Magic and divination, intending to control things by manipulating the signs that identify them, were not regarded as marginal knowledge. There are certain similarities between this description and that of indigenous African knowledge, as well as African Islamic and some local Christian knowledges, which do not separate the word from the world and unite words and things in divine orders. The contrast between the Renaissance episteme and the Classical and Modern to follow, reflects the contrast with which Africa was faced during its contact with Europe.

During the Classical age, a radical epistemic break occurred. Words and things separated and resemblances no longer served as a mediating agent. "Words became signifiers and things were signified, but no direct connections between them existed" (Major-Poetzl, 1982,

p. 171). This change, Foucault (1970) concludes,

> involved an immense reorganization of culture, a reorganization of which the Classical age was the first and perhaps the most important stage, since it was responsible for the new arrangement in which we are still caught - since it is the Classical age that separates us from a culture in which... signs... in their primitive being shone in an endless dispersion. There is nothing now, either in our knowledge or in our reflection, that still recalls the memory of that being. Nothing except perhaps literature. (p. 43)

In Europe, the knowledge of resemblances was relegated to a mythical, primitive past, and superseded by the new knowledge of the Classical age. When a knowledge of resemblances was discerned in Africa, it, too, was relegated to a mythical, primitive space.

The Classical Episteme

In Foucault's terminology, the Classical age refers to the transitional era between the Renaissance and bourgeois capitalism, from about 1650 to 1800 (Cooper, 1981; Gutting, 1994), when the knowledge of resemblances was relegated to a world of primitives, madmen and poets and a new knowledge of "identities and differences" (Foucault, 1970, p. 54) became dominant. The disappearance of what is now called superstition and magic and the entry of nature into the scientific order were made possible by a retreat of language in respect to the world. Language became an instrument for manipulating, mobilising, juxtaposing, and comparing things (Canguilhem, 1994). A science of measurement and order, which represented objects in tables and grids, was created. Analysis became a universal procedure (Cooper, 1981).

The major transitions that occurred from the Renaissance to the Classical episteme according to Foucault are summarised by Major-Poetzl (1982, p. 173) as "the substitution of analysis for analogy, finite differences for infinite resemblances, certain knowledge for probable relationships, discrimination of differences for synthesis of similarities, and those that divorced history (what was heard and recounted) from science (what was seen and observed)". Order was established by an analysis of differences and similarities. During the 17th and 18th centuries,

change was understood in spatial, not temporal, terms. Changes in the natural order were regarded as displacements in spatial positions on a table. Knowledge of Africa and Africans was ordered into grids of classification.

The Modern Episteme

The rupture that divided the Classical from the Modern episteme occurred at the turn of the 18th century, after the French revolution. It was marked by the sudden dominance of temporal concepts replacing spatial ones in the discourses on life, labour, and language. This made possible the emergence of history as a mode of being and evolutionary theories of change (Major-Poetzl, 1982). The static order of the Classical tables of knowledge shifted to a concern with knowledge of hidden life processes. At the end of the 18th century, "seeing meant leaving the density and opacity of things closed upon themselves and allowing the slow and deliberate passage of the gaze to fix individual things objectively so as to organize rational language around them" (Cooper, 1981, p. 34). The darkness of Africa was fixed in a gaze of "objective" science.

In language, there was a shift from presentation to self-presentation. Words interpreted the meanings of things, and thought emerged from and turned back on man (Foucault, 1970). Man now became a being which existed both as subject of knowledge and the object of historical processes. This made the emergence of sociology and psychology possible. The human sciences were further made possible by the emerging sciences of biology, economics, and philology, constituting man as a being who lives, works,, and speaks. These views of man are reflected in the human sciences, with shifts in their relative importance. The biological model was dominant during the early part of the 19th century, the economic model dominated at mid-century (as reflected in Marx's thought), and the linguistic model achieved pre-eminence from the end of the century, as reflected in Freud's work. A further shift occurred from a concern with function (processes, conflicts) to structure (norms, rules, and systems). Similar shifts occurred in scientific discourse on Africa.

According to Foucault (in Cooper, 1981) the new knowledges of man, freed from the

presence of God, put man in charge of his own salvation.

Man could become freed of his alienations, freed of all determinations of which he was not the author; thanks to this knowledge that he had of himself, he could...become for the first time, master and possessor of himself. In other words, man was made an object of knowledge so that man could become the subject of his own freedom and his own existence. (p. 5)

An important offshoot of the modern creation of man as subject/object was the simultaneous creation of the Other, man's double, the unthought, and the collective unconscious (Foucault, 1970). This made it possible to distinguish between the normal and the abnormal; to confer on the Other the properties rejected by the self, and to create normalising scientific knowledge which treated the Other as object. The ordering of the Same during the Classical age, was further refined by the ordering and objective study of the Other during the Modern. Africa, as domain of the Other, became the object of normalising science.

A new perception of the past in terms of "origin", made the concept of regression possible. "Although the origin of things such as species, products, or words, now receded indefinitely into the past, it could still break through to the present (a notion that is called the return of the repressed in Freudian thought)" (Major-Poetzl, 1982, p. 190). A search for origins made it possible to develop a hermeneutics of suspicion, where undetected meanings lie hidden behind surface meanings, waiting to be detected by the gaze of knowledge. It also made it possible to speak of "primitive mentalities" and "societies left behind by history".

Scientific versus Narrative Knowledge

Scientific knowledge, rooted in positivism and empiricism, became dominant during the Modern era. Reflecting a binary either/or logic of hermetic subjects and objects and a linear, teleological rationality, such knowledge is assumed to be value-free (Lather 1992). It represents "the one true reality" subjectively copied in our heads by perception or objectively represented in scientific models (Kvale, 1992b).

Narrative knowledge, "the quintessential form of customary knowledge" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 19) became subjugated to the abstract logic of positivism.

One of the features that characterizes more "scientific" periods of history, and most notably capitalism itself, is the relative retreat of the claims of narrative or storytelling knowledge in the face of those of the abstract, denotative, or logical and cognitive procedures generally associated with science or positivism. (p. xi)

Although science set itself up in opposition to narrative knowledge, it produced a discourse of legitimation with respect to its own status (as embodied in philosophy) which is essentially narrative. Lyotard (1984) uses the term modern science "to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse... making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such as... the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth" (p. xxii). Paradoxically, scientific knowledge "cannot know and make known that it is the true knowledge without resorting to the other, narrative, kind of knowledge, which from its point of view is no knowledge at all" (p. 29).

One important difference between narrative and scientific knowledge is that scientific knowledge entails "an alienation from its user" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 7) because it is legitimised by outside claims of experts (grand narratives) whereas narrative knowledge is legitimised through social consensus and practices at the local level, as in African indigenous knowledge, and to some extent in African Islam and African Christianity. One implication of the difference between narrative and scientific knowledge is that the one cannot be judged by the criteria of legitimation of the other. The relationship between the two is unequal. Narrative knowledge "does not give priority to the question of its own legitimation and... certifies itself in the pragmatics of its own transmission without having recourse to argumentation and proof" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 27). It approaches the problems of scientific discourse with an incomprehension but also with a certain tolerance: "It approaches such discourse primarily as a variant in the family of narrative cultures" (p. 27). We have seen an example of this in the attitude of the Tswana towards missionary knowledge in the previous chapter. In contrast, the scientist (missionary), does question the validity of narrative statements (the narratives of

rainmaking) and, because they do not stand up to argumentation or proof,

> classifies them as belonging to a different mentality: savage, primitive, underdeveloped, backward, alienated, composed of opinions, customs, authority, prejudice, ignorance, ideology. Narratives are fables, myths, legends, fit only for women and children. At best, attempts are made to throw some rays of light into this obscurantism, to civilize, educate, develop. (Lyotard, 1984, p. 27)

The unequal relationship between scientific and narrative knowledge had enormous pragmatic effects in Africa, where indigenous and religious knowledges were devalued and subjugated.

> We all know its symptoms. It is the entire history of cultural imperialism from the dawn of Western civilization. It is important to recognize its special tenor, which sets it apart from all other forms of imperialism: it is governed by the demand for legitimation. (Lyotard, 1984, p. 27)

Metanarratives of Legitimation

The modern narratives that serve as legitimation of scientific knowledge are cultural products. They provide norms defining not only what is true but also what is just. Science, for instance, is legitimised through appeal to grand narratives of Utopias such as the emancipation of the rational or working subject and the creation of wealth (Kvale, 1992b, p. 33). The hero of the Enlightenment narrative is

> the people, the sign of legitimacy is the people's consensus, and their mode of creating norms is deliberation. The notion of progress is a natural outgrowth of this. It represents nothing other than the movement by which knowledge is presumed to accumulate... extended to the new sociopolitical subject. (Lyotard, 1984, p. 30)

What is meant by "the people" in Enlightenment narratives of legitimation is different from

what is implied by traditional narrative knowledge, which

> requires to instituting deliberation, no cumulative progression, no pretension to universality.... It is therefore not at all surprising that the representatives of the new process of legitimation by "the people" should be at the same time actively involved in destroying the traditional knowledge of peoples, perceived from that point forward as minorities or movements... destined only to spread obscurantism. (Lyotard, 1984, p. 30)

Although the subject of modern narratives is humanity as the hero of liberty, the definition of humanity is constrained by cultural norms. The dominant view of humanity of western narratives of legitimation was constructed out of a rational self-image by philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, and others. It is formed around

> a generally unspoken, but nonetheless very much operative, key aspect of identity: male, rational male, of Greek (and subsequently European) descent!... It is here, in the invention of homo rationalis as distinctive human type (found only among persons of the appropriate gender and racial/ethnic pedigree)... that we find the birth of the "man" whose rotting corpse has caused such a choking scent over Africa.... For the ideal of the "rational man"... has been, in fact, the carrier of key elements of a particular cultural agenda. (Outlaw, 1990, p. 227)

The Grand Narrative of Progress

> The grand narrative of the modernist programme assumed a logical and ordered universe whose laws could be uncovered by science. As the knowledge of these laws accumulated, it could be used to benefit humankind and eventually lead to the emancipation of humanity from poverty, sickness, and class and political servitude. (Polkinghorne, 1992, p. 147)

Within this narrative of progress, the modernist researcher is

a soldier in an army where the battles are fraught with difficulty, dedication is valorous, but victory is guaranteed. Each individual scientist makes his/her contribution - great or small - to the annihilation of ignorance and the establishment of truth (often equated with liberty and justice) for all. (K. J. Gergen, 1992, p. 25)

The long struggle of the hero to ultimate victory is an ancient western narrative. The modern idea of progress and development includes both the progress of mankind and the individual pilgrim's progress towards salvation of his or her soul, later to be turned into the health of the psyche (Kvale, 1992b). Both views are reflected in psychology and both were exported to Africa.

Psychology and Modernism

"The story of academic psychology is a subplot within the history of modernism. Psychology originated as a purposeful effort to apply the epistemological principles of the Enlightenment science to the study of human beings" (Polkinghorne, 1992, p. 146). Modernism's romance with positivist science gave rise to the following overarching assumptions in psychology: That it has a basic, knowable subject matter, that this subject matter has universal properties, that it may be uncovered through the empirical method, that results are objective and devoid of ideology and values, and that research is a progressive enterprise that moves towards truth (K. J. Gergen, 1992). Gergen calls these assumptions "presumptions" as they ignore that psychology takes place within the narrative conventions of western culture, which robs subjects of their voices by scientific procedures, which are saturated by western cultural values. Simply to write as an isolated subject independently observing the actions of others is already to carry a western worldview into the field (K. J. Gergen, 1992).

In the modern narrative of science, "methodology was the means to truth and light, and thus to salvation" (Kvale, 1992a, p. 24). Methodology, as applied in psychology, casts the individual into the role of mechanical automaton, denying the possibilities of agency and personal responsibility. Methodology "engenders an artificial separation between the scientist-knower and the subject, suggesting that superior knowledge is gained through alienated

relationships" (Kvale, 1992a, pp. 24-25). Such relationships become even more alienating when the subject is African and the context colonial.

Empiricism and Romanticism

Although empiricism became a dominant narrative of legitimation of knowledge in the Modern era, a dissenting tradition appeared in the form of 19th century romanticism (Kvale, 1992b). Nietzsche's philosophy, the surrealist tradition in art, and new forms of literature, offered romanticism and irrationality as alternatives to empiricism and rationality. This manifested itself in 19th century humanitarianism which became less rational and more concerned with the goodness of man, as reflected in the rise of emancipatory discourse. As the world became characterised by mechanisation and industrialisation, romantic ideas of the person proliferated.

Both empiricism and romanticism are reflected in psychology. The empiricist tradition is best exemplified in behaviourism and the romantic tradition in humanistic subjectivism. These two extremes are, however, both sides of the same modern coin as both focus on the inside of a psychic container (Kvale, 1992b), both assume a unified, reified, and essentialist subject (Lather, 1992), and both are interpretative knowledges (Foucault, 1970). Both extremes are caught in a quest for external legitimation in metanarratives: Behaviourism legitimises itself via empiricism and positivism; humanistic psychology via existentialism, hermeneutics, and phenomenology. The apparent contradictions within psychology, such as the dichotomy of the universal versus the individual, the opposition between technical rationality and romanticist emotionalism, and the issue of quantitative commensurability versus qualitative uniqueness, are all essentially modern issues. Both commensurability and "the retreat to the cult of the individual self" (Kvale, 1992b, p. 44) ignore the contextual rootedness of human activity in language, culture, and history, that is, in narrative knowledge.

The Hermeneutics of Suspicion

"A heady and optimistic romance with foundations and essence lies somewhere towards

the center of the modernist perspective" (K. J. Gergen, 1992, p. 19). The interpretative function of modern knowledge (Foucault, 1970) led to the idea that everyday practices hide hidden truths, called the hermeneutics of suspicion by Paul Ricoeur (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). It assumes that no action is what it appears to be but becomes an expression of another, deeper, more real reality. Psychology is characterised by a continuing hunt for underlying plans and rationales, hidden plots or curricula, to explain disorder and impose on it an underlying order, constructing a deeper rationality where none is visible (Kvale, 1992b, p. 38).

The hermeneutics of suspicion was carried to its extreme in marxist and psychoanalytical thought, where the underlying disguised truth is the class struggle and the libido (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). "The psychoanalyst came to be a positivist Sherlock Holmes, intelligently finding the concealed and buried meaning, awaiting discovery" (Kvale, 1992b, p. 45). Not only the psychoanalyst, but also the patient and the public, were taught by western psychology to be suspicious of their own narratives and defer to psychological experts to unravel the "real" meaning of behaviour.

Views of the Person

The dominant views of the person inherent in psychology are "an isolated, thinking subject set over and against an objective world, facing an essentially theoretical task, and a view of him as a mechanism, operating according to laws" (Shotter, 1975, p. 30). The dominant metaphors representing humans in psychology are biological and mechanical, the dominant metaphors of modernism, evolutionary science, and the industrial revolution.

The implication is that psychologists do not treat the objects of study as agents themselves able to do things or create knowledges. Psychologists take the stand of "external, detached and disinterested (disembodied) observers... rather than, as in everyday life, being involved in exchanges with other people, appreciating the meaning of what they are doing" (Shotter, 1975, pp. 67-68). Shotter's comparison of psychology to "everyday life" is similar to Lyotard's comparison of science to narrative knowledge. Instead of being co-creators of

narratives with other people, modern psychologists create knowledges of people which are legitimised by grand narratives of truth.

Psychology, by focusing on the inner life of the individual, also served modernism by internalising the grand narratives. Freud drew upon many of the grand narratives to help people make sense of their own stories and Jung further encouraged the individual to become autonomous and self-orientated in a quest for personal freedom. However, paradoxically, through encouraging the internalisation of European myths, psychology also created individuals who became less and less sure of their own knowledge, and more and more dependent on experts for interpretation of their own narratives (T. A. Parry, 1993).

Individualism

In contrast to indigenous African views of the person as constituted by the community, psychology's view of the person reflects a strong individualism. The notion of the unique, isolated individual is a cultural- and historical-specific way of conceiving man, which arose in Europe around the 16th century (Kvale, 1992b) and came to fruition in the Modern age. Western individuality is a combination of liberation and loneliness, as exemplified in its prototype: Don Quixote, a solitary figure on a strange journey, "terribly free and terribly lonely" (Berger, 1985, p. 323); the explorer in space or in the mind, the "conquistador of unknown lands" (p. 332); the entrepreneur, "conquistador of the marketplace" (p. 332); the citizen, embodiment of freedom as the bearer of rights and maker of revolution; the bourgeois gentilhomme; the artist-hero who defies bourgeois society in a search for freedom; the existential hero. All these individuals appear in and are constituted by psychological discourse, and the psychologist himself, as conquistador of knowledge, strides into unknown territories, such as Africa, following the example of the lonely missionary and explorer (Munro, 1978).

Psychology's understanding of human welfare mirrors this cultural form of personhood. "We cherish persons who stand out from the group, who chart their own course, who are the masters of their own fate" (Sampson, 1990, p. 118). Psychology provides a set of internal personal qualities (attitudes, beliefs, values, personality) that are invested in such a view of the

person and actually helped constitute it. Humanistic psychology has supported the cult of the individual subject and its self-actualisation. The ideal self has freed itself from tradition and authority and dissociated itself from society. In humanistic ethics, virtue is responsibility towards oneself. The self-actualised person is self-contained, true to her own nature, ruled by the laws of her own character. Internal psychological processes are viewed as central; cultural content becomes accidental and local (Kvale, 1992b), and political contexts are ignored.

Psychology's individualism contrasts with the communalism of not only indigenous African knowledge, but of a much wider "common human pattern" of collectivism (Berger, 1985). Through individualism, psychology was invested with, and served, a particular, modern form of power.

Powers of Enlightenment

From Pastoral to Individualising Power

Christianity not only changed the ethics of the ancient world, it also spread new power relations, as was illustrated in the previous chapter. It produced pastoral power, which was salvation orientated, individualising, coextensive and continuous with life, and linked to the production of the truth of the individual (Foucault, 1982). Although the pastorate has almost disappeared in the West, "an important phenomenon took place around the eighteenth century - it was a new distribution, a new organization of this kind of individualizing power" (Foucault, 1982, p. 214). The state has become a modern matrix of individualisation, functioning in a way that is similar in certain respects to pastoral power. The new power was still concerned with salvation, but instead of in the next world, salvation was to be ensured in this world. Salvation was turned into health, material well-being, and security. The officials of pastoral power increased. Not only state apparatuses, but private ventures, welfare societies, benefactors, philanthropists, medicine, and the family became concerned with the well-being of individuals. In the 18th century one of the primary functions of the police was to assure hygiene, health, and standards of living (Foucault, 1982).

The most important officials of the new pastoral power became the human scientists, whose knowledge was focused around two functions:

One, globalizing and quantitative, concerning the population; the other, analytical, concerning the individual. And this implies that power of a pastoral type, which over centuries - for more than a millennium - had been linked to a defined religious institution, suddenly spread out into the whole social body; it found support in a multitude of institutions. And, instead of a pastoral power and a political power, more or less linked to each other, more or less rival, there was an individualizing "tactic" which characterized a series of powers: those of the family, medicine, psychiatry, education and employers. (Foucault, 1982, p. 215)

This individualising tactic also characterises psychology, which contributes its share of globalising, quantitative, and analytical knowledge to this power. As the new form of power was dispersed throughout society, in a series of discontinuous networks, psychologists became one of many professionals called upon to exercise functions that earlier belonged to the police.

From Sovereign to Disciplinary Power

With the formation of the knowledges of man during the Classical age, the scale and continuity of the exercise of power changed. Whereas, before, power was characterised by massive but infrequent displays of destructive force (public executions, military occupations, the violent suppression of insurrections and, in Africa, slavery and military occupation), the new power was uninterrupted and imposed constraints through discipline, training, and the production of knowledge (Foucault, 1980b).

It was a question not of treating the body, en mass, "wholesale", as if it were an indissociable unity, but of working it "'retail', individually; of exercising upon it a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself - movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body. (Foucault, 1977, pp. 136-137)

Whereas, previously, sovereign/monarchic power was used to coerce or destroy its target, discipline and training can reconstruct its target to produce new actions, habits, and skills, and ultimately create new kinds of people (Rouse, 1994).

> The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it.... It defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, "docile" bodies. (Foucault, 1977, p. 138)

Sovereign power needs violence and spectacle; modern power operates quietly, from within. Where sovereign power confers individuality, visibility, and audibility on the sovereign, modern power confers it on the ruled through subtle practices of surveillance (Rouse, 1994). Where sovereign power demands the sacrifice of subjects to save the throne, and pastoral power demands sacrifice for personal salvation (Foucault, 1982), disciplinary power demands the sacrifice of the self. In the words of Foucault (in Rabinow, 1984): "Where religion once demanded the sacrifice of our bodies, knowledge now calls for experimentation on ourselves, calls us to the sacrifice of the object of knowledge" (p. 7).

Disciplinary power is exercised both on the dominators and dominated, because it involves self-formation and autocolonisation:

> Hierarchized, continuous, and functional surveillance... was organized as a multiple, automatic, and anonymous power.... This enables the disciplinary power to be both absolutely indiscreet, since it is everywhere, and always alert, since by its very principle it leaves no zone of shade, and constantly supervises the very individuals who are entrusted with the task of supervising, and absolutely "discreet", for it functions permanently, and largely in silence. (Foucault, 1977, pp. 176-177)

The Panopticon

Foucault uses the panopticon to illustrate the functioning of modern disciplinary technology, although he stresses that there are many other technologies of power. The panopticon model may be applied to different institutions, and society as a whole.

The panopticon consists of a large courtyard with a tower in the centre, and a set of buildings, divided into levels, and cells, on the periphery. In each cell, there are two windows; one brings in light, and the other faces the tower, where one-way windows allow surveillance of the cells. The cells are like "small theatres in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized, and constantly visible" (Foucault, 1977, p. 200). The inmate is cut off from any contact with those in adjoining cells, and is always visible to an invisible supervisor. The inmate is "the object of information, never a subject in communication" (Foucault, 1977, p.200), and effectively guards him- or herself. Surveillance is constant, and total. It allows not only control, but also transformation of individuals.

Experiments could be carried out in cells and results tabulated in the tower. In factories, schools, hospitals (or psychology laboratories), the surveillant can observe and encode a perfectly differentiated grid which lies before his gaze (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). The guardians are themselves observed by other guardians, in the same system of individualised, invisible surveillance. While observing, they are also fixed, regulated, and subject to control. The system perpetuates itself. Its power is continuous and anonymous. It unites knowledge, power, the control of the body, and the control of space into an integrated technology. "Whenever the imperative is to set individuals or populations in a grid where they can be made productive and observable, the Panoptic technology can be used" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 189).

Practices of Exclusion

The reorganisation of space, as exemplified in the panopticon, is an ancient European method of control. The dangerous, abnormal, and those who deviated from the norm were

traditionally excluded, either geographically or by institutionalisation. During colonisation, Africa became a space of exclusion. Europeans who could not be fitted into European society or any of its institutions of exclusion, were sent to the colonies, armed with racism. Those who were sent to the colonies were used as cadres and administrative functionaries; "as tools of surveillance and control over the colonised peoples. And it was certainly to avoid the forming of an alliance between these 'lesser whites' and the colonised peoples... that a rigid racialist ideology was foisted on them" (Foucault, 1980b, p.17).

Foucault's (1977) analysis of disciplinary mechanisms such as leper colonies and quarantined cities in 17th century Europe applies equally to the colonies: "It entailed the analysis of a geographical area; the supervision of its inhabitants; the control of individuals; a hierarchy of information, decision making, and movement down to the regulation of the smallest details of everyday life" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 190). The act of exiling lepers into separate communities where they were required to live and die was "a massive, binary division between one set of people and another" (Foucault, 1977, p. 198). No South African needs to be reminded of local manifestations of such dividing practices.

With the demise of imperial forms of power and colonialism, modern power added the individualising scrutiny of a constant gaze to such exclusion (Foucault, 1980b).

Individualize the excluded, but use procedures of individualization to mark exclusion - this is what was operated regularly by the disciplinary power from the beginning of the nineteenth century in the psychiatric asylum, the penitentiary, the reformatory, the approved school, and to some extent, the hospital. (Foucault, 1977, p. 199)

We may add the colonies and the "homelands". From the turn of the century, Africans became the object of the individualising gaze of the new sciences, anthropology and psychology. Like the inmates of the panopticon, their visibility was maximised. They were to be isolated, identified, classified, understood, and categorised along a normative scale.

The Swarming of Disciplinary Mechanisms

The techniques of the panopticon were first applied in the humanitarianised institutions born of the Enlightenment: Prisons, mental asylums, and hospitals. They then invaded those sectors of society concerned with "the integration of production, utility, and control" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 193). In schools, factories, and the military, authorities saw workers, students, and soldiers as individuals who needed to be trained, studied, and disciplined, first where they worked and later in their homes and every aspect of their daily lives. As the knowledge produced by these institutions developed, its scope of application broadened and disciplinary mechanisms infiltrated society. Foucault (1977) calls this process the swarming of disciplinary mechanisms. "One can speak of the formation of a disciplinary society in this movement that stretches from the enclosed disciplines, a sort of 'quarantine', to an indefinitely generalizable mechanism of 'panopticism'" (p. 216). The mechanisms of bio-power made an important contribution to this movement.

Bio-power

"Bio-power is the increasing ordering in all realms under the guise of improving the welfare of the individual and the population" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. xxi). This order reveals itself as a strategy of power produced by the Victorian proliferation of discourse on bodies and their pleasures (Foucault, 1980a). The bourgeoisie first developed control over its own members through technologies of confession and an associated concern with life, sex, and health. By the end of the 19th century, these technologies were extended to the working class (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982) and to anomalies in the social body. Ultimately, the entire body of society was required to be healthy. "Health is an imperative: the duty of each person and the general objective of society" (Cooper, 1981, p. 117). The concept of health was extended to include mental health. Medicine, social work, community mental health, and psychology, extended normalisation to within the individual and the family, which became the locus of a private ethic of good health, with benevolence organised around internal surveillance (Cooper, 1981).

The centrality of the body and health in the exercise of power explains the importance that the concepts of both sexuality and race assumed in western thought since the 19th century. The age of repression was also the age of an intensification of a concern with and discourse on sexuality. The confession of the sins of the flesh was replaced by a science of sexuality, which was part of a new political anatomy. The 19th century redefined women and children's sexuality, specified norms of social bodies (populations), created the bourgeois family and, ultimately, specified abnormal bodies, degenerate individuals, and races. "What is new in the nineteenth century is the appearance of a racist biology, entirely centred around the concept of degeneracy. Racism wasn't initially a political ideology. It was a scientific ideology which manifested itself everywhere" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 223). In European discourse on Africa, racial and sexual distinctions were closely associated (Fanon, 1967a).

It is in the name of the management of life, of bodies, and the race, that Europe conquered Africa and that modern wars are fought. The regulation of life and the race made genocide and apartheid possible. Bio-power controls the life functions of whole populations, as well as our relations with ourselves. Through a mode of self-formation, we act to monitor, test, improve, and transform ourselves (Foucault, 1980a).

Power and the Human Sciences

The human sciences originated in the age that produced the idea that the kind of power embodied in the panopticon was necessary and desirable. Psychology was born in prisons, mental asylums, and hospitals, flourished in factories, educational institutions, and the defence force, and soon swarmed into the most intimate areas of personal life. Although Foucault never assumes that each aspect of the human sciences has disciplining effects, he insists on a continuous, mutual, and prolonged interplay between these sciences and the extension of disciplinary power (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). This interplay is most visible at the margins of society: In the creation and treatment of those defined as Other by the normalising powers. Among these Others were criminals, the mad, the sexually deviant, women, children, and members of different races.

The human sciences extended the power over the body to a power over the soul, by creating a modern corpus of knowledge around it. Foucault (1977) views the soul as "the present correlative of a certain technology of power over the body" (p. 29), which is produced on, around and within the body by a power that is exercised

> on those one supervises, trains, and corrects, over madmen, children at home and at school, the colonized.... This is the historical reality of this soul which, unlike the soul represented by Christian theology, is not born in sin and subject to punishment, but is born rather out of methods of punishment, supervision and constraint.... It is the machinery by which the power relations give rise to a possible corpus of knowledge.... On this reality-reference, various concepts have been constructed and domains of analyses carved out: psyche, subjectivity, personality, consciousness, etc.; on it have been built scientific techniques and discourses, and the moral claims of humanism.... The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body. (Foucault, 1977, pp. 29-30)

Where early missionaries operated on the soul of Africans, the psychologist later carved out domains of analysis on "the African personality" and "African intelligence".

Normalisation and Rehabilitation

A central question in the technologies of normalisation was knowledge of anomalies in the social system. Where the criminal used to be a legal and political issue, the sciences of man turned him into a delinquent: A subject/object that had to be understood, classified, and soon also rehabilitated. As the new sciences and bio-power advanced simultaneously, more categories of anomalies appeared and proliferated. The power/knowledge technologies that were designed to eliminate these anomalies were only partially successful, justifying further efforts at classification and rehabilitation. "Penitentiaries, and perhaps all normalising power, succeed when they are only partially successful" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 195).

Normalising power and the language of reform illustrate the complex relationship between politics and science.

> Political technologies advance by taking what is essentially a political problem, removing it from the realm of political discourse, and recasting it in the neutral language of science. Once this is accomplished, the problems have become technical ones for specialists to debate. In fact, the language of reform is, from the outset, an essential component of these political technologies. Bio-power spread under the banner of making people healthy and protecting them.... We are promised normalization and happiness through science and law. When they fail, this only justifies the need for more of the same. (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 196)

The pairing of normalisation and rehabilitation was based on the right of reason to exercise power over unreason and of psychiatrists to "treat" madmen, which was transcribed in terms of "competence over ignorance, of commonsense and access to reality as a corrective to the errors of illusion, hallucination and fantasy, and of the need for normality to be imposed on disorder and deviation" (Cooper, 1981, p. 23). A similar transcription occurred in colonial discourse, where access to western knowledge of reality was viewed as a corrective to errors of primitivism and the disorder perceived in culturally different construals of reality.

Psychology as Technology of Power

Normal Science and Normalising Technologies

One way to crystallise psychology's position as a technology of power is to contrast normal science (a Kuhnian concept) with normalising technologies. According to Kuhn, science becomes normal when the practitioners in a certain area all agree on the important problems in the field and demonstrate how some of these can be solved. The ideal of normal science is to show how all the phenomena that resist incorporation into the theory will eventually be shown to be compatible with it. "By determining what counts as a problem to be solved and what counts as a solution, they set up normal science and normal society as totalizing fields of activity

which continually extend their range of prediction and control" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 198). The same may be said of normalising technology. However, this technology "works to set up and preserve an increasingly differentiated set of anomalies, which is the very way it extends its knowledge and power into wider and wider domains" (Dreyfus &Rabinow, 1982, p. 198). Normalisation both presupposes equality and justifies differences and inequalities. Psychology spread itself by creating new kinds of objects for knowledge to be about, such as delinquency, hyperactivity, developmental structures, age-group levels of performance, and normal distributions of intelligence (Foucault, 1977) .

This process illustrates the productive aspect of normalising psychological technologies. "Programmes/technologies of power have essentially to do with the formation of the social real" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 251). Psychology produces knowledge both to describe the object of power and devices to inscribe it (Rose, 1990). Psychology makes it possible to think of achieving desired social objectives such as contentment, productivity, sanity, and intellectual ability through a "systematic government of the psychological domain" (Rose, 1990, p. 106). The vocabulary produced by psychology was written on

> a surface of emergence upon which problems would take shape - racial degeneration, intellectual decline... childhood maladjustment.... In and around these sites, psychology would find its subjects, scrutinise and study them, seek to reform or cure them, and, in the process, elaborate theories of mental pathology and norms of behaviour and thought. (Rose, 1990, p. 106)

In liberal democracies, experts such as psychologists are accorded power to prescribe ways of acting in the light of "truth". Their power operates "not through coercion but through persuasion, not through the fear produced by threats but through the tensions generated in the discrepancy between how life is and how much better one thinks it could be" (Rose, 1990, p. 108).

Examination and Documentation

Normalising technologies spread themselves through the creation or extension of rituals of surveillance and practices of examination: Scholastic and psychological tests, examinations, case histories, employment interviews, and research data banks, make previously inconspicuous people audible and visible. The practice of confession, extended into the interview and the test protocol, has become a central feature of western society, and of psychological practice. According to Foucault (in Rouse, 1994), western society has become

a singularly confessing society.... [The confession] plays a part in justice, medicine, education, family relationships, and love relations, in the most ordinary affairs of everyday life, and in the most solemn rites: one confesses one's crimes, one's sins, one's thoughts and desires, one's illnesses and troubles; one goes about telling, with the greatest precision, whatever is most difficult to tell. (p. 92)

What is seen and heard in confessional practices is then documented, as a resource for further intrusion, enquiry, disclosure, influence, and control. The normal distribution, a 19th century creation of European statistical bureaus to supervise the health of populations and backbone of psychometrics, makes it possible "to locate the individual within an epistemic field, without reducing the individual to the typical" (Rouse, 1994, p. 98). Normalising judgement produces

a whole range of degrees of normality indicating membership of a homogeneous social body but also playing a part in classification, hierarchization, and the distribution of rank. In a sense, the power of normalization imposes homogeneity; but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another. (Foucault, 1977, p. 184)

Surveillance, confession, and documentation, while normalising, create individuals. The individual is constructed

as a describable, analyzable object, not in order to reduce him to "specific" features, as

did the naturalists in relation to living beings, but in order to maintain him in his individual features, in his particular evolution, in his own aptitudes and abilities, under the gaze of a permanent corpus of knowledge. (Foucault, 1977, p. 190)

The gaze of the psychological examination, as part of this corpus of knowledge, originated in 19th century medical science. It "fixes things objectively to organize rational language around them" (Cooper, 1981, p. 34). Like the doctor and the missionary, the psychologist is authorised by society to impose, from a domain of esoteric knowledge, an ethic of self-discipline and self-regulation, serving a particular, western dream of a healthy society and supervising "a regime of supervised normalcy" (p. 37). Psychology, like medicine, reflected a new relationship between knowledge and curing: "Everything that appeared to the clinical gaze could be expressed; that which was not on the scale of the gaze fell outside the domain of possible knowledge" (Cooper, 1981, p. 41). The new relationship between the doctor and patient was a "confrontation of a gaze and a face, or a glance and a silent body... by which two living individuals are 'trapped' in a common, but non-reciprocal situation" (Foucault, 1973, p. xv).

The gaze of psychology generates construals of the individual interior which, in western culture, have become constituents of the taken-for-granted-world. Each of these construals is embedded in forms of discourse that favour certain segments of the population or certain patterns of conduct, while disparaging others. With the objectification of this discourse, so occurs the ossification of social pattern (K. J. Gergen, 1992, pp. 26-27). Psychology's discourse has consistently centred around a Eurocentric norm, which is hidden behind a scientist regime of neutrality and objectivity.

Humanistic Psychology and Normalisation

According to Foucault (in Richer, 1992), "the success of power-knowledge mechanisms is proportional to their ability to hide themselves" (p. 112). Humanistic approaches to psychology are especially successful in hiding power. Their indirect interpretative approaches subject individuals "not through an alien gaze, but through a reflexive hermeneutics" (Rose,

1990, p. 113). The guilty, law-abiding subject is best manufactured in the offices of humanistic psychology with its insistence on the sovereignty of the subject:

> It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word "subject": subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience of self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to. (Foucault, 1982, p. 212)

The apparatuses of humanistic psychology function through technologies of the self

> which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality. (Foucault, cited in Rose, 1990, p. 114)

This self-government is a matter of choice, and above all, of freedom, attained through a language of self-interpretation and a set of criteria for self-evaluation.

> We imagine that avoiding objectification and medicalization, the hermeneutic, psychodynamic and humanistic trends in psychology somehow transcend the job of social control that is explicit in other forms of psychology. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In the end, the prying interpretations of humanistic and psychodynamic approaches are far more efficient at normalizing than either the anti-psychotic drugs of the medical approach or the shaping techniques of behaviorism. Psychology - all of it - is a branch of the police; psychodynamic and humanistic psychologies are the secret police. (Richer, 1992, p. 118)

The policing function of psychology has to be understood not as a repressive, but as a productive function; the production of psychological well-being, as defined by the norms of western societies. Psychology produces knowledge and thereby the terms of self-understanding that allow people to police themselves and others.

Psychoanalysis and Bio-power

The modern medical management of sexuality resides at the heart of the society of normalisation (Bernauer & Mahon, 1994). As sin was replaced by sickness, sexuality invaded science, and desire was turned into discourse. What is peculiar to modern societies, according to Foucault (in Cooper, 1981), "is not that they consigned sex to a shadow existence, but that they dedicated themselves to speaking of it ad infinitum, while exploiting it as the secret" (p. 127). Sexuality, having been turned into the object of medical knowledge, had to be detected and described - "in the depths of the organism, in a smile, in the colour of one's skin, in the signs of the slightest behaviour" (Cooper, 1981, p. 128).

It was during the emergence of bio-power that psychoanalysis emerged as a confessional science. Man came to be defined by the "truth" of sex, in the same way that reason had defined man's essential nature in the 18th century (Major-Poetzl, 1982, p. 207). The truth of the self had to be uncovered through the relationship with the psychoanalyst, and extended to a process of self-surveillance. Rooted in confessional practices, psychoanalysis fortifies the notions of the subject and the self, in a project that links sexuality to self-identity as a source of truth. Through psychoanalysis, self-knowledge diverts a quest for freedom to the illusory liberation from repression (Bernauer & Mahon, 1994). By investing the self with dangerous drives and energies requiring constant surveillance, as well as the ability to attain freedom, normalising power insinuates itself into self-identity and overinvests the self with illusionary power, disregarding social and historical contexts and masking the circulation of power in these contexts.

Psychoanalysis, like psychology in general, emerges from the individualising power/knowledge of the Enlightenment. Its effects of power are visible in western societies, but become even more so in Africa.

The Enlightenment, Africa, and Psychology

The Enlightenment idea of progress had no limits: Not only enlightened Europe but all mankind was deemed capable of perfection. Science, like Christianity, was deeply embroiled in

the manufacture and implementation of colonialism, by which "Europe set out to grasp and subdue the forces of savagery, otherness and unreason" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 11). In a quest for equality, freedom, material well-being, and morality, it brought an empire of inequality, alienation, poverty, coercion, and dispossession to Africa.

Colonialism and Forms of Power/knowledge

Historically, Europe conferred on Africa pastoral, sovereign and disciplinary power. The domestication of the Congo (chapter 4) may serve as an example of the interplay between these forms of power. Although pre-colonial Africa was familiar with the visible power of a monarch, who bestows life and death on to his subjects (Ray, 1991), at the local level, power was usually conferred through the personal sanctioning of communal relationships (chapter 2). Modern, impersonal, individualising forms of power were unfamiliar and wrought profound changes to African societies. Where Europe had centuries to gradually adapt to new forms of power, colonialism imposed these forms of power in a relatively brief period on Africa.

The initial conquest of Africa was characterised by the brute, visible forces of sovereign power, as manifested in military conquests, slavery, and economic and social exploitation. This initial confrontation was "harsh, its spirit amoral; the interest limited to extracting a profit from trade, first in gold and other goods and then primarily in slaves" (July, 1968, p. 18). This phase was characterised by crude biological knowledge based on racism (Fanon, 1967e).

The second phase of colonialism reflected a transition to disciplinary power, mirroring the transition to this form of power in Europe. Due to increasing technological development and industrialisation and the imposition of a mechanised, regulated, and impersonal social system requiring a high degree of conformity, the expenses of sovereign power were overcome by instituting more subtle forms of power. In Africa, as in Europe, the processes of hierarchical observation, normalising judgement, and constant examination were introduced to control the colonised. As the human sciences were implemented in these processes of surveillance, more subtle forms of cultural oppression were developed. Ethnopsychological and anthropological knowledges, and later cross-cultural studies, replaced the earlier, biological theories justifying

colonialism. A pseudo-concern with African culture and the cooption of native collaborators into the new power/knowledge systems further strengthened colonialism (Fanon, 1967e).

Both as objects of science and within the newly created western institutions, Africans were subjected to individualising examination, classification, regulation, and supervision. Psychological evaluation was one of the technologies employed in the conversion to modernity, which followed the same pattern as conversion to Christianity. Certain candidates were selected for integration into the upper class of its hierarchies. The évolué had to repress indigenous knowledge and assimilate the new knowledge (Mudimbe, 1994). As in Europe, all the major institutions reflected the effort to render individuals obedient and productive with a minimum of violence and expense. As in Europe, the twin processes of accumulation of men and accumulation of capital, cannot be separated. "Each makes the other possible and necessary; each provides a model for the other" (Major-Poetzl, 1982, p. 206). In Europe, citizens reaped some material benefit from these gains. In colonial Africa, the benefits were exported to Europe. Whether this situation has changed in postcolonial Africa is questionable (Bulhan, 1993a). Both neocolonialism and autocolonialism employ disciplinary, individualising power, although monarchic power is still displayed in all its visible splendour in parts of Africa (Mazrui, 1986).

Colonial Discourse

In Africa, the "rational man" of the Enlightenment

was heard to speak in the timbre of another facet of the self-image: the "man" of Western Europe now elevated to the position of paragon of human development and existence. This form of self-image was off-loaded to Africa from... slave ships... through rationalisations of greed and imperialism, under the camouflage of sacred texts and practices guided by the cross, the pseudo-science of the "other" (i.e. early anthropology) and the outright practices of near genocide and domination. The most frequent rationalization offered was that the European encroachment on Africa brought "progress", in the form of the spread of Christianity and "rational" civilization, which

would lead to the improvement of individual and social existence. (Outlaw, 1990, p. 228)

Colonialism, as such inscribed with the grand narrative of progress, was both a civilizing mission and a violent subjugating force.

It is there, in the colonial margin, that the culture of the West reveals its <u>difference</u>, its limit-text, as its practice of authority displays an ambivalence that is one of the most significant discursive and psychical strategies of discriminatory power - whether racist or sexist. (Bhabha, 1990, p. 71)

In philosophical discourse, such as that of Kant, Hegel (Neugebauer, 1990), and Marx (Manganyi, 1985), producing narratives of legitimation, African peoples were depicted as racially inferior and explicitly denied the status of rational, historical beings, as in the words of Hegel (in Outlaw, 1990): "What we properly understand by Africa, is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature" (p. 229). This orientation was shared by many of Africa's early European visitors, as well as colonialists and scientists, who saw their mission as

<u>methodically</u>, to "make history" for people whom, they thought, lacked it; to induct those people into an <u>order</u> of activities and values; to impart <u>form</u> to an Africa that was seen as formless; to reduce the chaos of savage life to the <u>rational</u> structures and techniques that, for the Europeans, were both the vehicle and the proof of their own civilization. (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 14)

A grid of difference and sameness, originating in the 18th century Classical ordering of the world, as well as a modern narrative of evolutionary progress, were imposed on Africa. During the Classical age, in the order of the "great chain of being", the African marked the point between animality and humanity. With the rise of the human sciences, black bodies were increasingly associated with dim minds.

The great chain of being, a vertical scale, had been set on its side, becoming also a linear history of human progress from the peripheral regions of the earth to its north European core. The hard facts of organic form, it seemed, could now explain and determine the place of men in the world. (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 99)

Africa bore the image of an earlier Europe, waiting to be liberated from ignorance, but with liberation entailing a subjection to modern scientific power/knowledge. This subjection was inscribed into colonial discourse:

The essence of colonization inheres less in political overrule than in seizing and transforming "others" by the very act of conceptualizing, inscribing, and interacting with them on terms not of their own choosing; in making them into the pliant objects and silenced subjects of our scripts and scenarios; in assuming the capacity to "represent" them, the active verb itself conflating politics and poetics. (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 15)

Similarly, Said (1986) describes Europe's Orientalist discourse as the confinement of Arabs and Muslims to "the fixed status of an object frozen once and for all in time by the gaze of western percipients" (p. 214), thereby imposing a muteness upon the Other as object. The colonised, though Other, is deemed entirely knowable and visible (Bhabha, 1990). Such discourse emerges not from an interaction but exist as "communities of interpretation", perpetuating themselves in further discourse.

Here, of course, is perhaps the most familiar of Orientalism's themes - they cannot represent themselves, they must therefore be represented by others who know more about Islam than Islam knows about itself.... There is no question of an exchange between Islam's views and an outsider's: no dialogue, no discussion, no mutual recognition.... Now this, I submit, is neither science, knowledge or understanding: it is a statement of power and a claim for relatively absolute authority. (Said, 1986, p. 219)

Terms like the Orient, Islam, Arab, and Africa derive their meanings from a discourse created around European meanings assigned to an "imaginative geography" (Said, 1986, p. 211). Inherent in colonial discourse is a confusion between geographic and mythical space (Shetty, 1989), so that even a critic of empire such as Joseph Conrad in <u>Heart of darkness</u> uses a colonial stereotype of Africa as mythical space of darkness, to expose the darkness inherent in Europe.

> So saturated with meanings, so overdetermined by history, religion and politics are labels like "Arab" or "Muslim"... that no one today can use them without some attention to the formidable polemical mediations that screen the objects, if they exist at all, that the labels designate. (Said, 1986, p. 214)

The following section depicts some of the meanings conferred by Europe on the labels "Africa" and "Africans".

Africa as Other

It comes as no surprise that the era of Enlightenment primarily associated Africa with darkness. Since the earliest use of the word "Africa" (a Latin term), its darkness was associated with absence, void, and nothingness, until the arrival of an outsider, usually in the form of a conqueror, first Muslim and then European (C. L. Miller, 1985). Africa only attained meaning by being described from an external point of reference, in terms of that external point. "Darkness can be known only by shedding light on it; that is, it cannot be 'known' as such" (C. L. Miller, 1985, p. 19). In this context, knowledge, as light, must destroy what it knows. Blank darkness opens a space of distance, difference, and absence, to be simultaneously inscribed and dominated.

The inscription of the mythical space of the Other took on a variety of different, often ambiguous, ambivalent, and usually stereotypical forms, in European discourse on Africa (Bhabha, 1990). All these African Others reflect qualities that have, at some time, been assigned to Europeans, but were rejected; all reflect internal concerns of Europe, and all reflect Europe's changing relationship with Africa. "Images of otherness as the furthest boundary of

normality exert a disciplinary influence, as reverse reflections, warning signals. The savage is indispensable in establishing the place of civilization in the universe" (Pieterse, 1992, p. 233).

Early inscriptions of Africans in European discourse cast them into images of the rejected European self: The savage; the barbarian; the noble savage (chapter 4). Colonialism created a series of new images. During the first, forceful stage of colonialism, the African "native", was represented as an enemy and a brutal warrior, in contrast to the noble self-image of the imperialist. This "ignoble savage" (Pieterse, 1992, p. 78) replaced the earlier "noble savage", who returned in a new guise during the second stage of colonialism, when savages had to be turned into political subjects and the "native" was depicted as impulsive and childlike. "Colonial paternalism engendered as its counterpart the infantilism of the colonized" (Pieterse, 1992, p. 89). With the expansion of capitalism and modern forms of power, the stereotype of the lazy native, indolent and without ambition, was born, while the colonies were depicted as a place made productive through discipline and ingenuity. Late colonialism created the "westernised savage".

In colonial discourse, stereotypes often conflict and contradict each other.

The black is both savage (cannibal) and yet the most obedient and dignified of servants (the bearer of food); he is the embodiment of rampant sexuality and yet innocent as a child; he is mystical, primitive, simple-minded and yet the most worldly and accomplished liar. (Bhabha, 1990, p. 85)

An attraction-rejection ambivalence towards the Other was reflected in the development of an association between exoticism and Africa during colonialism. While colonial science was turning the colonised into objects of knowledge, they were turned into spectacles by being regularly displayed at colonial exhibitions in Europe. Groups of Africans were imported to be exhibited amongst reconstructions of their own dwellings and cultural products in what was termed "anthropological-zoological exhibits" (Pieterse, 1992, p. 95). Preference was given to fierce-looking warriors in full regalia.

The peoples on display were the trophies of victory. After the battle was done with, the image of the native warrior... became <u>decorative</u>.... Exoticism is a luxury of the victors and one of victory's psychological comforts. The Other is not merely to be exploited but also to be enjoyed, enjoyment being a finer form of exploitation. (Pieterse, 1992, p. 95)

The contradictory nature of African otherness is further exemplified in depictions of Africa as representing an uninhibited, extroverted sexuality, which is both declared taboo and idealised, within a field of attraction and repulsion.

An ambivalence towards one's own sexuality is experienced and projected on to the outside world, which appears the more primitive and uninhibited the greater one's fears as to one's own sexuality.... A connection can arise between the control and repression of one's own sexuality and the control and repression of "Others". (Pieterse, 1992, p. 172)

These connections reached their zenith during the19th century, when sex and the body were invaded by power/knowledge. Africa, both the unspoilt paradise and dark labyrinth, appears as a seductive, destructive woman, whose interior had to be penetrated by explorers. Similarly, colonial abuses were later cast in the allegory of rape - the rape of the continent; of the Congo (Pieterse, 1992). The portrayal of Africa as a woman was an extension of an emerging gender ideology in Europe, made possible by bio-power. As differences between men and women were "biologicalised" and ascribed to fixed, determined scientific laws, differences between races were similarly fixed. Biology merged with geography in stigmatising signs that came to imply one another: In late 18th century images of Africa, "the feminization of the black 'other' was a potent trope of devaluation. The non-European was to be made as peripheral to the global axes of reason and production as women had become at home" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 105).

The colonial scenarios of ambivalence reflect the intimate connection between power, desire, and knowledge. Colonial texts are characterised by "scenes of fear and desire" (Bhabha, 1990, p. 78). In colonial discourse, Africa, like "the Orient", "vaccilates between the West's

contempt for what is familiar and its shivers of delight in - or fear of - novelty" (Said, 1978, p. 59).

The Other and Unreason

A parallel may be drawn between the images of otherness that were projected on to Africa and the treatment of Others in European society (Major-Poetzl, 1982). The relation between Same and Other revolved around complementary relations between reason-unreason, being-nonbeing, and inclusion-exclusion. These pairs emerge together and define each other.

The history of madness would be the history of the Other - of that which, for a given culture, is at once interior and foreign, therefore to be excluded (so as to exorcise the interior danger) but by being shut away (in order to reduce its otherness); whereas the history of the order imposed on things would be the history of the Same. (Foucault, 1970, p. xxiv)

During the Renaissance, madness was viewed as different but not as pathological. There were no efforts to control it. The "dialogue between reason and unreason remained open" (Major-Poetzl, 1982, p. 113). During the Classical age, madness was viewed as a moral fault and violation of the orderly and rational laws of nature (Gutting, 1994), and both the mad and the African were associated with animals. As such they were believed to be confined to their inherent, fixed natures, and subject to public display and spectacle (Foucault, 1967). "They could be put on show, but there was nothing to be said to them, nor would one listen to them" (Cooper, 1981, p. 17). By the time that Africans were exhibited in Europe, the dialogue between reason and unreason was closed. Unreason was "deprived of its language; and although one continues to speak of it, it became impossible for it to speak of itself" (Major-Poetzl, 1982, p. 113).

The Modern age transformed otherness to natural phenomena, governed by biological and psychological laws, though the moral condemnation of the Classical age was retained (Foucault, 1967). Unreason was rejected because it violated the morality of work. The idle

were a threat to the stability of a bourgeois society in which labour was the central value. Hence the association in discourse on Africa between unreason, biological and psychological determination, immorality, and laziness. However, this discourse also contained "a paradoxical unity of moral guilt and animal innocence" (Gutting, 1994, p. 59), as reflected in the noble savage romantic discourse. Africa, like Foucault's (in Gutting, 1994) view of madness, "gathered into a single point, the whole of unreason: the guilty day and the innocent night" (p. 59).

Between the Medieval and Modern periods, otherness was systematically divorced from the world, nature, and society, and increasingly located within the "personality" of the Other. This internalisation of otherness "paralleled the shift from the medieval belief in God to the Enlightenment concept of Nature and the later shift to nineteenth century notions of History and Man" (Major-Poetzl, 1982, p. 119). A similar shift occurred in notions of Africa, which increasingly came to be viewed as a different state of being located within Africans. This state of being, paradoxically, also came to possess no real content. As the Enlightenment "freed" men from being viewed as transgressions of nature, otherness came to indicate absence, nothingness and nonbeing and the African came to symbolise blank darkness in colonial discourse (C. L. Miller, 1985), as opposed to the light of knowledge:

> A fear haunted the latter half of the eighteenth century: the fear of darkened spaces, of the pall of gloom which prevents the full visibility of things, men and truths. It sought to break up the patches of darkness that blocked the light, eliminate the shadowy areas of society, demolish the unlit chambers where arbitrary political acts, monarchical caprice, religious superstitions, tyrannical and priestly plots, epidemics and the illusions of ignorance were fomented. (Foucault, 1980b, p. 153)

The emerging sciences had recently discovered that it was possible to describe "what for centuries had remained below the threshold of the visible" (Foucault, 1973, p. xii). Both darkness and the light of the scientific gaze were manufactured in the early 19th century. "The residence of truth in the dark center of things is linked, paradoxically, to this sovereign power of the empirical gaze that turns their darkness into light" (Foucault, 1973, pp. xiii-xiiv).

Psychology's individualising gaze contributed to the opening up of the blank darkness of the Other and its inscription within scientific discourse.

Psychology and the Other

Psychology reflected the dominant episteme of the late 19th century, which elevated the norms of rational, male, bourgeois society to the status of normalcy and excluded and objectified those who departed from this norm. Its knowledge both informed European discourse on Africa and was informed by this discourse.

Psychological theories sought explanations for otherness in regression to earlier, less rational modes of being. This evolutionary perspective made it possible to establish resemblances between the mad, the primitive, and the child. Foucault (in Major-Poetzl, 1982) comments as follows on these psychological theories:

> On the horizon of all these analyses there are, no doubt, explanatory themes that are themselves situated on the frontiers of myth: the myth, to begin with, of a certain psychological substance (Freud's "libido", Janet's "psychic force")... the myth, too, of an identity between the mentally ill person, the primitive, and the child - a myth in which consciousness, shocked by the sight of mental illness, finds reassurance and is reinforced in the enveloping prejudice of its own culture. (p. 108)

This myth was instrumental in the redefinition of savagery at the turn of the century: Savagery had become an inner disposition common to both civilised and primitive humanity so that primitive peoples appeared in the work of colonial anthropologists as Europe's "contemporary ancestors" (Pieterse, 1992, p. 37). According to H. White (in Pieterse, 1992), the idea of primitive man was progressively despatialised and "attended by a compensatory process of psychic interiorization" (p. 37). Savagery had acquired an image of the instinctive: A view at the heart of Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis. The unconscious is identified with the collective and unindividualised and the black person, in Jung's (in Pieterse, 1992) words,

"reminds us - in not so much our conscious but our unconscious mind - not only of childhood but of our pre-history" (p. 173).

Freud freely linked metaphors of the Dark Continent and the voyage of discovery to the study of women and psychoanalysis. When discussing the ignorance of psychology regarding female sexuality, Freud refers to this lack of knowledge as the "dark continent" of psychology. According to Gilman (cited in Pieterse, 1992),

> in using this phrase in English, Freud ties the image of female sexuality to the image of the colonial black and to the perceived relationship between the female's ascribed sexuality and the Other's exoticism and pathology.... Freud continues a discourse which relates the images of male discovery to the images of the female as object of discovery. (p. 173)

Freud (cited in Manganyi, 1985), links the group mind, primitiveness, and uncontrolled emotionality to the child and the neurotic (usually female), thereby reflecting and justifying the subjugation of non-rational knowledges:

> In our children, in adults who are neurotic, as well as primitive peoples, we meet with the mental phenomenon which we describe as a belief in the "omnipotence of thought". In our judgement this lies in an overestimation of the influence which our mental (in this case intellectual) acts can exercise in altering the external world. All the magic of words, too, has its place here, and the conviction of the power which is bound up with the knowledge and pronouncing a name (p. 153).

This passage could only have been written from within the Modern episteme, and reflects its web of power/knowledge. The form of knowledge that it condemns had been relegated to the Other, who was linked, since Freud, to the unconscious (as both the embodiment of Europe's own past and the individual's infantile past). Despite the condemnation of this past in terms of its lack of rationality, it was necessary to continually uncover it, to speak of it, to fix it in discourse, in the same way that sexuality had to be exposed and fixed. Europe's quest for the

uncovery of the unconscious was, however, characterised by an ambivalence, reflected in attitudes towards the colonised.

As Manganyi (1985) points out, Freud further contributed to a modern denigration of communal values, in the form of the archetype of the primal horde, whereby primitive man is defined by an absence of individuality, as part of a permanent, dangerous mob, endowed with sexuality and rebellion, and associated with patricide. "The black man is constituted individually as though he was part of a permanent mob. He is, since the connection is not a difficult one, a group man" (Manganyi, 1985, p. 154).

These Freudian images combine into what Manganyi (1985) terms the paradox of innocence and treachery: "A single image: the tantrums of a child, the omnipotence of thought, a passionate intensity which knows no limits, as well as the cannibalistic savage in whom violence, murder and sexual transgressions are but the order of the day" (p. 153). This Other image remains evident in later ethnopsychological discourse, to be further substantiated through "objective scientific research" and bolstered by the emergence of scientific racism.

Psychology and Racism

Although racism has a long pre-history, the abolition of slavery marked its emergence in a modern form (Pieterse, 1992), when race science established hierarchies on the basis of not only race, but class, age, and gender. "Victorian anthropology saw racism, classism and sexism as... expressions of the same logic.... It used concepts of race and notions about savages and primitive peoples as a basis for ideas about women, lower classes, criminals, mad people and deviants" (Pieterse, 1992, p. 219). According to Foucault (in Major-Poetzl, 1982), racism, one manifestation of otherness, was made possible by normalising technologies: "When one spoke of the life of groups and societies, of the life of the race, or even of 'psychological life' one did not think first of the internal structure of the organized being but of the medical bi-polarity of the normal and the pathological" (p. 139).

At the turn of the century, bio-power and racism extended themselves through an

obsession with information on the body and a proliferation of scientific research on race. Skin colour measurement led to the manufacture of various devices to measure hair texture, hair colour and thickness of lips. Brass instruments were devised for measuring the cranium and skeleton. A six volume work on the nervous system by Gall and Spurzheim (in Guthrie, 1976) published in 1817, declared that the outward shape of the skull reflects the shape of the brain underneath, which in turn determines the level of intelligence, which differs between races. Such conclusions were made possible by the truth claims that the sciences had recently acquired, and, though we now consider them "unbelievable" (Guthrie, 1976, p. 33), these truths still reverberate in both knowledge and practice. In the words of Said (1978):

> The point to be emphasised is that this truth about the distinctive differences between races, civilizations, and languages was (or pretended to be) radical and ineradicable. It went to the bottom of things, it asserted that there was no escape from origins and the types these origins enabled; it set the real boundaries between human beings, on which races, nations, and civilizations were constructed; it forced vision away from common, as well as plural, human realities like joy, suffering, political organization. (p. 233)

By the late 19th century, the human sciences were saturated with racism and social Darwinism. Contentions that "primitive races" (like women) could not abstract, inhibit impulses or make ethical choices were first solidified by Freudian theory and later empirically confirmed by "objective" psychological research (Guthrie, 1976). Psychology and anthropology joined in a search for racial differences in mental abilities and character traits. Ethnology, the subbranch of anthropology concerned with race, was a field of study so significant at the time that Wechsler (in Guthrie, 1976) saw fit to include the word in the Information subtest of his intelligence test in 1939. The link between ethnology and psychology was established only after race differences came to be viewed as nativistic. According to Guthrie the following events contributed to nativism in psychology:

- Darwin's theory of evolution led to psychology's obsession with the ordering of human behaviour on scales of relative success in adaptation through intelligence and strengths. It facilitated a view of the biological connectedness of man and animal, and psychology's

laboratory studies of lower animals, where "even the rat was white" (Guthrie, 1976, p. 37).

- Galton's eugenics provided the link between scientific naturalism and psychology. Galton, an important contributor to the field of intelligence, was also an early explorer of Namibia in 1851-1852 and "to examine Galton's original ethnological impressions from Africa... is to glimpse some of the roots of modern psychology" (Fancher, 1982, p. 713). His account of his exploration is notable for its racism. When later combined with Darwinian ideas on evolution, this view produced Galton's hereditary psychological theories and eugenics, which promoted the idea of racial improvement through selective mating and sterilisation of the racially "unfit". Galton's (in Guthrie, 1976) idea of a "perfectly efficient society" (p. 37) is an example of bio-power taken to its extreme.

- German psychophysics: As every primary psychology textbook proclaims, psychology originated in Germany with the application of the experimental method. The psychology of the 19th century was a product of the union of philosophy and physiology.

- Mendelian genetics: Mendel's work on the genetic transmission of physical traits was transposed to psychological characteristics, which fuelled the hereditary-environmental debate in psychology.

This debate was most pronounced in the field of intelligence, due to an early link between unreason, the Other, and race.

The fixity of the representation of the Other (blackness) which race science placed before our eyes pronounces the genetic inferiority of blacks particularly with regard to intelligence.... This time the black man is not a child, he is not a beast. He is afflicted with a condition that cannot be alleviated. In short, since he cannot be helped by anyone, least of all himself, in changing his innate genetic endowment, he is cursed. (Manganyi, 1985, p. 156)

Intelligence, the original concern and technical pinnacle of psychometrics, is in itself a Eurocentric cultural construct, reflecting bourgeois values in its emphasis on abstraction and verbalisation criteria (Guthrie, 1976). A culture obsessed with reason (and unreason) produced the concept of intelligence, developed a technology of normalisation around it and used this technology to define otherness nativistically in terms of a lack of intelligence.

Psychology has made efforts to extricate itself from racism, inter alia by attempting to explain it. These explanations tend to locate racism within groups or individuals, as a kind of pathology, and ignores ideology, politics and class variables (Foster, 1993a). The study of race later shifted to a concern with ethnicity, and then with culture, recirculating the discourse of otherness in new forms.

Ethnopsychology

The concept of ethnicity was created by science and put into general circulation by missionaries and colonialists. As Comaroff and Comaroff (1991) illustrate, the European objectification of the Self and Other led to a process whereby European ways were constructed in opposition to African ways, "each with its own cosmology, 'customs', and conventions... as distinct, objectified cultures" (p. 194). As the European world was objectified, Africans invented for themselves a similar self-conscious coherence and distinctness, often organised around an ethnic identity conferred upon them by colonial and apartheid administrations.

The great divide that had opened up between Europeans and Africans was reflected in the sciences of the time. At the beginning of the 20th century, indigenous systems of thought became "primitive philosophy" or "philosophy of the savages" in ethnographic and anthropological texts. The field of "African philosophy" was staked out within a primitivist ideology which ascribed to the African a prelogism in thinking, paganism in belief, and primitiveness of worldview (Mudimbe, 1986). The work of Levy-Bruhl in the 1920's on "primitive mentality", which had an enduring effect on later psychological research in Africa, described "African thinking" in terms of a "prelogical mentality", and "concreteness". The African was said to rely merely on memory and to lack the capacity for individuation. His

prelogical thinking was assumed to belong to an earlier phylogenetic stage. Despite opposition to these conclusions, much of later research was organised around them (Bulhan, 1981).

After 1930, some trends in German and French anthropology began to develop more sophisticated taxonomies. A new type of discourse emerged, insisting on the originality of different cultures. Anthropology became the study of both a multitude of cultural peculiarities and the effort to discern a universal system, which would in turn account for all the particularities (Mudimbe, 1986). The discourse of colonialism had gradually shifted from a concern with race, to ethnicity and from there to culture, coinciding with changes in the kind of power employed. However, Foucault (1970) holds that the discipline of ethnology "can assume its proper dimensions only within the historical sovereignty - always restrained, but always present - of European thought and the relation that can bring it face to face with all other cultures as well as with itself" (p. 377).

The term ethnical psychology was first defined by Haddon in 1910 as the study of "the minds of other races and peoples, of which, among the more backward races, glimpses can be obtained only by living among them and endeavouring to reach their point of view by means of observation and experiment" (Guthrie, 1976, p. 30). Increasingly, the method of "living among them" were appropriated by anthropologists and methods of "observation and experiment", were colonised by psychologists, who viewed themselves as experimental scientists reigning within a laboratory milieu. The ethnical psychologist invaded Africa, preoccupied with locating differences on scales of normalisation, especially on measures of intelligence. His knowledge was highly valued in South Africa, where ethnicity had become a cornerstone of apartheid ideology (Swartz & Foster, 1984) and became closely identified with "the South African version of colonial discourse called Apartheid" (Manganyi, 1985, p. 157).

The extent to which colonial discourse is reflected in psychological discourse, is illustrated in the following comment by Manganyi (1985):

Colonial discourse respects no boundaries; its geography is that of a limitless terrain, and I consider this characteristic so decisive that I will not bother to introduce

conceptual distinctions between the so-called "African psychology", "Ethnopsychiatry" and "race science".... Small wonder that I have and will continue to use these terms as signifiers in a single semantic field. (p. 157)

Bulhan (1981), Fanon (1967a), and Manganyi (1985) analyse the discourse of ethnopsychologists and ethnopsychiatrists, which essentially reflect all the ambivalent stereotypes and assumptions of colonial discourse. Manganyi stresses the absence and silence of the coloniser in this discourse. The African or Muslim takes centre stage; his intelligence, personality, culture, and above all modifiability are made transparent and fixed. As psychological evaluation techniques are developed to measure these concepts, colonial discourse recirculates itself. Results, such as that of De Ridder (1962) show how South African blacks are still children, but also prone to violence. "Immature, anxious, insecure and naively exhibitionistic: is he not an inadequate personality, or worse still, simply neurotic as has often been suggested?" (Manganyi, 1985, p. 162). Carothers (in Bulhan, 1981, p. 31) went even further: "The native African in his culture is remarkably like the lobotomised western European and in some ways like the traditional psychopath ". What is absent from the analysis is the coloniser and his political, economic and military power, as well as the effects of the circulation of this discourse: Separate education, residential segregation, exclusion from political power and the exploitation of labour.

Even studies that did include the coloniser, such as Mannoni's (1964) psychological analysis of colonialism, sought explanations from an ahistorical and subjective perspective (Bulhan, 1981; Fanon, 1967a). Mannoni attributed to the African a dependency complex and a need for nurturant authority, and to the coloniser unconscious forces to adopt a paternal role. The coloniser-colonised relationship assumes a neurotic form. As elsewhere in colonial discourse, the inscription of the Other takes place within a medicalised, decontextualised space (Manganyi, 1985).

Cross-cultural Psychology

As culture came to replace ethnicity in psychological discourse, the ethnopsychologist or

"brass instrument Tarzan" (Guthrie, 1976, p. 31) turned into the cross-cultural psychologist, who, like the ethnopsychiatrist (Gaines, 1992), is still battling to extricate himself from a territory demarcated by boundaries of otherness and hierarchies of evolution (Segall, 1986; Serpell, 1984).

Cross-cultural studies were initially focused exclusively on comparisons between westerners and Africans. The earliest studies were concerned with the morphology and physiology of "the African brain", which were linked directly to intelligence. Next followed comparative studies between "African" and "White" intelligence, and qualitative analyses of "African intelligence" (Cryns, 1962; Serpell, 1984). The nature-nurture debate was central in interpretation of these studies (Cryns, 1962). Although social and cultural variables, and the concept of cultural relativity were later introduced (and reified) in interpreting findings, the central concerns in the field are technical and the economic and political context of the research itself, ignored.

The recent discourse of cross-cultural psychology is focused primarily on a concern with the well-being of cross-cultural psychology, whose centre of gravity resides firmly in Europe and America (Serpell, 1984). Evaluations of the field (Doob, 1980; Lonner, 1980; Segall, 1986) are done in terms of the narratives of legitimation of science. Doob (1980) criticises the field only in terms of its lack of scientific purity: "It has not appreciably hastened a scientific millennium: No great theorist or theory has emerged; sloppy psychologizing, and anthropologizing persist... and neologisms and fancy phrases are flagrantly coined" (p. 59). Lonner (1980) is similarly concerned with the well-being of the field. The future and concerns of the peoples studied receive no mention. Lonner does lament the fact that cross-cultural psychology is done mostly by and for westerners, but only because it threatens validity. Questions raised by Bulhan (1993a), such as who is benefitting from the results, are absent.

In its search for differences, cross-cultural psychology has gradually shifted from nativistic to environmental explanations. These explanations include an environmental deficiency model, paternalistic notions of the "noble savage", static concepts of tribal identities, and, more recently, cultural relativism (Bulhan, 1993a). The historical, economic, and social

underpinnings of the relationship between researcher and subject tend to be ignored. The social role of the psychological investigator is familiar and crystallised in western societies, to such an extent that it has acquired an almost ritual character. Its "constants" include a power differential, where the researcher is both voyeur and determines what is done and the subject has a complementary role to "confess" and expose himself in an unreciprocal relationship. When transposed to a colonial or postcolonial situation, these constants are easily translated into the relationship between coloniser and colonised.

Safely cocooned in the modernist world of scientific progress, cross-cultural psychology today distances itself from the crude ethnology of its colonial past, but continues a long tradition of alienated relationships with its subjects, who by and large remain mute within the margins set by its discourse. Bulhan (1981) concludes: "African psychological research has thus far been geared to the development of Euro-America and the psycho-economic underdevelopment of Africa" (p. 38).

Psychology in South Africa

The history of psychology in South Africa contains and magnifies all the problematic issues in the history of the profession and the continent. Psychology's technologies of power have been employed in a state apparatus that normalised racism and systematically employed disciplinary power techniques in a panoptic society, where both the prisoners and guardians are submitted to dividing practices. South African psychologists have lived in a world of rulers, separated by government policy from the majority of the population and functioning within a decontextualised, mythical world of science, mystifying differential power relations while contributing to their construction.

Psychological research on black South Africans grew out of the concerns of those institutions most concerned with disciplinary power such as industries, notably the mines, the defence force, and educational institutions. Sophisticated psychological tests were developed to obtain maximum performance from workers and students (Retief, 1988). These technologies of normalisation came to be extensively used throughout Africa (Bulhan, 1981). The discourse of

South African psychologists on "the African" reflects a long tradition of colonialism in the guise of scientism. The African is objectified as a different Other, to be made productive and compliant, in an a-historical, decontextualised world where a concern with methodology takes center stage and both internal psychological attributes and cultural variables are reified. Political and economic power differentials are studiously ignored (Dawes, 1985). Examples of this kind of discourse may be found in De Ridder (1962), Swanepoel (1980), Umlaw (1980), and most of the literature on the construction and standardisation of psychological tests in South Africa.

Even the most sympathetic cross-cultural studies have served to mystify power differentials between researcher and subject, who, in South Africa, are usually members of dominating or dominated groups (Dawes, 1985; Roper, 1992; Swartz & Foster, 1984). In an analysis of the images of black culture and mental illness in South African psychiatric and psychological approaches, Swartz and Foster (1984) conclude that

> common to all of these is a view of "Black culture" as an organic, archaic essence which is contrasted with the fragmented alienated "Western culture". This view seems to dovetail neatly with dominant South African ideology and is apparently related to a Romantic conception of the primitive. Political issues are generally ignored. (p. 17)

In South Africa, the great cultural divide of colonial discourse was extended to a classificatory system consisting of a multitude of ethnic identities that have been reified to such an extent that today mention of the concept culture has become identified with ethnocentrism and oppression. The concept of cultural relativism has been used to exclude and divide. "It is not possible in South Africa to claim that groups of people are different from each other without at some level recalling, consciously or unconsciously, a major basis for justification of oppressive practices" (Swartz, 1992, p. 231). Psychological research reinforced ethnical and cultural stereotypes, which usually were originally imposed on people from the outside, as a static identity (Swartz & Foster, 1984). Swartz and Foster (1984) emphasise, however, that it is not useful to locate the problem in "conspiracy theories", but rather to acknowledge the embeddedness of psychological practice in the encompassing discourse of otherness. This

discourse produces paradoxes where psychologists who are concerned with overcoming Eurocentrism attempt to cross the (historically created) divisions between cultures, but thereby stand accused of creating the very same divisions they are attempting to cross, while studying people who often constitute themselves in terms of distinct cultural identities.

Psychology's individualism and subjectivism have served as a smokescreen for social injustices. Individual psychotherapy, especially the client-centred approach, by focusing on the individual's internal states, have ignored the political context's contribution to personal problems (Dawes, 1985, 1986; Whittaker, 1991). Following the western model of modernistic psychology, psychologists search for causes of misfortune within the person (Beit-Hallahmi, 1974). The psychologist's role of priest, and the quest for individual salvation, has relegated social and political issues to the professional unconsciousness. "We start with the belief that the big machine is all right; we just have to keep it oiled and running.... Psychologists help people adjust to the reality of the big machine" (Beit-Hallahmi, 1974, p. 127). In South Africa, the big machine was particularly successful in implanting the psychologist with an identity of surveillance within a context of division and exclusion.

Conclusion

The point of departure of this chapter has been a distinction between the West and Africa. It draws from a discourse that separates western knowledge from African knowledge; light from darkness; Same from Other; coloniser from colonised. This discourse, emanating from the Enlightenment, did not only create and fix an African otherness, it also created and fixed a European sameness. As the African was inscribed with a fixed, limited identity of difference, the "rational man" of Europe (and the psychologist) was similarly inscribed with a fixed, limited identity.

Such a binary division permeates not only colonial discourse, but also those discourses that attempt to deconstruct it. This Manichean world (Fanon, 1967a), a dividing field of power/knowledge, encompasses both the object and subject of knowledge. This study, in approaching the field of emergence of such a hegemony, is, paradoxically, also drawn into it.

The binary world, like the total web of modern power/knowledge, is hegemonic, in the sense that its dominance has made it a part of

> that order of signs and practices, relations and distinctions, images and epistemologies - drawn from a historically situated cultural field - that come to be taken-for-granted as the natural and received shape of the world and everything that inhabits it. It consists... of things that go without saying because, being axiomatic, they come without saying (Bourdieu, cited by Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 23).

Not only the discourse on Africa, but knowledges and practices, like psychology, occupy and constitute hegemonies. Hegemonies establish themselves at the expense of what has gone before in the same way that continued surveillance becomes invisibly inscribed into the fabric of the mundane, so that later it is not seen as control at all. It is precisely the things that go without saying that make it possible for well-intentioned psychologists to constitute themselves as agents of social control.

However, as pointed out by Comaroff and Comaroff (1991), hegemonies are actively made, and, by the same token may be unmade. The following chapter describes attempts at liberation from the subtle, and at times unsubtle, webs of power peculiar to processes of domination in Africa. In contrast to the present chapter, which muted voices of resistance, the following chapter is concerned with African voices contesting the muteness imposed on them.

CHAPTER 6

KNOWLEDGES OF RESISTANCE

> What is striking is that someone always comes
> along to disturb the order of "reason". (Lyotard,
> 1984, p. 61)

This chapter turns towards the receiving end of the knowledges of Enlightenment that colonised Africa. It presents African perceptions of, resistance against, and appropriation of modern western secular knowledge and focuses on psychological perspectives on this process. African knowledges of resistance all contain implicit and explicit psychologies, as they are aware of colonial power/knowledge intruding upon and redefining the terms of self-understanding of both the coloniser and the colonised (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991; Ho, 1985; Nandy, 1982). Various retellings of African narratives of resistance occur in the current debate on the relevance of psychology in Africa.

The first section of the chapter is concerned with a general consideration of African reactions to western knowledge. This serves to contextualise the subsequent sections depicting two narratives of resistance that have implications for the field of psychology: The reclamation of Africanness and the psychology of oppression and liberation. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the nature of power/knowledge embedded in African knowledges of resistance.

African Responses to Western Knowledge

The knowledge of western modernity had, and continues to have, enormous power. There is no doubt that it has transformed Africa and that Africa has largely succumbed to its attractions. In the words of Senghor (in July, 1968):

> The Renaissance was a conqueror.... But it exported not only merchants and soldiers; with professors, physicians, engineers, administrators, and missionaries, it also exported

ideas and techniques. It not only destroyed, it built; it not only killed, it cured and educated; it gave birth to a new world, an entire world of our brothers, men of other races and continents. (p. 18)

In an effort to gain control of this world, many Africans have joined its forces, some have resisted, some, like Senghor (1965), have recast its intrusive forms in their own image, and most have done all of these things, at one time or another, during the struggles provoked by colonialism. Just as technologies of power may vary between overt control and implicit persuasion, modes of resistance extend over a wide spectrum. At one end is organised protest, explicit movements of dissent that are recognisable as "political" by western standards. At the other end are silent gestures of tacit refusal. "For the most part, however, the ripostes of the colonized hover in the space between the tacit and the articulate, the direct and the indirect" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 31), a process that is more complex than simple equations of domination and resistance. African resistance speaks both in local and European terms and languages, while extending the boundaries of these terms and languages.

> Even as they are consumed by the European capitalist system - consumed, ironically, as they consume its goods and texts - these "natives" of other worlds often seek to seize its symbols, to question their authority and integrity, and to reconstruct them in their own image. Sometimes they do so in open defiance; sometimes through strikingly imaginative acts of cultural subversion and re-presentation; sometimes in silent, sullen resistance. (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. xii)

In so doing, they paradoxically escape the dominant order without leaving it. Sometimes their resistance further contributes to their own subordination, and often they fail to call into doubt the most essential entrapments of the colonising culture and the most fundamental assumptions of its knowledge (Nandy, 1982). Resistance may take the form of a "'reverse discourse': the terms of resistance are already given us, and our contestation is entrapped within the Western cultural conjuncture we affect to dispute", writes Appiah (1988, p. 161). Many narratives of resistance are incorporated into and neutralised by the dominant discourse, which is ever hungry for novelty and feeds on challenges (Ferguson, 1990): Said (in Ferguson, 1990) expressed the

result as follows: "We can read ourselves against another people's pattern, but since it is not ours... we emerge as its effects, its errata, its counternarratives. Whenever we try to narrate ourselves, we appear as dislocations in <u>their</u> discourse" (p. 11). Despite such re-appropriation of African resistance by the dominant discourse, the subtle, ambivalent manoeuvres of resistant discourse also escape dominance (Bhabha, 1990; B. Parry, 1987):

> When re-articulated by the native, the colonialist desire for a reformed, recognizable, nearly-similar other, is enacted as parody, a dramatization.... For in the "hybrid moment" what the native re-writes is not a copy of the colonialist original, but a qualitatively different thing-in-itself, where mis-readings and incongruities expose the uncertainties and ambivalences of the colonialist text and deny it an authorizing presence. (B. Parry, 1987, pp. 41-42)

This process is discernible in both written and other responses to western knowledge.

Responses in Writing

In 1787, the Sierra Leone colony was established for the repatriation of ex-slaves from London. Hereby was initiated a long period whereby western-educated and acculturated freed slaves were returned to West Africa (July, 1968), turning this region, cradle of many influential African intellectuals, into an ambiguous space where western knowledge was imported by Africans with close ties outside Africa. A new class of "assimilated" Africans and mulattos was born (Curtin, 1972), who tended to form closed communities, constituting what Said (in Serequeberhan, 1991, p. 8) has termed "a widely varied group of little Europes" planted on African soil. Members of these groups became Christian missionaries and emissaries of the Enlightenment, and viewed their fellow-countrymen in much the same terms as the European colonisers did. Their assimilation was relatively unambiguous: As prototypes of bourgeois respectability they had few reservations about European culture. In their writings, they proposed programmes of active rehabilitation to bring Africa out of her barbarism and ignorance, and envisaged a period of tutelage and transition under the agency of Europe (Curtin, 1972; July, 1968.)

Examples of 19th century writers from these communities include the West-African physician Africanus Horton setting off on a civilising mission of his fellow country-men (July, 1968); Samuel Crowther, European educated missionary and explorer, who described the "nakedness, paganism, and cannibalism" of his African brethren in his travelogues, which read like early European texts of the same genre (Mudimbe, 1988), and the missionary Edward Blyden who advocated the mass importation of westernised Africans from the diaspora to civilise Africa (Curtin, 1972; Mudimbe, 1988). By the fact of their entry into colonial discourse through the written word and their (mis)appropriation of the role of the coloniser, these authors paradoxically reversed its ethnocentric assumptions. In their writings, they gradually started chipping away at the edifice of primitivism: Horton by arguing against its racism; Blyden by recognising a unique positive value in both indigenous and Islamic knowledge (July, 1968; Mudimbe, 1988).

An almost unquestioning acceptance of western ways during the Classical age was gradually displaced by an increasing attraction/repulsion ambivalence during the Modern, which in varying forms has characterised African thought to this day. This ambivalence originated during the growth of modern racism and the partitioning of Africa into colonies (Curtin, 1972; July, 1968), whereupon the educated African found himself suspended between two worlds:

> Trained to an uncritical acceptance of the West, he was now rejected as an equal by Europe, and his country and people were made to subserve European interests. Unable and unwilling to return to a traditional Africa he no longer respected, he rose to its defense in part through loyalty and in part as an expression of national sentiments learnt through the West. (July, 1968, p. 463)

This defense took the form of a reclamation of the positive values of African culture and a struggle for liberation from western domination. These two modes of resistance are dealt with in more detail later in this chapter.

Other Responses

It is easy to overlook the responses of ordinary men and women to western knowledge. It is also dangerous, as these responses may constitute a new form of subjugated knowledge outside the realms of the dominant voices of African resistance. Modernity and its modes of resistance were by no means the inevitable or likely consequences of colonialism for those outside the circles of the acculturated élite (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991; Curtin, 1972) and the dominant narratives of resistance do not necessarily reflect their experience (Bruner, 1986).

Anthropological studies that attempt to bridge the gap between the ideas of the élite and those of the mostly illiterate masses have found a similar sequence of reaction to the West: An early uncritical approval, followed by second thoughts, and finally some form of neo-traditionalism and/or active pursuit of modernisation (Curtin, 1972). Like the literate response, the illiterate response was profoundly ambivalent (Curtin, 1972; Fernandez, 1972). Searching for general themes may, however, prove as unfruitful as working with a generalised African/western distinction. Particular African individuals and groups encountered particular western individuals and groups - "not a monolithic and inseparable western culture. One common element, indeed, was the African discrimination between different westerners and the aspects of western culture that each seemed to represent" (Curtin, 1972, p. 231). Missionaries, merchants, administrators, and different social classes were distinguished and received different, increasingly compartmentalised, responses.

What all westerners had in common, though, and what made them attractive, was their access to scientific and technological advances; in sum, modernity. Efforts to grasp this power, to seek it in some aspects of culture, without always being able to sort out the incidental from the essential, characterise early reactions to the West (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991; Curtin 1972). Many sought its power in Christianity (chapter 4); some in literacy; many reinterpreted it in terms of indigenous knowledge. In the same way that Africans were inscribed into western narratives, westerners were inscribed into African narratives.

Fernandez (1972) shows how the Fang of Gabon, Guinea, and Cameroon, who have had a relatively short period of contact (approximately a century) with westerners, first in the form of missionaries and later administrators, became anxious to explain their submissive relations with the colonisers to themselves. Myths and legends were reworked to explain the differences between whites and blacks and a powerful religious cult (Bwiti), a complex syncretism between indigenous religion, Christianity, and secular knowledge, was created, whereby they tried consciously to harmonise the cultures in contact and to find an explanatory network for the anomalies produced by that contact. Other reactions included self-isolation, but in general, "increasing self-consciousness is the lot of the acculturated. This must be labelled as an intellectual reaction, for at least in western tradition knowledge of the self has been one of the hallmarks of the intellectual posture" (Fernandez, 1972, p. 44).

The particular form that such self-knowledge takes varies according to the specific aspects of western knowledge imparted by particular westerners to particular African societies. Paradoxically, the Fang's contact with missionaries and administrators not only subjected them to contrary intellectual pressures, but also reinforced many aspects of their pre-colonial epistemology, which Fernandez (1972) calls a "pre-scientific supernatural empiricism" (p. 45). In an effort to effectively transmit the Gospel, the missionaries focused on enactive and iconic representations thereof, reinforcing the preferences of the Fang. The pre-modern aspects of Christianity were imparted and assimilated, rather than the modern. Similarly, administrators imparted the organisationalism of the West; not its positivism or spirit of enquiry. The Fang assimilated new models of the environment and of social interaction, but the core of their cosmology remained intact. Frustrated in their efforts to impose western time constraints on the Fang, administrators and missionaries strongly depreciated the Fang's sense of time. Reactions on the part of the Fang included the inclusion of numerous alarm clocks in the rituals of the Bwiti cult, "though they run on a very local time" (Fernandez, 1972, p. 6). Similarly, French administrators' obsession with order, structure, and bureaucratic paperwork was mirrored in the organisation of a Fang clan regroupment movement, that appeared to Fernandez as "the perfect mockery of European organizationalism if it hadn't been taken so seriously" (Fernandez, 1972, p. 17).

Though the Fang became increasingly disillusioned and embittered towards the European and his knowledge, something of an aura of the supernatural persisted to surround him. In the Bwiti cult the European was often represented as a black who had died and paid for his sins, learned the secret of the unseen, and returned purified and whitened. A similar integration of the European into the supernatural realm of indigenous cosmology occurred in other groups (Oruka, 1990), including the BaKongo (MacGaffey, 1972, 1978).

In contrast to the Fang and the rest of Central Africa, the BaKongo have had intensive contact with Europeans for over five centuries. "During the colonial period the effect of European educational and economic institutions was probably more intense in the Lower Congo than anywhere in the interior" (MacGaffey, 1972, p. 50). In 1972, nearly all BaKongo were professed Christians, and most were literate to some extent . However, in contrast to West Africa, the region has only recently begun to produce intellectuals, who are trained in the West and offer "a poor guide to local social realities" (MacGaffey, 1972, p. 51).

MacGaffey (1972) studied the ideas that the BaKongo themselves express in everyday conversation and found that the popular reaction to the West presupposes a cosmology according to which the universe is divided into two parts or phases called "this world" and "the other world", embodying the contrast between perceived events (this world) and the unseen causes that give rise to them (the other world). This world is inhabited by black people, whose lives are affected by the powers inhabiting the other world. These are the ancestors and spirits, coloured red or white. There are two routes of communication between the worlds: Water and the grave.

From within this cosmology, the arrival of white-skinned people displaying unknown powers from a country across the ocean was easily assimilated. Whenever their powers had been regarded as extraordinary, westerners were classed as agents of other-worldly powers and were assigned to four roles - chief, prophet, magician, or witch - according to whether their powers were destructive or constructive, and whether they were exercised in the public interest or not. "Europeans have been allocated to any of the four roles, most often to those of witch... and magician" (MacGaffey, 1972, p. 57). The magician, a technician employing his skills in

order to maximise his own material rewards, in fact summarised the European view of civilisation by the Fang, who viewed the exercise of power in the interest of private individuals as promoting social anarchy.

History and geography have provided further content to the paradigm. Myths tell of the home of white people as a single continent across the sea, where the dead go and have always gone. Both the slave trade and later trade in goods were viewed as forms of witchcraft which transported large numbers of Africans, or their souls contained in goods such as ivory tusks, prematurely to the land of the dead. Having crossed the water, the dead become white. Colonialism was viewed as a process of destruction of indigenous power/knowledges, especially of medicine and metalworking, by the power/knowledge of the Europeans for material gain, and independence was promoted as the restoration of indigenous technology and medicine (MacGaffey, 1978). This may account for the phenomenal rise of Kimbanguism, a healing cult, as principle movement of resistance against the colonial regime (chapter 4). Only superior forces of healing could purge the country of the witchcraft of colonialism.

"The Congolese, in brief, do not see themselves as having benefitted from the introduction of a form of civilization vastly superior to their own, nor do they share the European habit of distinguishing civilization in racial terms" (MacGaffey, 1972, p. 59). Research by Görög (in Curtin, 1972) show that many ordinary Africans do share this habit, as is attested by popular stories accounting for racial differences. These confuse race and culture and accept the "fact" of European superiority, symbolised most often by the art of writing and the acquisition of technology. Viewed against the history of the 19th century, when people all over the world were first confronted with modern technology and industrialisation, not only Africans but Chinese, Turks, and Latin Americans were confused by the fact that it arrived in western clothing, and attempted to explain its powers in cultural and racial terms (Curtin, 1972).

Why did many Kongo persist in their view of the West as the land of the dead despite nearly all having been at least to European primary schools and having been exposed to continuous propaganda exalting the West and its ways at the expense of African culture? MacGaffey (1972) offers three considerations:

First, that Kongo cosmology provides an adequate framework for the intellectual evaluation of Kongo experience in the modern world, as it did in the past; secondly, that the institutional position of literacy has not been such as to develop a consciousness of history; and thirdly, that Congolese experience of western culture has never been sufficiently different from popular expectations to cause a radical questioning of indigenous conceptual categories. (p. 62)

As was the case with the Fang and the early Tswana (chapter 4), the BaKongo were introduced only to certain selective aspects of European knowledge. Primary school education emphasised rote learning of selective facts; analytical reasoning and the context of the facts were not imparted. Congolese were trained to operate but not to understand western technology. Most were, at least until 1972, not presented with knowledge that could profoundly challenge their cosmology (MacGaffey, 1972).

A similar situation developed around medical knowledge. The BaKongo, like many Africans, are to varying degrees suspicious of and disappointed with western health services, and tend to use these as an adjunct to indigenous and religious healing systems (Devisch, 1993; Lowery-Palmer, 1980). The research of Awanbor (1985), Brownell et al. (1987), Corin and Bibeau (1980), Edgerton (1980), Lambo (1960, 1961), Lowery-Palmer (1980), and Otsyula (1973) illustrates how this situation has led to mutual misunderstandings. Medical personnel carry western expectations of the doctor/patient relationship and "patient compliance" into the field, while patients bring indigenous expectations of a holistic, spiritual healing context, that remain largely unmet. Such a situation translates easily into a meeting between psychotherapist and client, although this relationship is unknown to many Africans.

Although indigenous healing systems have undergone many changes and new forms of malpractice have become common, their value is now recognised by the World Health Organisation and many African governments are attempting to integrate them into their health systems (Devisch, 1993; Green, 1980; MacGaffey, 1981). The question of integration has also received attention in South Africa (Holdstock, 1979; Kottler, 1988, 1990), attesting to a complex process whereby the dominant scientist knowledge attempts to integrate a subjugated narrative

knowledge. As was discussed in the previous chapter, these knowledges employ different and unequal strategies of validation, so that one cannot be judged by the criteria of validation of the other. Does integration in this context mean subjugation or confirmation?

The Question of Identity

Both written and other responses to the West involved a re-assessment of self-identity. The previous chapter has illustrated how early European knowledges of Africa had systematically denied Africa an identity in itself. Ever since, Africans have had to justify and defend whatever identity they conferred upon Africa; to prove that African history did not begin when Europe first reached Africa, and, by extension, that they themselves did not become fully human only after becoming "civilised" (Irele, 1986).

The question of an African identity is reflected in a struggle for personal identity which is deemed characteristic of African intellectuals and is a central theme in their work. This is partly the result of an identity conferred upon them by the West (the "westernised savage" script). Even in postcolonial Africa, the intelligentsia and those who become part of the African élite continue to be presented to the world as "marginal men, as men alienated from their people and uprooted from their traditional cultures. Whoever dares to get education in Africa becomes a 'westernized' élite" (Anise, 1973, p. 437). However, this view is not only a product of western condescension, but one propounded by and reflected upon by African scholars and writers themselves (Irele, 1986; Memmi, 1965; Moore, 1980; Mudimbe, 1994). African intellectuals found themselves straddling two worlds. From this uncomfortable position have, however, emerged new discourses of Africanness.

Of Africans and Africa

In its search for identity, Africa has turned into multiple Africas of multiple knowledges of resistance. Some of Africa's Africas were taken over from the West. One is a unitary view of Africa as a continent, whose identity is defined in opposition to the West. This has become the secular Africa of the Pan-Africanists, where a mutual commitment to the struggle for autonomy

from the West is supposed to dissolve differences in culture and religion (Anise, 1973; Mazrui, 1986).

A second Africa is Sub-Saharan Africa, a concept that was developed in order to confer a specific racial/religious identity on those cultures which are not of Islamic and Arab origin. Hereby the cultures of North Africa are viewed as belonging to either the Mediterranean or the Muslim world. They are not "African", despite the fact that almost half of Africans south of the Sahara are also Muslims. This view was long accepted by North Africans and "Africans" alike, and, despite efforts from both sides to cross the Saharan barrier, still casts an ambivalence on all African definitions of Africa (Anise, 1973) and produces discomfort at "African" conferences (Irele, 1992; Soyinka, 1985). Sub-Saharan Africa historically has a distinct cultural connotation: It is the Africa of traditional African culture, of Négritude, which is supposed to belong to all persons of African descent (Brenner, 1993). This Africa also has a distinct racial connotation: It is "black Africa, and black Africa belongs to the black Africans. This has given rise to the problem that no definition of African could be purified from its racial foundations" (Anise, 1973, p. 441). This view is complicated by the presence of not only "Arabs" in North Africa but generations of whites in North and Southern Africa, who either demand to be viewed as Africans and/or insist on defining themselves as non-Africans. It is further complicated by the presence, since the first contact with Europe, of peoples of mixed blood who have chosen to culturally define themselves on their own terms, though politically they may include themselves under the rubric of black Africa.

Despite Pan-African consciousness, the Black Ethos continues to dominate the collective identity of Africans. It is further complicated by the tendency of blacks of the diaspora, especially the United States, in their own search for an identity, to identify themselves with black Africa, often viewed nostalgically and romantically as mother Africa. Thus a further distinction grew out of "black Africa": That all black peoples are Africans and all white peoples are Europeans. While being an expression of a common identity of black peoples who act together to liberate themselves from white control, these notions have given rise to numerous problems. African Americans identify themselves with and search for an idealised African culture which is supposed to be found among rural African peasants, uncorrupted by the West,

while contemporary Africa is largely oriented towards the future and resents being prescribed to by Americans (Anise, 1973).

There is also the Muslim version of Africa, which subsumes cultural and racial differences under the universal Ummaa and equates African unity with Islamic unity. This Africa is unified by the Arabic language, "the knowledge of which is inextricably linked with the knowledge of Islam. It is an Africa which has recaptured its political independence from the West and whose destiny is linked with the future of Islam" (Brenner, 1993, p. 14).

Finally, there is an emerging Africa that owes its existence solely to the fact that there is a continent of this name. There is nothing unique or essentialist about this Africa; it is part of a larger humanity. Though marginalised and subjugated to the West, this Africa searches a future not in its own uniqueness, but in the acquisition of "universal" scientific and technological knowledge which is to be applied autonomously for the benefit of economic and social development (Brenner, 1993). This view springs largely from a Marxist heritage and its proponents are to be found in fields such as African philosophy (Hountondji, 1983), education (Irele, 1992), and psychology (McCulloch, 1982). It paradoxically wants to liberate itself from the West by entering fully into its knowledge, which is deemed neutral and universal. A similar trend is described by Said (1978) in the Muslim world at large, where

> the intelligentsia itself is auxiliary to what it considers to be the main trends stamped out in the West. Its role has been prescribed and set for it as a "modernizing" one, which means that it gives legitimacy and authority to ideas about modernization, progress, and culture that it receives from the United States for the most part. Impressive evidence for this is found in the social sciences and, surprisingly enough, among radical intellectuals whose Marxism is taken wholesale from Marx's own homogenizing view of the Third World. (p. 325)

Brenner (1993) concludes as follows on the Africas of Africa:

Discourse in Africa about Africa's own identity is complex and includes numerous

164

opposing and conflicting strands. And the discourse takes on a very different shape depending on the perspective from which it is viewed. For example, if we analyze it in terms of its Muslim versus secular components, then these two sub-discourses appear to be largely conflictual and mutually exclusive.... But viewed from other perspectives, the Muslim and secular discourses are quite similar, for example in their attitudes towards the West. All Africans share the aim of liberating the continent from the political, economic and cultural domination of the West. (p. 19)

African Philosophies

The question of African identity and the ambivalent position of the African intellectual are nowhere better illustrated than in the discourse around African philosophy, which relates to many of the issues raised by the relevance debate in psychology.

The topic began with the book Bantu Philosophy published in 1945 by the Belgian missionary Tempels, which suggested that there exists an African philosophy that deserved to be taken seriously. Tempels' equation between an African indigenous worldview (based mostly on anthropological studies) and "philosophy" not only serves to positively reframe and validate indigenous knowledge (previously denigrated to a primitive status), but has inspired efforts towards elevating this knowledge to the status of a metanarrative, competing with the metanarratives of western philosophers, and thereby challenging the boundaries drawn around mainstream western concepts of knowledge and philosophy (Outlaw, 1990). Tempels' project, which has become known as ethnophilosophy, was taken up by Africans such as Abraham (1962), Kagame (in Mudimbe, 1988), Kamalu (1990), Mbiti (1971), and Senghor (1965) and represents one pole of a continuum that reflects the positions of African philosophers (Mudimbe, 1988). At the ethnophilosophical extreme of this continuum would fall all those efforts at documenting the implicit collective philosophies of African peoples (chapter 2). At the opposite extreme would fall the work of those who insist that African philosophy is the work of Africans trained in the western tradition of philosophy, which has been termed the scientist position (Serequeberhan, 1991).

From the scientist position, the project of ethnophilosophy is a failure, firstly because it does not constitute "real" philosophy, which should be understood as "the critical self-reflection of a culture engaged in by specific individuals in that culture" (Serequeberhan, 1991, p. 18). This critical self-reflection is characterised by rationality and science, is viewed as universal and as having an essential unity (Hountondji, 1983). Ethnophilosophy fails secondly because it is an extension of European colonialist discourse aimed at subjugating the African (both Tempels and Mbiti aim at using their work to better convert Africans to Christianity and "civilisation") and thirdly, because the undertaking of ethnophilosophy edifies the existence of a static African culture predating colonialism, that has no direct practical engagement with current, concrete problems.

The scientist approach, followed by Hountondji (1983), Towa (in Irele, 1986), and Wiredu (1980) faces the problem of putting the concepts of science at the disposal of African nations. Cultural givens are viewed as irrelevant to the class struggle and a search for power. Towa (in Irele, 1986) writes:

> Due to its close affinity with science and technology, European philosophy seems to be the source of European power; for that reason, it will help us bring about the revolution of consciousness that underlies the construction of our own power. (p. 144)

Philosophy should incalculate the values of rigorous enquiry and precise measurement necessary to a modern, technological civilisation (Wiredu, 1980). These authors all view philosophy as the handmaid of science and a rather uncritical modernisation. It is not hard to discern the grand narrative of the Enlightenment in these views.

Writers such as Irele (1986) and Okolo (in MacGaffey, 1981) criticise the scientists' position, especially of their limited view of philosophy. "There is no Platonic essence or 'essential unity' of philosophy, certainly no single style of enquiry" (Outlaw, 1990, p. 241). Harris (1980) accuses the "scientists" of being in the grip of a romantic, naive positivism. "Philosophy does not descend from heaven in full panoply of rigor, it emerges from a social context.... Is the mystification of science, rigor, and texts any more than a European evolutionist

ideology in the service of a neo-colonial bourgeoisie?" asks MacGaffey (1981, p. 261). Similarly, Koffi and Abdou (in Mudimbe, 1988), accuse the "scientist elite" (p. 160) of neo-colonialism. The debate continues.

There have also been efforts in the middle ground between ethnophilosophy and scientism. Oruka (1990) advocates "philosophical sagacity" (p. 4), an effort to extract and document the philosophical wisdom of African sages through dialogue with their educated colleagues. Similar though not identical work includes that of Sodipo (1973) and Hallen and Sodipo (1986). These positions have been criticised for assuming that an African philosophy can be uncovered without being in some way contaminated by the inquiries of the educated (Serequeberhan, 1991). Serequeberhan also refers to a "national-ideological philosophy" (p. 20) produced by the African liberation struggle. These include the writings of Nkrumah, Toure, Nyerere, Fanon, and Senghor, some of which will be discussed later in this chapter.

MacGaffey (1981, p. 261) concludes: "Africans, while advocating Otherness, have not been able to avoid repeating the tedious alternations of European social thought.... These belong to the ideological armature of modern institutions, including international conferences, universities, and publishing". However, Outlaw (1990) illustrates how African philosophy has effectively reconstructed the history of western philosophy and has offered a direct challenge to its dominant narratives.

African Literature

While African philosophers search for new, appropriate metanarratives of legitimation, African literature, often written in the languages and styles of Europe, presents us with a different narrative knowledge that has not yet received the attention it deserves from psychologists who are concerned with relevance, due to the imperialism of science. In the West, literature and narrative knowledge have a marginal existence, as a space where romanticism and dissent can play themselves out without unduly disturbing the grand narratives (Lyotard, 1984). However, it is not surprising that African leaders and thinkers turned to literature to express their dissent. It has a long tradition of creating alternative knowledges challenging the dominant

ones, and of narrative knowledge challenging scientific knowledge. In modern African literature, this tradition merges with Africa's own narrative tradition, where oral literature was woven into the fabric of culture, served as a catalyst for change, edified and puzzled, educated and cured (chapter 2). The world of soothsayers and sages, of tales and fables, of poetry (a close relative of dance) and fiction, of dreams and myths; a world of a unity of words and things in a network of correspondences and resemblances (Foucault, 1970), opened a space where African intellectuals could open a different conversation not only with Europe but with a growing African readership.

This literature speaks primarily in a language of resistance, as in the words of Achebe (in Leshoai, 1985):

> I believe it is impossible to write anything in Africa without some kind of commitment, some kind of message, some kind of protest. Even those early novels that look like very gentle recreations of the past - what they are saying, in effect, was that we had a past. This was protest, because there were people who thought we didn't have a past. What we were doing was to say politely that we did - here it is. (p. 118)

Similarly, Appiah (1988) writes: "We see the formation of a counterhegemonic discourse... as the decolonized subject people write themselves, now, as the subject of a literature of their own. The simple gesture of writing for and about oneself... has a profound political significance" (p. 156). Writing turns the colonised cultural consumer into a creator (Césaire, 1959).

Resistance was firstly aimed at colonialism, a strong theme in African literature. Where European fiction fabricated a mythical traditional Africa, African writers reacted with realist representations of African existence, thinking, perceptions, and values. Where colonial fiction contrived apologies for colonialism, African novels answered with stories of social havoc and psychological damage, or satirised the colonial ritual and pantomime, as in the work of Beti, Oyono and Achebe (Moore, 1980). The complexity and disillusionment of the colonial world are portrayed in the work of Kane and Achebe. Themes such as alienation, urban political realities, exile and return, speak of the lived realities of Africans (Cartey, 1969). The theme of

cultural ambiguity, of attempts to find a personal identity, is contextualised and localised in the work of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Okara (Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981).

"Such fiction restores to the dislocated colonial the image of the collective subject, of the integrated self in vital interactions with an authentic cultural community" (B. Parry, 1987, pp. 46-47). This cultural community is often nostalgically depicted as a lost paradise and attempts are made to retrieve its values and dignities that have been insulted by colonialism, as in the work of Laye, Diallo, and Senghor. There is also the nostalgia of a writer like Achebe (1987) who portrays a realistic, dynamic, particular, local past that can hardly be described as romantic. In Achebe's work, the movement from pre-colonial to colonial and postcolonial is a central theme, as in writing all over the continent (Moore, 1980). The African that emerges from this theme has been restored to humanity by writers such as Achebe, Beti, and La Guma, who write of the African "from the dignity and authority of self-acceptance" (Soyinka, 1963, p. 395).

More recently, protest is increasingly being launched against the excesses of postcolonial regimes (Leshoai, 1985; Soyinka, 1967). A theme of disillusionment with contemporary affairs features strongly in later work, casting the writer in the role of moral critic and conscience, for which many have been prosecuted (Soyinka, 1967). Similarly the problem of corruption and deceit amongst both politicians and ordinary people permeates the work of Achebe, Soyinka, Armah, and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (Leshoai, 1985).

African literature deconstructs western notions of Africa by affirming multiple forms of African difference and sameness. Above all, as narrative knowledge, it contextualises - it is not possible to tell a story without rooting it in the particular and local. By voicing experiences that are not encompassed by the dominant narratives, it deconstructs monolithic generalisations and exposes the complexities and multiformity of existence in Africa. In Soyinka's (1963) words:

Only when the political creature who persistently emerged from the common back cloth of an imposed identity - primitivism - began to display evidence of will, of individuality, of localized social and historical causation, only then did the European observer begin

seriously to accept the validity of a creative imagination for the African, outside folklore and ritual. (p. 387)

The Reclamation of Africanness

We now examine in more detail one of the dominant African narratives of resistance: The reclamation of Africanness. This narrative has found its most able spokesmen in the Négritude literary movement in French-speaking Africa. What started as a psychological and literary response to colonialism developed into an ideology expressing African and pan-African nationalist sentiments (Irele, 1965a; Steeves, 1973), an approach to history (Irele, 1986), a philosophy (Markovitz, 1968), an epistemology (Senghor, 1965), and a psychology of African personality (Tembo, 1985). It has influenced the Black Consciousness movement (Adam, 1973; Biko, 1978; Charney, 1986; Hirschmann, 1990; Ranuga, 1986) and Black Psychology in the United States (Houston, 1990; Jackson & Sears, 1992; Jones, 1980; Myers, 1984, 1986, 1993; Nobles, 1976; J. L. White, 1984), and is echoed in the movement towards the indigenisation of psychology in Africa (Abdi, 1985; Bodibe, 1992, 1993, 1994; Gobodo, 1990; Holdstock, 1981b; Laubscher & Mcneil, 1995; Moghaddam, 1987; Okonji, 1975) as part of the relevance debate.

The Context

Négritude was the product of the acquaintance of three students of literature in 1928 in Paris. They were Léopold Senghor from Senegal, Aimé Césaire from Martinique, and Léon Damas from French Guiana. Both Senghor and Césaire were later to become leaders of their countries (Eshleman & Smith, 1983; Markovitz, 1968; Moore, 1980). All three men hailed from highly assimilated French colonial cultures, found themselves alienated from French culture in Paris, and set out to rediscover and reconstitute an African identity (Spleth, 1985). The intellectual climate in Paris at the time reflected a re-assessment of European values which included a rising concern with Marxism, the rise of existentialism and Nietzsche's philosophy, the rise of surrealism, and a "discovery" of "primitive art", which became a source of inspiration to modern artists (Eshleman & Smith, 1983; Reed & Wake, 1965). European writers like André Gide had begun to discover the evils of colonialism (Eshleman & Smith, 1983). In fact,

European thought was undergoing what Mudimbe (1988) terms an epistemological shift. Europe was discovering and exploring various forms of "unreason", in its growing disenchantment with "reason", thereby opening a space for Négritude to enter its discourse.

Public awareness of Africa and black culture was rising, partly the result of a black cultural renaissance in America during the 1920's (Guibert, 1961; Spleth, 1985). The Négritude writers were inspired by an American writer, McKay, who wrote about the alienation of black intellectuals due to a loss of folk wisdom because of imitations of the "civilised" white. Instead of stifling their uniqueness, McKay urged them to see their "backwardness" as preserving a vital resource (Eshleman & Smith, 1983). They read ethnological studies such as that of Frobenius who conceived of an African essence - or soul - permeating all aspects of black culture (Eshleman & Smith, 1983; Senghor, 1986).

The time was ripe for these black writers to gain full entry into the French world, through a literature that proclaimed the unique values that Africa had to offer Europe. The fact that they did gain entry is attested by the warm reception they received from prominent French writers such as Sartre, "the High Priest of postwar letters" (Eshleman & Smith, 1983, p. 7) and André Breton, leader and theorist of the surrealist movement (Reed & Wake, 1965). In an introduction to an anthology of Négritude poetry, Sartre (1976) saw the movement as an antithesis following the thesis of the colonial situation and preceding the synthesis in which all oppressed peoples would triumph over their oppressors. He opens the anthology as follows:

> What would you expect to find, when the muzzle that has silenced the voices of black men is removed? That they would thunder your praise? When these heads that our fathers have forced to the very ground are risen, do you expect to read adoration in their eyes? Here... are black men standing, black men who examine us; I want you to feel, as I, the sensation of being seen. For the white man has enjoyed for three thousand years the privilege of seeing without being seen.... Today, these black men have fixed their gaze upon us and our gaze is thrown back in our eyes. (Sartre, 1976, pp. 1-2)

Césaire's Négritude

The point of departure of Césaire's (1959, 1969, 1983) writing was a particular Martiniquan position of alienation (Eshleman & Smith, 1983). Antilleans had been colonised for three centuries and had no direct access to African culture. Their alienation was an alienation from themselves, not from their past (Reed & Wake, 1965). Césaire coined the term Négritude as an act of self-affirmation, "a decision to affirm and take pride in those things for which the Negro has been despised... principally and symbolically, in his black skin.... Césaire accepts the white man's myths about the Negro and glories in them" (Reed & Wake, 1965, p. 10). The initial goal of the movement was a renewed awareness of being black and a positive acceptance of one's destiny, history, and culture. Césaire had contact with African culture only through books which mirrored colonial views of African culture as antipodal to western values. The black culture of Négritude was thus initially spelled out as

> not the control of nature by reason and science but a joyful participation in it; not its control by technology but a coexistence with other forms of life; not the Christianity of the missions but the celebration of very ancient pagan rites; not the praise of individual achievement but the fraternity and communal soul of the clan, the tribe, as well as the love of ancestors. (Eshleman & Smith, 1983, p. 7)

Both Césaire and Senghor were criticised for racial overtones in their early formulation of Négritude (Scheub, 1972). The word itself focuses on blackness, not Africanness, and has been interpreted as an anti-racist racism (Sartre, 1976). Both later defended themselves from this accusation by emphasising the cultural identity of Négritude as part of a universal humanism (Eshleman & Smith, 1983; Reed & Wake, 1965; Senghor, 1966). The racial connotation was, however, compounded by uncompromising attacks on white culture made by both Césaire and Damas, and to a lesser extent by Senghor (Scheub, 1972). Despite these attacks, Négritude was a modern movement, and Césaire ended with what seems a revised "cannibalised" version of modernism (Eshleman & Smith, 1983). In defiance of European popular imagery, Césaire emphasised a symbolic cannibalism as part of his African heritage: "Its symbolism carries to its fullest degree the idea of participation; it symbolically eradicates

the distinction between the I and the Other, between human and nonhuman... finally, between subject and object" (Eshleman & Smith, 1983, p. 13).

As a modernist, Césaire (in Eshleman & Smith, 1983) viewed poetry as an antidote to scientific knowledge, which "numbers, measures, classifies, and kills" (p. 8). Drawing on Jung and Freud, as well as anthropology, he searched for an escape from oppression (viewed in terms of a kind of repression) in myth and image. He drew upon classical myths, mostly myths of transformation, but re-situated them in the context of black culture. Of all the Négritude writers, Césaire is closest to surrealism, whose goals were parallel to that of Négritude. Surrealism's basic premises were a return to childhood, an idealisation of madness, Freudian free associations, anticlericalism, eroticism, and the occult (Eshleman & Smith, 1983). It was a yearning for wholeness, an identification with the universe, the female, the foreign, the animal and vegetative, the unconscious; an inclusion of what had been relegated to the Other by knowledges of modernity.

Césaire, like Senghor, carried, and bestowed on himself, an almost messianic role, as a bridge between Europe and Africa. As both political and poetic spokesman for his people, he made the universal human black (and vice versa) and made the African an elemental human in whom all humans could recognise themselves:

> Césaire was paradoxically putting the finishing touches to an image of man toward
> which Europe itself had been groping in the wake of Rousseau, Diderot, and the
> Enlightenment and which continued to develop through nineteenth- and
> twentieth-century anthropology. In expanding Man's image, he gave the white world,
> which had educated him, a hundredfold more than what he had received from it.
> (Eshleman & Smith, 1983, pp. 19-20)

Senghor's Négritude

In contrast to Césaire, Senghor had a more direct experience of African culture, through memories of early childhood experiences, in a traditional African Islamic community as the son

of a Catholic trader. For Senghor, indigenous culture was less a mythical, remote past than a recently lost, romantic paradise, that could still be revived to make a contribution to the future of not only Africa, but also the West (Moore, 1980; Reed, 1963).

Senghor's work includes the formulation of a uniquely African cosmology and epistemology (chapter 2). Where Césaire gloried in what the African was not, Senghor (1965, 1966) gloried in what he was, and presented this view as a positive contrast to the European. He positively reframed the negative Other of Europe and at times turned Europe into an Other in terms of Africa:

Let us consider first the European as he faces an object. He is... an objective intelligence, a man of will, a warrior, a bird of prey, a steady gaze. He first distinguishes the object from himself. He keeps it at a distance. He freezes it out of time, and, in a way, out of space. He fixes it, he kills it. With his precision instruments he dissects it in a pitiless factual analysis. As a scientist, yet at the same time prompted by practical considerations, the European makes use of the Other that he has killed in this way for his practical ends. He makes a means of it.... He destroys it by devouring it. "White men are cannibals", an old sage from my own country told me a few years ago. "They have no respect for life". It is this process of devouring that they call "humanizing nature". (Senghor, 1965, p. 29)

Whereas Césaire's Négritude was a confirmation of self, Senghor's was a confirmation of culture: "The sum total of the values of the civilization of the African world" (Senghor, 1965, p. 31). That he asserts these values through a (mis)appropriation of the terms of colonial ethnographic discourse may be read from the following passage on "the African apprehension of reality":

The African is as it were shut up inside his black skin. He lives in primordial night. He does not begin by distinguishing himself from the object, the tree or stone, the man or animal or social event. He does not keep it at a distance. He does not analyse it. Once he has come under its influence, he takes it like a blind man, still living, into his hands.

He does not fix it or kill it... he fingers it, he <u>feels</u> it....

He lives with the <u>Other</u> in a communal life, lives in <u>symbiosis</u>: he is born-with and thereby knows the <u>Other</u>. Subject and object are dialectically confronted in the very act of knowing one another. It is a long caress in the night... the act of love, from which the fruit of knowledge is born. The African might say, "I smell, I dance the <u>Other</u>. I am". (Senghor, 1965, pp. 20-32)

Like Césaire, Senghor was offering Europe an alternative view of humanity and non-scientific ways of knowing which it was searching for at the time. However, Senghor's Négritude was ultimately concerned with a larger unity between African and European knowledge. He affirmed Africa's contribution to a process of mutual assimilation in the face of France's arrogant one-way process. African values were affirmed in terms of their contribution to a new world civilisation, which he termed <u>La Civilisation de l'Universel</u>, an idea inspired by the philosophy of Teilhard de Chardin and the New Physics (Senghor, 1965, 1966). This civilisation would ultimately transcend the limitations of Africa, Europe, and the Arab world (Scheub, 1972; Reed & Wake, 1965). As such, Négritude became one ingredient of a new unity:

The civilization of the twentieth century cannot be universal except by being a dynamic synthesis of all the cultural values of all civilizations. It will be monstrous unless it is seasoned with the salt of Négritude. For it will be without the savour of humanity. (Senghor, 1965, p. 98)

Senghor's leaning towards synthesis and cultural assimilation, which contrasts with the views of many of his contemporaries (Moore, 1980), may be related to Senegal's relation with France, which had for a long time been closer and more equal than almost any other colony (July, 1968). Assimilation had many benefits, despite its alienating effects. As spokesman of his country, Senghor's position reflected its close ties with France, while offering Négritude as a contribution towards mutual assimilation (Moore, 1980). The dominant metaphor in Senghor's work, of the rising Phoenix of Egyptian mythology, embodies its core narrative: Destruction and alienation (the present), followed by purification and Négritude (the past), and, finally,

resurrection and synthesis (the future) (Scheub, 1972). Reed and Wake (1965) summarise Senghor's position as follows:

It is not so much unity as the process by which things become one, the process of mutual contribution, of synthesis and symbiosis into a wholeness which is more complex and more capable of freedom, so that unity and uniformity are not the same but incompatible conditions, that has most deeply interested Senghor's poetic imagination and his meditations on the nature and destiny of human culture. (p. 26)

The Psychology of Négritude

The point of departure of Négritude is the experience of otherness: Alienation, inferiority, self-hatred, and shame flowing from a state of dependence on a dominating culture, which is also extremely attractive, resulting in the "pathology of the uprooted man": A divided self (Irele, 1965a, p. 503). The cultural hybrid suffers from spiritual instability, intensified self-consciousness, restlessness, and malaise. Négritude, as a reaction to these experiences, embodies a revolt against the dominating culture, a rediscovery of self-identity, self-affirmation, and self-differentiation, in a renaissance of the myths of indigenous Africa. It involves "a quest for the self, with a conquest of a lost identity as the prize" (Irele, 1965a, p. 511).

The Legacy of Négritude

Irele (1965a, 1965b) views Négritude as a watershed that marks the emergence of a modern African consciousness, by contrasting it with African messianic religious movements, which remain largely traditional, but borrow from the West. The reverse is true of Négritude:

Despite its championship of a non-rational tradition, it remains rigorously rational. Senghor's Négritude, for example, is an anti-intellectualism mediated by the intellect, and the whole movement is expressed through a western mould which absorbs African realities.... It marks a "desacralisation" of African collective life, an attitude which is spontaneous and no longer imposed, and out of which have begun to flow new currents

of ideas for tackling present-day African problems. (Irele, 1965a, p. 522)

Although Négritude continues to serve as a point of reference in African intellectual debates, it is generally viewed as a necessary movement whose time has nevertheless passed. Its image of Africanness fitted too neatly into European expectations and was too close to colonial discourse and the myth of the noble savage for the comfort of many (Simone, 1993; Steeves, 1973). Négritude was rejected by many Anglophone writers, like Soyinka, who was critical of its romanticism and dismissed it by stating that "the tiger does not have to proclaim its tigritude" (Eshleman & Smith, 1983, p. 7). The concerns of Négritude were never as close nor as pressing to Anglophone intellectuals, who were colonised by a policy of indirect rule, leaving traditional culture largely intact, than to the assimilated Francophones.

Similarly, the black South African educated élite were more concerned with being allowed full entry into the white world, than with re-asserting an African identity (Moore, 1980). Whereas African Négritude writers were brought up amid traditional cultures still rich and alive, most South African writers formed part of an urban, industrialised culture and rejected the traditional culture that was artificially relegated to the Homelands, symbols of stagnation and oppression (Moore, 1980; Mphalele, 1959, 1964; Reed & Wake, 1965). They tended to associate Négritude with racism and an imposed cultural identity. Rather than questioning themselves or doubting their identity, they blamed the system and the régime (Foster, 1993b). Some of the most scathing attacks on Négritude came from South Africa. Mphahlele (1964) criticised its élitism, its failure to challenge white authority, and its romanticism:

Who is so stupid as to deny the historical fact of négritude as both a protest and a positive assertion of African values? All this is valid. What I do not accept is the way in which too much of the poetry inspired by it romanticizes Africa - as a symbol of innocence, purity, and artless primitiveness. I feel insulted when some people imply that Africa is not also a violent continent. I am a violent person, and proud of it because it is often a healthy human state of mind; some day I'm going to plunder, rape, set things on fire; I'm going to cut someone's throat; I'm going to subvert a government; I'm going to organize a coup d'état; yes, I'm going to oppress my own people; I'm going to hunt down

the rich fat black men who bully the small, weak black men and destroy them...

This is only a dramatization of what Africa can do and is doing. The image of Africa consists of all these and others.... So we are told only half - often the falsified half - of the story of Africa [by Négritude].... I refuse to be put in a Negro file - for sociologists to come and examine me.... If African culture is worth anything at all, it should not require myths to prop it up.... And if you thought that the end of colonialism was the end of agony, then it is time to wake up. (p. 625)

Mphahlele (1964) is asserting another African reality: That of oppression and liberation; a world of force and violence that had found a home not only in South Africa but in French colonies like Algeria as well as postcolonial African states; a world far removed from the assimilated unity of Senegal and France, which could converse in literary language across cultural divides. In the world of oppression, it is not poetry and myth but action and violence that liberates.

Oppression and Liberation

The most dominant narrative of African resistance is that of the movement from oppression to liberation. This narrative, carrying a strong Marxist imprint, emerged directly from the colonial scenario, has inspired the Black Consciousness (Adam, 1973; Biko, 1978; Ranuga, 1986) and Black Power movements (Hirschmann, 1990; West, 1990), and has influenced movements in psychology such as Black Psychology (Houston, 1990; Jackson & Sears, 1992; Jones, 1980; Myers, 1993; Nobles, 1976; J. L. White, 1984), the psychology of oppression (Bulhan, 1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1980c, 1985; Nicholas, 1993a, 1993b; Nicholas & Cooper, 1990) critical psychology (Dawes, 1986; Ivey, 1986; R. Miller, 1989; Whittaker, 1991), and materialist psychology (Couve, 1986; Manganyi, 1991). The work of Bulhan (1985) and McCulloch (1983) on Fanon has influenced various authors in the relevance debate in South Africa (Anonymous, 1986; Couve, 1988; Manganyi, 1973, 1977, 1981). There is also a new generation of African intellectuals, including social scientists, who are rediscovering Fanon in their disenchantment with postcolonial excesses of African states (Dacy, 1986; Jinadu, 1986) .

This section focuses mainly on the psychological dimensions of the oppression-liberation narrative, as described by two actors in the colonial drama, whose work has extended the boundaries of psychology to include aspects of colonial power/knowledge.

The Context

In the 1950's, two men met each other in Tunis: Albert Memmi was director of an institute of child psychology; Frantz Fanon was a psychiatrist at the local hospital and writer for the Algerian liberation movement. Both were committed to the North African struggle for liberation, yet both were outsiders to the contesting camps: Memmi, though a native Tunisian of Berber background, was a Jew; and Fanon, a black West Indian of Christian background; both were outsiders within a Muslim majority. Both were culturally assimilated Frenchmen through their education and further studies in psychiatry (Fanon) and philosophy and psychology (Memmi) in France, yet both were outsiders among the French as colonials of a different "racial" origin. Both found themselves hovering in the middle echelons of stratified colonial societies, simultaneously identifying with the coloniser and the colonised. (Cassirer, 1973; Caute, 1970; Geismar, 1971; Memmi, 1973; S. G. Miller, 1991; Zahar, 1974.)

Both were confronted in North Africa with a form of colonialism that was far more brutally oppressive than that of Senegal (Levine, 1986), and both sought to establish how the phenomenon of oppression shape the psychological and cultural personality of the oppressed, as well as the possible ways in which the oppressed "can break out of the circle of oppression and give substance to the ideal of a universal humanism" (Cassirer, 1973).

Memmi's Psychology of Colonialism

Memmi (1965) views the coloniser-colonised relationship as a reflection of the larger colonial system of political, economic, and cultural dominance. The colonial situation invades the self-constitution of individuals and creates a colonised personality as it creates a coloniser personality, a process which may be compared to Foucault's (1977) descriptions of the swarming of disciplinary mechanisms. These personalities are then tied into a relationship of mutual

dependence. The only escape from this position is the destruction of the colonial system.

Portrait of the Coloniser

The coloniser poses as noble adventurer and righteous pioneer, but is drawn towards the colony by economic gain and privileges vis à vis the colonised.

Jobs and positions will be reserved for him in advance; the tests will be given in his language, causing disqualifying difficulties for the colonized... he always receives preferential treatment.... From the time of his birth, he possesses a qualification independent of his personal merits or his actual class. He is part of a group of colonizers whose values are sovereign. (Memmi, 1965, p. 12)

However, the coloniser cannot ignore the colonised.

He must constantly live in relation to them, for it is this very alliance which enables him to lead the life which he decided to look for in the colonies; it is this relationship which is lucrative, which creates privilege. He finds himself on one side of a scale, the other side of which bears the colonized man. (Memmi, 1965, p. 8)

Memmi (1965) differentiates between the coloniser who accepts, and the coloniser who refuses colonialism. The coloniser who accepts is heir to privileges he would defend at all price, due to his mediocrity within his own culture. "It is the mediocre citizens who set the general tone of the colony. They are the true partners of the colonized, for it is the mediocre who are most in need of compensation and of colonial life" (Memmi, 1965, p. 50). The coloniser finds himself in an ambiguous position. Never totally convinced of his legitimacy, aware of being an usurper, he has to create an identity for himself that justifies this position. "One attempt can be made by demonstrating the usurper's eminent merits, so eminent that they deserve such compensation. Another is to harp on the usurped's demerits, so deep that they cannot help leading to misfortune" (Memmi, 1965, pp. 52-53). He may go further, to wish the disappearance of the usurped, whose very existence causes him to take on the role of usurper.

But, paradoxically, the more he hurts them, the more he assumes the role of oppressor. The coloniser is progressively dehumanised by identifying himself with the colonialist apparatus (Sartre, 1965).

This is where the knowledges of colonial science play an important role. Ultimately, only racism can save the coloniser from being confronted with the impossibility of his position.

> Colonial racism is built from three major ideological components: one, the gulf between the culture of the colonialist and the colonized; two, the exploitation of these differences for the benefit of the colonialist; three, the use of these supposed differences as standards of absolute fact. (Memmi, 1965, p. 71)

The colonial relationship "is what it is because they are what they are, and neither one nor the other will ever change" (Memmi, 1965, p. 72). The impossible situation of the coloniser who accepts, is a product of a pre-existing colonial system. A person who could have been a moderate democrat in the home country, "will surely be transformed into a conservative, reactionary, or even colonial fascist.... The colonial situation manufactures colonialists, just as it manufactures the colonized" (Memmi, 1965, pp. 55-56).

If the coloniser rejects the ideology of colonialism, he finds himself in a contradiction because he daily profits from those privileges he denounces. If he speaks out, he is rejected as a traitor by his own people. He then turns towards the colonised. "Refusing the colonizers, damned by them: let him adopt the colonized people and be adopted by them; let him become a turncoat" (Memmi, 1965, p. 72). However, he finds that he is not one of them and has no real desire to be. "He has another civilization before him, customs differing from his own, men whose reactions often surprise him, with whom he does not feel deep affinity" (Memmi, 1964, p. 24). In addition, his liberal political beliefs are challenged by the fierce nationalism of the colonised, which excludes him. He becomes "unbearably embarrassed" in the face of terrorism and political assassination, and tries to rationalise these. "He can't approve acts of the colonized which he condemns in the colonizers because these are exactly why he condemns colonization" (Memmi, 1965, p. 31). He discovers that the nationalism of the oppressed has a strong religious

(Islamic) element, and that he may have no place in the new order. His role collapses, leading to withdrawal and, ultimately, silence. Memmi explains this in terms of the colonial system:

> Colonial relations do not stem from individual good will or actions; they exist before his arrival or his birth, and whether he accepts or rejects them matters little. It is they, on the contrary which, like any institution, determine a priori his place and that of the colonized and, in the final analysis, their true relationship.... He shares a collective responsibility by the fact of membership in a national oppressor group. Being oppressed as a group, the colonized must necessarily adopt a national and ethnic form of liberation from which he cannot but be excluded. (Memmi, 1965, pp. 38-39)

The In-betweens

The colonial system consists of a hierarchy where, between the coloniser and the colonised, exist other nationals, candidates for assimilation, the recently assimilated as well as the representatives of the authorities recruited among the Muslim themselves. The Jew "found himself one small notch above the Moslem on the pyramid which is the basis of all colonial societies" (Memmi, 1965, p. xiv). He identified both with the French and the Muslims, leading to a profound ambivalence.

The recently assimilated in-betweens often place themselves in an even more superior position towards the colonised than the coloniser himself.

> They push a colonial mentality to excess, display proud disdain for the colonized and continually show off their borrowed rank.... Such is the history of the pyramid of petty tyrants: each one, being socially oppressed by one more powerful than he, always finds a less powerful one on whom to lean, and becomes a tyrant in his turn. (Memmi, 1965, pp. 16-17)

Portrait of the Colonised

The colonised suffers deprivations that are primarily economic but also social and personal, by being defined as inferior. He both hates the colonisers and admires them passionately. He internalises the mythical portrait of the colonised created by colonial discourse and tends to view himself as part of a unanimous group, removed from its own history; as part of a community denied of growth and vitality. There are two possible reactions, tried in succession or simultaneously: Assimilation in order to become different from the myth, or an attempt to reconquer indigenous values that are denied under colonialism (Memmi, 1965).

Initially, the colonised fall back on traditional values and religion. These, though providing a refuge and identity, are ineffective in dealing with colonial realities because they do not carry power within the structure of the colonial world. "All effectiveness and social dynamics... seem monopolized by the colonizer's institutions" (Memmi, 1965, p. 103). The local culture becomes petrified and static, encased in colonialism. "As long as he tolerates colonization, the only possible alternatives for the colonized are assimilation or petrification" (Memmi, 1965, p. 102). The colonised who chooses assimilation, usually through education, finds himself in an alienated world that excludes his own culture and language, and is still refused entry into the adopted culture. By adopting its values, he paradoxically has to condemn himself, which he may try to do by hiding his past, traditions, and origins. However, he also has to defend these. Ultimately, assimilation is impossible.

> Revolt is the only way out of the colonial situation, and the colonized realizes it sooner or later. His condition is absolute and cries for an absolute solution; a break and not a compromise. He has been torn away from his past and cut off from his future, his traditions are dying and he loses the hope of acquiring a new culture.... He possesses nothing, is no longer anything and no longer hopes for anything.... How can he emerge from this increasingly explosive circle except by rupture, explosion? The colonial situation, by its own internal inevitability, brings on revolt. For the colonial condition cannot be adjusted to; like an iron collar, it can only be broken. (Memmi, 1965, pp. 127-8)

The coloniser is actively rejected on his own terms. "The colonized fights in the name of the very values of the colonizer, uses his techniques of thought and his methods of combat. It must be added that this is the only language that the colonizer understands" (Memmi, 1965, p. 129). Enter the colonised's defensive racism and xenophobia, as well as the Other image - now proclaimed and glorified. "Suddenly, exactly to the reverse of the colonialist accusation, the colonized, his culture, his country, everything that belongs to him, everything he represents, become perfectly positive elements" (Memmi, 1965, p. 138). Even the terms of revolt are profoundly enmeshed in the colonial situation. "In the midst of revolt, the colonized continues to think, feel and live against and, therefore, in relation to the colonizer and colonization" (Memmi, 1965, p. 139).

Like Fanon, Memmi calls for a transcendence of the colonial situation:

Colonization distorts relationships, destroys or petrifies institutions, and corrupts men, both colonizers and colonized. To live, the colonized needs to do away with colonization. To become a man, he must do away with the colonized being that he has become. If the European must annihilate the colonizer within himself, the colonized must rise above his colonized being. (Memmi, 1965, p. 151)

Fanon's Manichean Psychology

Fanon's view of colonialism largely confirms that of Memmi, but extends into an explicit theoretical psychological critique. It further exposes the destructive effects of European power/knowledge and challenges its epistemes and technologies of power, paradoxically while being caught up in these same power/knowledges.

A central problem in his work is: How to transcend the dualisms created by the Manichean world of colonialism. For Fanon (1967a), man is rooted at the core of a "Manichean world.... from which he must be extricated" (p. 8) and has to "...give up projecting on to the world an antinomy that coexists with him" (p. 8). This antinomy is described from three overlapping angles in his work: White/black (racism), the coloniser/colonised (colonialism),

and the oppressor/oppressed (oppression). Like a hologram, these dualisms repeat themselves on the level of communities, societies, groups, and individuals. The Manichean world is reflected and mirrored within society and manifests itself in intrapsychic conflicts. This world is rooted in colonial history and entails a mutual influencing process between the races that is described as follows: "White and black represent the two poles of a world, two poles of perpetual conflict: a genuinely Manichean concept of the world" (Fanon, 1967a, p. 33). Not only Fanon's theories but also his actions were directed towards extricating himself, and humanity, from these dualisms, and towards exposing their alienating and violent effects (Bakker, 1993).

Black Skin White Masks

Fanon's central argument, like that of Memmi, is that colonialism leaves nothing untouched. The imposition of the colonising culture leads to an inferiority complex in the colonised, which, historically, has an economical dimension: "One is white above a certain financial level" (Fanon, 1967a, p. 32). Efforts at overcoming this predicament result in an "arsenal of complexes" (p. 23) and "psychic alienation" (p. 36):

> The Negro enslaved by his inferiority, the white man enslaved by his superiority alike behave in accordance with a neurotic orientation. Therefore I have been led to consider their alienation in terms of psychoanalytical classifications. The Negro's behaviour makes him akin to an obsessive neurotic type, or, if one prefers, he puts himself into a complete situational neurosis. In the man of colour there is a constant effort to run away from his own individuality, to annihilate his own presence. Whenever a man of colour protests, there is alienation. Whenever a man of colour rebukes, there is alienation. (Fanon, 1967a, p. 44)

Inferiority leads to overcompensation (Fanon, 1967a), by adopting the culture and values of the coloniser - assuming a white mask: "The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards" (p. 14). The result is a social hierarchy, like that described by Memmi, ranging from black to white. This cultural

imposition and resultant social hierarchy are intimately related to the Manichean world of racial perceptions:

> The white man is sealed in his whiteness. The black man in his blackness.... There is a fact: white men consider themselves superior to black men. There is another fact: black men want to prove to white men, at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect. How do we extricate ourselves? (Fanon, 1967a, p. 9)

The colonised "becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle" (Fanon, 1967a, p. 14). The white mask is assumed, firstly, through acquiring the language of the coloniser, for "to speak means... above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization.... The Negro of the Antilles will be proportionally whiter - that is, he will come closer to being a real human being - in direct relation to his mastery of the French language" (Fanon, 1967a, p. 13). This attempt is ultimately unsuccessful as it alienates him from his own culture. Authentic relations become impossible. This manifests itself on all levels of social interaction, including the relationship between the sexes, so that Martiniquans customarily "dream of a form of salvation that consists of turning magically white" (Fanon, 1967a, p. 33). One way of obtaining that salvation, a second form of white mask, is to fall in love with the "whiteness" of men and women whiter than themselves. A third is through education. However, the educated black may receive at best a paternalistic acceptance and remains caught in the paradox of a dualistic world. The white mask hides an anger, for ultimately the black is confronted by an "indifference, this automatic manner of classifying him, imprisoning him, primitivizing him, decivilizing him, that makes him angry" (Fanon, 1967a, p. 24).

Colonial Neurosis

Fanon (1967a) investigates the extent to which psychoanalytic theory can be applied to understand colonial society as a situation where the colonised necessarily has to exhibit "neurotic" and alienated behaviour. In non-colonial societies, the root of pathology may usually be traced to the family environment. However, "- and this is a most important point - we observe the opposite in the man of colour. A normal Negro child, having grown up within a

normal family, will become abnormal on the slightest contact with the white world" (Fanon, 1967a, pp. 101-102). The Negro child learns from an early age to identify with and to share the symbols of the white world, where

> the Wolf, the Devil, the Evil Spirit, the Bad Man, the Savage are always symbolized by Negroes or Indians; since there is always identification with the victor, the little Negro, quite as easily as the little white boy, becomes an explorer, an adventurer, a missionary "who faces the danger of being eaten by the wicked Negroes". (Fanon, 1967a, p. 103)

During socialisation, the black child comes to view the Negro not only as inferior, but as the personification of the id. This may later lead to various forms of conflict. The child may have to choose between European society and its "black and savage" (Fanon, 1967a, p. 106) family. Alternatively, he may view himself and his family as essentially "white", but upon contact with Europeans, find himself perceived as a symbol of darkness. The black's feeling of inferiority is conscious: "In him there is none of the affective amnesia characteristic of the typical neurotic" (Fanon, 1967a, p. 107). When faced with the white world, the Negro undergoes a sensitising action: "If his psychic structure is weak, one observes a collapse of the ego. The black man stops behaving as an <u>actional</u> person. The goal of his behaviour will be The Other (in the guise of the white man), for The Other alone can give him worth" (Fanon, 1967a, p. 109).

Fanon (1967a) stresses that this situation arises in a colonial culture where the only view of the world is white and where no "black voice" yet exists. Here the collective unconscious contains the archetype of "the uncivilized savage, the Negro who slumbers in every white man" (1967a, p. 133). Fanon criticises Jung for assuming that the collective unconscious is racially determined: "Jung locates the collective unconscious in the inherited cerebral matter. But the collective unconscious, without having to fall back on the genes, is purely and simply the sum of prejudices, myths, collective attitudes of a given group" (Fanon, 1967a, p. 133). The collective unconscious is culturally acquired, and in the case of the Negro, it is "the result of what I shall call the unreflected imposition of a culture" (Fanon, 1967a, p. 135). Any black growing up in a colonial country, will acquire this collective unconscious.

It is normal for the Antillean to be anti-Negro. Through the collective unconscious the Antillean has taken over all the archetypes belonging to the European. The *anima* of the Antillean Negro is almost always a white woman. In the same way, the *animus* of the Antilleans is always a white man. (Fanon, 1967a, pp. 136-137)

Fanon (1967a) criticises Jung for omitting blacks from his psychology: "This is where Jung was an innovator: he wanted to go back to the childhood of the world, but he made a remarkable mistake: he went back only to the childhood of Europe" (p. 134).

Fanon (1967a) also utilises aspects of Adlerian psychology in his analysis. Due to the inferiority that the Negro feels historically, he is characterised by a desire to dominate the other, to overcompensate.

The Negro is comparison... he is constantly preoccupied with self-evaluation and with the ego-ideal. Whenever he comes into contact with someone else, the question of value, of merit, arises. The Antilleans have no inherent values of their own, they are always contingent on the presence of the Other. (p. 149)

According to Adlerian individual psychology, all Antilleans are neurotic. This is where Fanon (1967a) departs from Adler:

It is not just this or that Antillean who embodies the neurotic formation, but all Antilleans. Antillean society is a neurotic society, a society of "comparison". Hence we are driven from the individual back to the social structure. If there is a taint, it lies not in the "soul" of the individual but rather in that of the environment. (p. 151)

Fanon (1967a) finally considers a Hegelian resolution to this ambiguous position. Both blacks and whites have to transcend their history, for both are slaves to their respective pasts. A transcendence of the past implies a transcendence of the black/white dualism:

The Negro is not. Any more than the white man. Both must turn their backs on the inhuman voices which were those of their respective ancestors in order that authentic communication be possible.... Superiority? Inferiority? Why not quite simply attempt to touch the other, to feel the other, to explain the other to myself? (p. 165)

Black Identity

Fanon's (1967a, chap. 5) essay The fact of blackness is a subjective exploration of the problem of black identity, which is rooted in the black man's contact with the white world. As long as he is among the frame of reference of his own people, the "problem of being black" (p. 77) remains something to be understood intellectually; to be protested against. However, the black man cannot just be black, "he must be black in relation to the white man" (p. 77).

Fanon (1967a) exposes the effects of the intrusive gaze of western knowledge on its objects, by describing how he had to "meet the white man's eyes" (p. 78): "In the white world the man of colour encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negative activity. It is a third-person consciousness" (p. 78). He finds himself but an object in the midst of other objects. He is an object imbued with certain characteristics by the white man

who had woven me out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories. I thought that what I had in hand was to construct a physiological self, to balance space, to localize sensations, and here I was called on for more....

"Look, a Negro!" It was an external stimulus that flicked over me as I passed by. I made a tight smile. "Look, a Negro!" It was true. It amused me. "Look, a Negro!" The circle was drawing a bit tighter. I made no secret of my amusement. "Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!".... I made up my mind to laugh myself to tears, but laughter had become impossible. (Fanon, 1967a, p. 79)

Fanon (1967a) contrasts this position to that of the Jew, who can go undetected despite racial

stereotypes; ultimately he is known through his acts. "He belongs to the race of those who since the beginning of time have never known cannibalism" (p. 82). In contrast, the black man cannot go unnoticed.

> I am overdetermined from without. I am the slave not to the "idea" that others have of me but of my own appearance.... I am being dissected by white eyes, the only real eyes. I am fixed.... I slip into corners, I remain silent, I strive for anonymity, for invisibility.
> (p. 82)

The eyes of the white man are "objective", cutting away "slices of his humanity" (Fanon, 19671, p. 82). The white man has a "shameful science" (p. 85) with which he discovers racially-linked characteristics: "He went through my pockets. He thrust probes into the least circumvolution of my brain. Everywhere he found only the obvious" (p. 91). Fanon is expressing the effect of otherness created by the "objective" gaze of colonial biological science.

The Negro comes to his own defense. First, through reason. "As a good tactician, I intended to rationalize the world and to show the white man that he was mistaken" (Fanon, 1967a, p. 84). However, his intellectual probings are answered with the "unreason" (p. 84) of colour prejudice, expressed in the "reason" of race science. Finally, since "no agreement was possible on the level of reason, I threw myself back towards unreason.... I had chosen the method of regression" (p. 87). He reads Senghor and Césaire (a former teacher of his) and finds a new weapon: "Had I read that right? I read it again with redoubled attention. From the opposite end of the white world a magical Negro culture was hailing me. Negro sculpture! I began to flush with pride. Was this our salvation?" (p. 87). The irony in the passage is not coincidental, for it is a black Frenchman speaking. The new weapon, Négritude, is an unfamiliar one. On the one hand, it offers a positive interpretation of his difference: "The white man was wrong, I was not a primitive, not even a half-man, I belonged to a race that had already been working in silver and gold two thousand years ago" (p. 92). Négritude becomes a weapon of self-assertion: "I put the white man back into his place; growing bolder, I jostled him and told him point-blank, 'Get used to me, I am not getting used to anyone'" (p. 93). On the other hand, the educated Martiniquan cannot avoid mistrusting Négritude:

From every direction I am assaulted by the obscenity of dances and of words.... Black magic, primitive mentality, animism, animal eroticism, it all floods over me. All of it is typical of peoples that have not kept pace with the evolution of the human race. Or, if one prefers, this is humanity at its lowest. (Fanon, 1967a, p. 89)

His ambivalent flight into Négritude finally proves unsatisfactory when the white man reacts in patronising, though rational manner, to the claims of Négritude:

In a society such as ours, industrialized to the highest degree, dominated by scientism, there is no longer room for your sensitivity.... Oh certainly, now and then when we are worn out by our lives in big buildings, we will turn to you as we do to our children - to the innocent, the ingenuous, the spontaneous... the childhood of the world. (Fanon, 1967a, p. 93)

The essay concludes on the following note: "Without a Negro past, without a Negro future, it was impossible for me to live my Negrohood. Not yet white, no longer wholly black, I was damned" (Fanon, 1967a, pp. 98-99). The Manichean world has allowed no escape. The essay clearly portrays its experiential effects.

Pathologies of Liberty

Fanon's clinical articles are concerned with the central question of the relationship between the individual and the colonial social environment. He severely criticised the French medical system's inability to deal with the apparent psychosomatic problems of North African migrants, due to a disregard of cultural, economical, and situational factors (Fanon, 1967d). As head of a mental hospital in Algeria, he later defined psychopathology as a pathology of liberty, reflecting a gradual realisation that the colonial situation was, as such, pathogenic, creating a situation where the freedom of the colonised was curtailed (Dequeker et al., 1955).

This theme was further explored in his critique of ethnopsychiatry. Fanon and Sanchez (1956) refute a belief that was widely and scornfully held amongst psychiatrists in Algeria, that

Muslims venerate all their mentally ill. Their article is an illustration of the principle of cultural relativity and contrasts western attitudes to mental illness with those of Muslims. They criticise the insensitivity of western doctors in denying the existence of a coherent system of values in the Muslim community. One consequence of such a denial is ineffective treatment methods. Attempts to apply European diagnostic and therapeutic techniques to Muslim patients often proved futile. Muslim women reacted with confusion and inarticulation when faced with the Thematic Apperception Test. Fanon and Geronimi (1956) conclude that "there is no homogeneity between what we are presenting to the sick person, and what she knows" (p. 368). Similar discoveries of cultural non-recognition were made when Fanon and Azoulay (1954) attempted to apply a sociotherapeutic approach in a ward of Muslim men and failed. Many Europeans would have ascribed this to the "constitutional laziness" of Muslims. Fanon and Azoulay, however, ascribe the failure of the programme to cultural insensitivity due to the French assimilationist policy.

In his later writings Fanon (1967b, 1967c, 1967f, 1973b) focuses more directly on the causative role of the colonial system in psychopathology and criminality. Exposed to poverty and a breakdown in traditional social and cultural structures, the native becomes especially sensitive to mental illness.

> In the period of colonization when it is not contested by armed resistance, when the sum total of harmful stimuli overstep a certain threshold, the defensive attitudes of the natives give way and they then find themselves crowding the mental hospitals. There is thus during this calm period of successful colonization a regular and important mental pathology which is the direct product of oppression. (Fanon, 1973b, p. 201)

Within the colonial world, the mental hospital becomes an extension of the oppressive system and serves as an instrument of social control. The native is "cured" when he is reinstated into colonial society as part of the "social background" (1973b, p. 200). In his letter of resignation before joining the liberation forces, Fanon (1967c) states the logical conclusion of his argument; a counterargument to the close association between madness and the Other developed by colonial discourse:

Madness is one of the means man has of losing his freedom. And I can say, on the basis of what I have been able to observe from this point of vantage, that the degree of alienation of the inhabitants of this country appears to me to be frightening.... If psychiatry is the medical technique that aims to enable man no longer to be a stranger to his environment, I owe it to myself to affirm that the Arab, permanently an alien in his own country, lives in a state of absolute depersonalization. (p. 53)

In the same way that mental institutions become instruments of oppression, western science often serves the interest of the oppressors. Fanon (1973b) launched an attack against ethnopsychiatric research which "proved" biological limitations of Africans, making them inherently lazy, violent and inclined to criminality. The laziness of the Algerian (prior to the war of liberation) was one of the only weapons enabling him to "sabotage the colonial machine" (Fanon, 1973b, p. 238). It is the "concrete manifestation of non-cooperation, or at least of minimum cooperation" (p. 238). His attitude towards the oppressor's laws and other aspects of colonial rule is similarly passive resistant. The high incidence of crime amongst the oppressed is the outcome of economic oppression and the destruction of the social and cultural values of the oppressed:

> Under the colonial regime, anything may be done for a loaf of bread or a miserable sheep.... For a colonized man, in a contest [sic] of oppression like that of Algeria, living does not mean embodying moral values or taking his place in the coherent and fruitful development of the world. To live means to keep on existing. (Fanon, 1973b, p. 249)

The aggression towards the coloniser is redirected towards the fellow-colonised.

> The Algerian, exposed to temptations to commit murder every day - famine, eviction from his room because he has not paid the rent, the mother's dried-up breasts, children like skeletons, the building-yard which has closed down, the unemployed that hang around the foreman like crows - the native comes to see his neighbour as a relentless enemy. (Fanon, 1973b, p. 248)

In Fanon's clinical writings both the mental patient and the oppressed are alienated from themselves and society. His sociotherapeutic approach assumes that therapy entails disalienation, liberation, and reintegration into a social structure. Similarly, the oppressed will become disalienated to the extent that they can create new social structures through the struggle for liberation. The paradoxes of assimilation and Négritude can only be transcended through a growing political awareness (Fanon, 1973b). Within the North African context at the time, the only path to liberation was through war. Fanon not only joined this war, but analysed its psychological effects.

Decolonisation and Liberation

Fanon (1967f) argues that through the war of liberation, "the Algerian has brought into existence a new, positive, efficient personality" (p. 102), replacing the alienated, guiltridden, inferior victim of colonialism. This personality is both the product of the growth of the liberation movement and a precondition for it:

An authentic national liberation exists only to the precise degree to which the individual has irreversibly begun his own liberation. It is not possible to take one's distance with respect to colonialism without at the same time taking it with respect to the idea that the colonized holds of himself through the filter of colonialist culture. (Fanon, 1967f, p. 103)

Psychological, cultural, and political renewal go hand in hand. Fanon (1967b) tells of a "new kind of Algerian man" (p. 18), who has added a "new dimension to his existence" (p. 18) through the struggle for liberation. This new dimension includes new attitudes toward previously scorned aspects of western technology, as well as new attitudes and behaviour within the traditional Arab cultural customs. The rigid dichotomy between Arab and western cultures that had existed before the war was breaking down. Before decolonisation, western technology and knowledge were viewed with suspicion and rejected.

The colonial situation is precisely such that it drives the colonized to appraise all the colonizer's contributions in a pejorative and absolute way. The colonized perceives the doctor, the engineer, the schoolteacher, the policeman, the rural constable, through a haze of almost organic confusion. (Fanon, 1967b, p. 102)

Fanon (1967b) blames colonialism for this confusion. Western experts were also colonisers, and even educated Africans were implicitly aligned with the colonisers. "Science depoliticized, science in the service of man, is often non-existent in the colonies" (p. 121). Resistance to western science and technology was not caused by an inherent flaw in the native: "The notions about 'native psychology' or of the 'basic personality' are shown to be vain. The people who take their destiny in their own hands assimilate the most modern forms of technology at an extraordinary rate" (Fanon, 1967b, p. 126).

However, decolonisation is "always a violent phenomenon" (Fanon, 1973b, p.27), simply because colonialism is always a violent phenomenon. Decolonisation is only possible through a dialectical process where the violence of the coloniser is opposed by the violence of the colonised. The result is the destruction of the colonial system and its values, which is a prerequisite for the emergence of a new society and a new humanity. The destruction of this world occurs within Manichean constructs. The peasant who initiates the violent struggle does not think objectively, for experience has taught him that "objectivity is always directed against him" (Fanon, 1973b, p. 61). He thinks in absolute terms: "The last shall be first and the first last" (Fanon, 1973b, p. 28). The Manichean world imposed by the settler through violent means is returned to him through violent means: "To the saying 'All natives are the same' the colonized person replies 'All settlers are the same'.... To the theory of the 'absolute evil of the native' the theory of the 'absolute evil of the settler' replies" (Fanon, 1973b, pp. 72-73). A cycle of violence results.

By claiming the violence which had previously ruled over them, the natives actively create their own history. "Violence is thus seen as comparable to a royal pardon. The colonized man finds his freedom in and through violence" (Fanon, 1973b, pp. 67-68). Fanon goes as far as saying that violence is "a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and

from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect" (pp.73-74). However, Fanon does not imply that violence is not a destructive process. He elaborates on both the physical and psychological trauma it inflicts (Fanon, 1973a) and blames colonialism for the existence of this suffering - the war being a natural outcome of it. Nor does he assume the automatic replacement of colonialism with a Utopia. In fact, he warns at length against the ills befalling recently liberated African states, including neocolonialism, racism, religious discrimination, autocratic rule, and other forms of oppression (Fanon, 1973b, chap. 3).

Fanon (1973b) concludes his last book with an urgent appeal to the Third World to avoid repeating the mistakes of Europe. He admits that European thought had contained many solutions to the great problems of humanity. However, Europeans' theories of humanity and spiritual values, were not matched by their actions: "When I search for Man in the technique and style of Europe, I see only a succession of negations of man, and an avalanche of murders.... Look at them today swaying between atomic and spiritual disintegration" (Fanon, 1973b, p. 252). The "false humanism" of Europe has to be replaced by a newly invented, unique humanism, to be created in the future.

In Fanon's earlier writings, Manicheanism could only be overcome by a humanistic transcendence in internal consciousness. His later writings imply that change is only possible through the violent overthrow of the colonial system. This contention mirrored the extent of Manicheanism in the Algerian context at the time: In a totally dualistic world, it is not possible to remain neutral. Fanon ultimately fails to transcend this world, while exposing the violence inherent in its processes of power/knowledge (Bakker, 1993). Like Memmi (1965), he shows how liberation was formed out of the same epistemic clay as oppression.

Conclusion

Nonwestern peoples have an objective existence in the world and, happily, they impose themselves increasingly on our narratives, affecting their substance, disrupting their harmony, and refusing to acknowledge their self-appointed sovereignty. In the postmodern age, the empire strikes back. (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 38)

The unsettling knowledges of resistance depicted in this chapter may have us not only agree with these statements but also question them. Who are today's "nonwestern peoples"? Is the African intelligentsia nonwestern? To whom belong "our knowledges"? African knowledges of resistance have provided certain conditions of possibility for these ambiguities to emerge. The fixed grids and hierarchies of the Enlightenment have been replaced by shifting and ambiguous meanings, a reflection of "a process in which signifiers were set afloat, fought over, and recaptured on both sides of the colonial encounter" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, p. 18).

Though clearly locatable within the dominant western post-enlightenment discourse (Irele, 1983; Mudimbe, 1988), African narratives of resistance have contributed to a growing chorus of voices of marginal Others who have unsettled the core of modern power/knowledge (Ferguson, Gever, Minh-ha & West, 1990; T. A. Parry, 1993). They have posed deconstructive and reconstructive challenges to the dominant view of what is human, displacing the Eurocentric notion of "civilised man" by expanding its denotative ranges and/or by redefining this notion (Outlaw, 1990), thereby challenging the dominant Eurocentric narratives which have guided not only philosophy but also psychology. Lyotard's (1983) thesis that the two great narratives of emancipation and Enlightenment have lost their legitimising power and are increasingly being replaced by smaller, local narratives is born out by these observations. Said (1989) extends Lyotard's thesis to a historical context that includes both Europe and its colonies. Such a view exposes the crisis of modernism as being not only the result of the demands of various European Others to be taken seriously, but also of the emerging counter-narratives of liberation of colonised Others. African counter-narratives reveal the western narratives of Enlightenment and emancipation as "so much windy hypocrisy" (Said, 1989, p. 224), demand an abandonment of fixed ideas of settled cultural identities, and present Others not as ontologically given but as historically constituted. They unite the western and non-western worlds into a plural destiny for mankind, erode exclusivist biases, and "provide us with new narrative forms or... with other ways of telling" (p. 225).

However, the recent resurgence of narratives of emancipation and Enlightenment in the African context in the form of a new scientism, may also cast doubt upon Said's reinterpretation of Lyotard's thesis of the demise of the grand narratives. Said (1993) admits that colonial

resistance was often cast in the form of European narratives of emancipation. The question remains whether these counter-narratives challenge some of the most pervasive mythologies created by the dominant knowledge. They leave virtually intact the Modern episteme and especially its technologies of power. As such they do not challenge the dangers inherent in this episteme (Irele, 1986), but employ them in the service of what may become new forms of imperialism.

The dominant psychology emerging from African resistance is a modern psychology. Its key words, including Négritude, black personality, alienation, and liberation, all hail from the centrality of the individual as historical actor (Mudimbe, 1994). This psychology of resistance searches for a value-free science that has rid itself of ideologies or struggles to replace one ideology with another; it romanticises and reifies, but also at times ignores culture; it is pervaded with the hermeneutics of suspicion of Marxist and psychoanalytic thought; it draws on modern western metanarratives of legitimation, though it also attempts to replace these with new metanarratives; it reifies the subject and the notion of the individual self, construes new forms of normalisation, and by implication new Others.

Similarly, the dominant views of power embodied in these knowledges reflect a myth of the Modern age: That power is a monolithic, oppressive force, seated in governments and political systems, and speaking in ideologies. From this perspective, it follows that psychology is an oppressive force; an extension of this political power. Liberation is construed in terms of the unmasking of ideologies, political action, practices of self-formation, liberation from repression, and violence. Such views of power and liberation fit neatly into the colonial world and have effectively challenged its visibly oppressive powers. These views of power may, however, be ineffectual in resisting its more insidious manifestations and the hegemony of its knowledge, and in preventing its metamorphosis into new forms. Epistemological imperialism is alive and well, not only in psychology (MacGaffey, 1981; Mudimbe, 1988; Said, 1993; Serequeberhan, 1991), and African intellectuals are continually invited to sacrifice their power on the altars of the dogmas and doctrines of either traditionalism or liberation ideologies (Sono, 1994).

The dominant African discourse of resistance has emerged from "the margins of African contexts... its axes as well as its language have been limited by the authority of this exteriority" (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 176). Mudimbe (1994) draws our attention to the its "unconscious" (p. xiv) - the primary, popular, local discourses of African peoples that have been silenced, converted, or translated by conquering western discourses. At the centre of efforts to liberate them, the mute remain largely mute.

The knowledges of resistance depicted in this chapter have served and may continue to serve as a liberatory force in psychology. However, they have fought ideologies while serving hegemonies. The final chapter searches for further avenues of liberation through a reconsideration of power/knowledge, liberation, and psychology.

CHAPTER 7

TOWARDS A LIBERATED PSYCHOLOGY IN AFRICA

> Suddenly it becomes possible that there are just
> others, that we ourselves are an "other" among
> others. (Ricoeur, cited in Mudimbe, 1988, p. 21)

The archaeology that was presented in the preceding pages speaks for itself. Each reader will draw from this archaeology different connections to the current situation of psychology in Africa. This is but one of many potential archaeologies of psychological knowledge in Africa. If it has served as a point of departure for the reader to construe further archaeologies and/or to construe his or her own narrative of liberation upon its field of emergence, it has served its purpose.

This chapter presents some of the author's personal reflections on liberation and psychology in Africa. It does not draw final conclusions, nor does it "impose regularities under the pretence of discovering truth. That great game is finished" (Cooper, 1981, p. 61). It attempts, instead, to present possible points of departure for further exploration, which could lead to further conversations and the construal of alternative narratives of relevance. The chapter includes some tentative observations on the present field of power/knowledge in Africa, comments on the relevance of psychology in terms of these observations, reconsiders liberation in terms of power/knowledge, and offers a number of pointers toward further exploration.

The Gods of Africa

The various archaeological strata of power/knowledge depicted in this study may be viewed as currently co-existing in continually evolving and various forms over unequally dispersed fields in Africa. In many respects, Africa is still poised between a-modern and modern power/knowledges, while having contributed to the demise of modernism (Said, 1989). Mazrui (1986) describes the current African landscape as a battlefield of the gods of Africa, who

have both religious and secular faces. The most universally present is the indigenous legacy, followed by a deeply rooted Islam, an indigenised Christianity, and "less deeply but still widely distributed is the western tradition, discernible among at least the elites... but with a trickle-down effect on other strata of African populations" (Mazrui, 1986, p. 34). The battle between Africa's gods has scarred its landscape:

> The euphoria of the early years of independence has been replaced by the agonies of failure. Political instability is widespread, food production has declined, numbers of refugees are expanding.... The old revolution of rising expectations has indeed been replaced by a new revolution of deepening frustrations. (Mazrui, 1986, p. 49)

African intellectuals are struggling to deal with these urgent concerns, mainly by searching for overarching ideologies and metanarratives to encompass the diversity of knowledges of Africa. As we have seen in the previous chapter, many have attempted to forge a synthesis between the African gods, but harmony is nowhere in sight at national or continental levels, although, locally, many Africans daily forge a workable unity between diverse power/knowledges. Hountondji (in Mudimbe, 1988) presents the African intellectual dilemma as follows:

> The problem... as regards our attitude towards our collective heritage is how to respond to the challenge of cultural imperialism without imprisoning ourselves in an imaginary dialogue with Europe, how to re-evaluate our cultures without enslaving ourselves to them, how to restore the dignity of our past, without giving room to a passeistic attitude. (p. 174)

The intellectual response has consistently fluctuated between metanarratives of reclamation and liberation, romanticism and scientism; the central axes of modern knowledge. At present, the attempt to create myths which would give meaning to hopes of improvement, "seems to hesitate between two principle sources, Marxist and traditionalist, and to worry endlessly about the evidence about the superiority of the Same over the Other and possible virtues of the inverse relationship" (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 96). Liberation is increasingly sought in

the acquisition of technological power through science, though indigenous and religious knowledges continually undermine efforts at subjugation by the imposition of these and other developmental ideologies and overarching metanarratives of modern knowledge.

Liberation remains a central concern in African thought. Intellectuals agree that colonial rule has been replaced by a new economic and academic imperialism by the West (Bulhan, 1993a; Irele, 1986; Makinde, 1982; Mazrui, 1986). Academic and professional research and training remain heavily dependent on western models, traditions, culture, and finance (Awa, 1986; Jansen, 1991; MacGaffey, 1981). The settler-colonial relation continues (Jansen, 1991; Makinde, 1982). As Serequeberhan (1991) points out, in a rather oversimplified way, contemporary Africa finds itself encased between two contradictory and complementary forms of estrangement: That of the westernised and non-westernised sections.

In a paradoxical and distorted manner, these two segments of African society mimic and replicate the estranged and estranging violent dialectic of the colonizer and the colonized described so well by Albert Memmi. But in this case the roles of colonizer and colonized are played by the native, cast on both sides of this antagonistic relation, by reference to the culture of the former colonial power. Power or empowerment is thus a function of European culture which manifests itself in and legitimates the power of the neocolonial elites of postcolonial Africa. (Serequeberhan, 1991, p. 9)

Paradoxically, the African intellectual élite also finds itself oppressed by some African political élites, as attested by the marginality in the power structure of certain African states of critical philosophy and social science departments (Mudimbe, 1988), furthering their dependence upon western academia. Many intellectuals are concerned with liberation from oppressive African regimes, who are viewed as replicating colonial relations with African peoples (Césaire, 1959; Hountondji, 1983; Irele, 1986; Mphahlele, 1964; Mudimbe, 1988; Soyinka, 1967). In the words of Hountondji (1983):

On the one side, there is force - a brute, blind, savage force, a direct heir to colonial violence - trying to dictate to the minds and hearts of all; on the other, there are the bare

hands of men and women so exploited and mystified that they make themselves active accomplices of their executioners: this is as close as you can get to a true description of the real face of contemporary Africa. (p. 170)

According to Mazrui (1986), these oppressive powers are not only heir to colonial violence, but in certain cases strengthened by indigenous traditions in western guise. Ancient and modern forms of power (chapter 5) have fused: The patriarchal tradition has been reinforced by both Islam and Europe; the warrior tradition is now wearing a uniform; sages, marabouts, and kings have become western educated presidents. Allegiance to one's ancestral unit, now called ethnicity, has been, paradoxically, strengthened by the arbitrary and divisive boundaries imposed by colonialism and the new nation states. In some cases it has turned into ethnic nepotism; in others into a healthy resilience of the values of collective sharing and responsibility (Mazrui, 1986).

Such a fusion between different power/knowledges blurs the boundaries between the layers of African knowledges co-existing in the present. Mudimbe (1988) rejects the dominant binary discourse that opposes traditional versus modern, oral versus written, and agrarian versus industrialised communities. Although in Africa a great deal of attention is given to the evolution implied and promised by the passage from the former to the latter, Mudimbe (1988) argues that such a presupposed jump from one extremity (underdevelopment) to the other (development) is in fact misleading and that between the two extremes there is an intermediate, diffused space.

It is in this diffused, marginal space that most Africans live. Today most are left mute within the dominant knowledge, and, like many people the world over, live in in-between worlds that cannot be classified into generalisations such as "western", "Islamic" or "indigenous". Africans are not passive recipients of knowledges; they are active participants in creating their cultural worlds, and consistency is a luxury that few can afford. While intellectuals are debating ideologies and politicians are nurturing nationalisms, Africans forge strategies of survival from diverse elements and "undo expectations of what survival in dire conditions is supposed to look like" (Simone, 1990, p. 163) by employing "millions of small

individual efforts operating without master schemes or abstractions" (p. 171). In a "multiplicity of expressions, cultural practices, and worldviews" (p. 165), they daily re-invent social networks and re-construct rituals and loyalties.

While various African neo-colonial nationalisms are growing and transferred into "barriers... frontiers, police forces, customs and exchange controls" (Said, 1993, p. 307), Davidson (in Said, 1993) points to the people's own solution to this "carapace accepted from the colonial period" (p. 308):

> What the peoples think upon this subject is shown by their incessant emigration across these lines on the map, as well as by their smuggling enterprises. So that even while a "bourgeois Africa" hardens its frontiers, multiplies its border controls, and thunders against the smuggling of persons and goods, a "peoples" Africa works in quite another way. (p. 308)

Davidson (in Said, 1993) may be providing a metaphor regarding failed efforts at imposing overarching knowledge systems, ideologies or theories on African people, who keep escaping from these impositions by reverting to subjugated local knowledges, complex reworkings of the old and the new. "To be governed people must be counted, taxed, educated, and of course ruled in regulated places (house, school, hospital, work site)... as Michel Foucault argued" (Said, 1993, p. 327). It is exactly these forms of disciplinary control, and its technologies of power such as psychology, that Africa escapes from, through small daily strategies of survival which sometimes coalesce in large-scale mass movements, like the ones inaugurating South Africa's shift to democracy. The prize is the conservation of various forms of autonomy and competence (Le Roux, 1987) in the face of various forms of domination. The cost, however, is often dear. "All of this vicarious autonomy comes at an enormous price in terms of concrete indices of well-being. But on the level of the social body - its characteristics, desires, resiliences and productivity - a much more ambiguous picture emerges" (Simone, 1993, p. 83).

The cost, in terms of indices of well-being, is what is perceived by western media and re-circulated into Africa (Awa, 1986; Said, 1993). In "today's electronic Colosseum", Africa and

the Third World remain spectacle; images of "Bacardi rum beaches" are coupled with those of starvation, famine, and bloodshed and of patronising aid from the West (Pieterse, 1992). Africa is increasingly viewed through the perspectives of pathology and/or therapy (Said, 1993) and situated within a language of risk (Le Roux, 1987). "Condemned to irrelevance, its substance is simply a surface on the television screen and in World Bank reports. We who watch fail to see life, fail to see what's at risk is not only bodies, but passions, wisdoms, resiliences, cosmologies, humours, assemblages and visions that survive the death of bodies" (Simone, 1993, p. 89).

In contrast, the media image of the New South Africa now presented to the world, and Africa, projects a narrative of hope, a dream of a new Utopia of Enlightenment and liberation. Psychology has the potential to contribute its share to the discipline of this new order, emerging from another dream of a perfect society. As elsewhere in Africa, however, it has to contend with the gods of Africa in its struggle for relevance.

Narratives of Relevance

Psychology's response to the concerns of Africa is voiced in its relevance debate, which reflects the dominant narratives of African discourse: Assimilation, reclamation, and liberation. Primarily, the relevance debate is an attempt at liberation from the role of oppressor, as well as from the role of oppressed, and thus part of the liberation narrative. It is simultaneously concerned with extending the domain of operation of psychology, which coincides with the assimilation narrative. It further embodies the reclamation narrative in its efforts to Africanise psychology.

Like African philosophers, psychologists are searching for metanarratives, overarching ideologies, and syntheses between Africa's diverse knowledges. The relevance debate oscillates between the modern axes of romanticism and scientism. Writers like Bodibe (1994), Gobodo (1990), Holdstock (1981b), Laubscher and Mcneil (1995), Moghaddam (1987), and Okonji (1975) tend towards the romantic side, by advocating the study and integration of African psychologies, worldviews, and philosophies into the main body of the field and drawing upon African metanarratives of legitimation for psychology. Paradoxically, such an

ethnopsychological position is more eagerly sought out by the field of American Black psychology than anywhere in Africa (Houston, 1990; Jackson & Sears, 1992; Jones, 1980; Myers, 1993; Nobles, 1976; J. L. White, 1984). These authors have drawn parallels between recent ecosystemic thought, emerging postmodern trends, and an African worldview. Towards the scientist extreme are to be found the psychology of oppression (Bulhan, 1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1980c, 1985; Nicholas, 1993a, 1993b; Nicholas & Cooper, 1990) critical psychology (Dawes, 1986; Ivey, 1986; R. Miller, 1989; Whittaker, 1991), and materialist psychology (Couve, 1986; Manganyi, 1991). These authors look towards narratives of liberation, prevailing scientific metanarratives, and modernisation to solve current problems. There are also various positions of in-betweenity on this continuum, including that of many African psychologists who find themselves stranded in a sterile middle-ground between their western training and the counterdemands of local contexts (Abdi, 1985; Boussat & Dupuy, 1975; Nsamenang, 1993).

Like other African intellectuals, psychologists have described themselves as dependent on and legitimised by western institutions, marginal to political power, and culturally alienated from the society they attempt to serve. They even find themselves marginalised within the social sciences (Akin-Ogundeji, 1991). The central problem in this marginalisation appears to be one of legitimation, both by those who carry political and economic power, and those who are viewed as lacking in power. As technology of western secular power, psychology's power base remains outside Africa, while locally it competes with various indigenous psychologies. Lock (1981) defines "indigenous psychology" as

> the cultural views, theories, conjectures, classifications, assumptions and metaphors - together with notions embedded in social institutions - which bear on psychological topics. These psychologies are statements about the nature of the person and his relations with the world. They contain advice and injunctions about the ways people should act, should feel, and how they can find happiness and success in life.... It can be contrasted with "specialist" psychologies, those developed by academic psychologists who favour scientific experiments, philosophers who favour abstract arguments and religious experts who develop esoteric understanding. (p. 4)

Lock's (1981) definition of indigenous psychologies is similar to what Bruner (1990) terms "'folk psychology', the culturally shaped notions in terms of which people organize their views of themselves, of others, and of the world in which they live" (p. 137), though Bruner's term is more encompassing. Among the westernised, modernised sections of Africa and the rest of the world, a large measure of congruence exists between the indigenous or folk psychologies of ordinary people and western "specialist" psychology, whose technologies of power have effectively swarmed into society. This dominant western psychology has, however, failed to colonise the folk psychologies of many ordinary people, who constitute themselves in terms of indigenous and/or religious knowledges. Their local, common-sense psychological notions are locally informed and validated by the "specialist" psychologies of indigenous, Christian, and Islamic religious experts, not western psychologists. As was illustrated in previous chapters, the "truth" of these knowledges is mostly validated in local narratives, not in the grand narratives of science. "In our society common-sense is born from 'science' but in traditional societies the inverse process is observable" (Lock, 1981, p. xi). The very notion of "modern science" is in itself a part of western common-sense (Geertz, 1983).

The marginality of psychologists, like that of other African intellectuals, may also be a source of power, offer avenues of escape from dominance and hegemony, and facilitate the crossing and re-crossing of boundaries and the charting of new territories (Said, 1993). However, to achieve the necessary legitimation from local contexts in order to proceed with this work, psychologists have to confront modern forms of power. In the previous chapter, we saw how the dominant narratives of liberation which inform psychology embody an implicit view of power as monarchic and juridical. This view of power has serious limitations in confronting modern forms of power, according to Foucault (1980a, 1980b), who offers an alternative view of power, and by implication, of resistance and liberation, applicable to both psychologists and their subjects.

Power/knowledge and Liberation

Foucault (1980a) views power, like knowledge, as a field within which we exist. In the same way that a hegemonic field of knowledge is variously distributed, is produced in local

relations and engenders a variety of resistant knowledges at various points in its distribution (chapter 6), power exists by virtue of a myriad of active relations spread over the field of its operation. This field has no privileged centre, nor is it located within certain subjects or institutions. It exists as a process within relationships.

> Power's condition of possibility... must not be sought in the primary existence of a central point... it is the moving substrate [sic] of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable.... Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength that we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society. (Foucault, 1980a, p. 93)

> Contrary to a Marxist view, power "is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared.... Power is exercised from innumerable points... in the interplay of mobile relations" (Foucault, 1980a, p. 94). Relations of power are imminent in other relationships such as economic processes, knowledge relationships and sexual relations. In contrast to Marx, Foucault (in Richer, 1992) locates oppression not within subjects, but between them.

> Analysis should take power as something that circulates. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. Individuals or classes are the vehicles of power, not its source. (p. 114)

The question of the "who" of power relations is a deflection from the field where power operates. "Multiple fields of power dynamics - economic, scientific, religious, for example - might temporarily form dominating cohesions, but those are rarely produced by the same bad guy at the top of the heap" (Richer, 1992, p. 114). Foucault's position de-centres the subject; makes it difficult to do witch hunts or create Manichean constructs of otherness and violence. It emphasises the responsibility of all in perpetuating different forms of power and stresses that analysis should not concern itself with the regulation and legitimation of a centralised power, but with "power at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it

becomes capillary, that is, in its most regional and local forms and institutions" (Richer, 1992, p. 114).

Foucault (1984) questions the notion of ideology, because it "always stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth.... The second drawback is that the concept of ideology refers, I think necessarily, to something of the order of a subject" (p. 60). He further rejects the notion of power as being repressive. Power "forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 119). A repressive view of power implies that it is dependent on a state apparatus. Although the state plays an important part in power relations, power relations extend beyond the state, which can only operate on the basis of other, already existing power relations.

> The state is suprastructural in relation to a whole series of power networks that invest the body, sexuality, the family, kinship, knowledge, technology, and so forth. True, these networks stand in a conditioning-conditioned relationship to a kind of "metapower" which is structured... around a certain number of great prohibition functions; but this metapower with its prohibitions can only take hold and secure its footing where its is rooted in a whole series of multiple and indefinite power relations. (Foucault, 1984, p. 64)

What makes power a productive rather than a repressive force is its close affinity with knowledge. Political structures rely on the power of the currently available ensemble of discourses on truth to construct their policies. The regime of truth dictates to governments and subjects alike which discourses are acceptable and true (Foucault, 1984). Modern power functions as a "'political economy' of truth" (p. 73). Anonymous power, in terms of language rules and pre-existing epistemic fields, determine what can be said and not said, thought and not thought.

This leaves us with the question of liberation. If beheading the king has ceased to be a

solution, how do we liberate ourselves? Power fields are transfused with resistances (Foucault (1980a).

> The other side of power's pervasiveness is precisely the omnipresence of the resistance it discovers. No ruse of reason can guarantee ultimate triumph to the system of power that is at work and its adversaries are as scattered, as multiple and as heterogeneous as power itself. The opposition to power is the twin of its birth, an opposition that is constituted, with different intensities at various times.... Power cannot be considered a massive, irresistible force since so many within a specific society, so much within a particular individual have to cooperate for it to function. (Bernauer, 1981, p. 405)

We can never be ensnared by power; we can always modify its grip, in the same way that we live within the dominant knowledge while rewriting its narratives. As knowledge is actively created within a dominant hegemony, the existence of a field of power depends upon local relations (Foucault, 1980a).

> Their is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant or violent.... They are the odd term in relations of power; they are inscribed in the latter as an irreducible opposite.... Are there no great radical ruptures, massive binary divisions, then? Occasionally, yes. But more often one is dealing with mobile and transitory points of resistance.... And it is doubtless the strategic codification of these points of resistance that makes revolution possible. (p. 96)

For Foucault (1984), liberty is to be found in practice, not in some overarching ideology or theory. He is profoundly suspicious of claims to universal truths or universal theories of liberation. "There is nothing that is functionally - by its very nature - absolutely liberating. Liberty is <u>practice</u>" (Foucault, 1984, p. 239). One may initiate a project with the aim of modifying constraints, loosening or even breaking them, but no project can assure liberty

automatically. Consequently, there are no general rules for a general liberation. However, resistance is possible at a micro-political level and constituted through action appropriate to each specific context.

Where does this leave psychology as "expert" knowledge? Foucault (1984) rejects the dominant model of the "universal intellectual" as conscience of mankind, such as the Marxist revolutionary. Instead Foucault (1984) envisions a "specific intellectual" (p. 68) who refrains from absolute truth claims or generalisations of claims to justice but who is deeply involved in mastering the specific power dynamics of the particular institution in which he labours. Foucault (1980b) criticises Marxists for identifying their position with a standpoint of sovereignty within a quest for the status of science:

> Which theoretical-political avant garde do you want to enthrone in order to isolate it from all the discontinuous forms of knowledge that circulate about it?.... You are investing Marxist discourses and those who uphold them with the effects of a power which the West since Medieval times has attributed to science and has reserved for those engaged in scientific discourse. (p. 85)

It is the potential of such knowledge to suppress conflicting voices and lives, to exclude and normalise, that Foucault (in Rouse, 1994) saw as a major danger. In contrast, Foucault proposes the emancipation of knowledges from subjection to the hierarchical power of science, to render them " capable of opposition and of struggle against the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal, and scientific discourse" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 85). The danger in psychology is exactly its silencing of voices by the coercion of its attempts at a theoretical, unitary, and formal scientific discourse.

The dissent of the intellectual derives from knowledge of the intricate manner in which the power of a specific, local context, operates; a knowledge that only a participant can have (Foucault, 1980b). Such a participant can identify and give a voice to those who are oppressed by its power/knowledge, and can work to open a space for their dissent to be heard, rather than speaking for them. Another way of conceptualising this stance, is to describe it as the

excavation of the local knowledges that have been subjugated by the dominant knowledge of a specific context/institution. By subjugated knowledges, Foucault (1980b) refers to

> a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity. I also believe that it is through the re-emergence of these low-ranking knowledges... a popular knowledge... a particular, local, regional knowledge... that criticism performs its work. (p. 32)

Such knowledge is not concerned with the vindication of ignorance or non-knowledge, or the opposition of romanticism with scientism, but rather with "the insurrection of knowledges that are opposed primarily not to the contents, methods or concepts of a science, but to the effects of the centralising powers which are linked to the institution and functioning of an organised scientific discourse" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 84).

Such a position contrasts with that of the radical humanist critique of psychology, which holds as its logical conclusion that the only way of producing a "non-oppressive" psychology is through the removal of state power - through changing the system (Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn, & Walkerdine, 1984). Such a psychology attempts to alleviate oppression by spurring people on to be conscious of themselves as active beings who bear responsibility for emancipatory action. It implies that intellectuals can transform the reality of the oppressed (Lather, 1992). However, such a position carries the danger that researchers with liberatory intentions impose meanings on situations, instead of constructing meaning through negotiation. The danger is to see oneself as a redeemer of social and political life (Lather, 1992). From a Foucauldian perspective, the desire to "understand" and "change", to predict or emancipate, may all be ways of disciplining the body, normalising behaviour, and administering the life of populations. All forms of knowledge define, categorise, and classify. The question is whether research subjects, or the oppressed that we want to liberate, share our norms and whether research practices can be viewed rather as inscriptions of legitimation than procedures that bring us closer to some truth (Lather, 1992).

From this point of view, as Henriques et al. (1984) have pointed out, psychology is not a monolithic force of oppression which constrains and enchains individuals. Rather, because of its insertion in modern social practices, it has helped to constitute the very form of modern individuality. As was put forth in chapter 5, psychology is productive of subjectivities as well as objects. "It is by producing explanations as well as identifying problems that psychology contributes to specific political positions" (Henriques et al., 1984, p. 1). Psychologists cannot escape their own constitutive power, they can only be constantly aware of how they are shaping action. If psychology remains only a dividing, normalising, positivist science, it remains an instrument of the dominant power/knowledge network, disempowering local and subjugated knowledge. If it should become less of a "discipline" and less (dis)empowered by the clinic and its medical normalising gaze, it could become more of a healing art. By de-centring, it could allow space for the power of subjugated local and erudite knowledges to resurface instead of searching for and trying to impose a tyranny of universal truth. There are no general rules governing the role of the psychologists in resistance. Expertise exists within in a specific, local realm and the rules for appropriate action are defined locally. The psychologist could, however, avoid speaking for others and allow space for subjects to use their own voices in a process of self-creation. What may emerge, instead of a universal knowledge and truth, is multiple knowledges, multiple truths, a multi-verse (Maturana, 1975) of psychologies specific to local contexts.

Does this imply "liberation"? We live in a world and a continent obsessed with liberation. The fulfilment of the Enlightenment promise of universal liberation is now demanded by all those Others historically excluded from it. The narrative of liberation is one of the grand narratives of the Enlightenment, an attempt to liberate individuals from the claims of religion, state, social class, race, and gender, "indeed from any claim that arbitrarily denies personal choice" (T. A. Parry, 1993, p. 428). The modern dream of liberation has created not only material well-being and technological advances, but also the loneliness of individualism, massive impersonal social and economic forces, normalising technologies of power, and the tyranny of the belief in one objective reality. Is that what we are clamouring for in our demand for liberation? In the postmodern age, individuals experience themselves as having "maximum freedom and minimum personal power" (T. A. Parry, 1993, p. 431) in the face of the effects of

the dominating power/knowledge. Modern freedom was conceived of so as to emphasise the rights of the individual self, while mutual obligation or the rights of the other to limit these personal rights to self-expression or gratification, were increasingly overlooked. "No provision had ever been made within the agenda of modernity, for any inherent limitation on the exercise of individual freedom" (p. 431). Without such mutual obligation, the other became the Other; God, Death, the earth, women, and "natives" were marginalised. The danger in such a universal view of liberation is that it always enslaves at another level. It may be less dangerous to proceed with caution from a position of commitment to resistance, and to search for ways to overcome the dangers of modernism.

Postmodern Journeys of Exploration

Many Africans feel that Africa should enter more fully into the modern technological age in order to survive. However, many are also aware, as was Foucault, of the various forms of subjection and incapacitation that tend to insidiously accompany advances in technical mastery (Makinde, 1982). As this archaeology has shown, western psychology has tended to be the handmaid of advances in technological development and modernity. It was instrumental in bringing modernity about, by constructing the modern, liberated subject and western individuality (Venn, 1984). It is, in fact, so firmly rooted in modernity that it is hard to view it in another context. Maybe it is necessary, in fact vital, for modernity and western psychology, in tandem, to enter further into African society. But how to prevent a repeat of the colonial tragedy? Is modernisation and technological advancement inevitably oppressive? Psychology today has at its disposal the advantage of postmodern hindsight. Through an exploration of the postmodern byways of modern thought, it may yet escape from the many ways in which modern power/knowledge has confined it, and the world, to an "epistemological hostagehood" (Auerswald, 1992).

The term postmodern does not refer to a coherent school of thought, a philosophy or a unitary discipline - these very concepts are at odds with postmodern thought (Waugh, 1992). There appears to be general agreement, though, that

<u>postmodernity</u> refers to an age which has lost the Enlightenment belief in emancipation and progress through more knowledge and scientific research. Postmodern society consists less of totalities to be ruled by preconceived models than by decentralization to heterogeneous local contexts characterized by flexibility and change. (Kvale, 1992a, p. 2)

Lyotard (1984) defines <u>postmodern</u> simply as "incredulity toward metanarratives" (p. xxiv). Counter-movements to the Enlightenment, such as romanticism, are as old as Enlightenment itself, but whereas, in the past, "the critique of reason was accompanied by an alternative foundationalism (of the Imagination), Postmodernism tends to claim an abandonment of all metanarratives that could legitimate foundations for truth" (Waugh, 1992, p. 5). In contrast to romanticism and the knowledges of resistance depicted in chapter 6, postmodern thought is non-oppositional; it does <u>not</u> mean anti-modern, but refers descriptively to what comes after modernism (Kvale, 1992a). It embodies neither a reverence for the past nor a modern erasing of traditions and starting anew from a <u>tabula rasa</u>. The approach is rather that "of re-use and collage, of taking up elements of tradition and recycling them in new contexts" (Kvale, 1992a, p. 7). It is thus sympathetic to both extremes of the reclamation-scientism continuum in African thought, while transcending the limitations of both. Postmodern thought offers avenues of liberation from the oppressive aspects of modern knowledge, without negating its liberating potential.

> <u>Postmodern thought</u> replaces a conception of a reality independent of the observer with notions of language as actually constituting the structures of a perspectival social reality. The modern dichotomy of an objective reality distinct from subjective images is breaking down and being replaced by a hyperreality of self-referential signs.... The dichotomy of universal social laws and the individual self is replaced by the interaction of local networks. Postmodern thought has evolved an expansion of reason, it has gone beyond the cognitive and scientific domains to permeate those of ethics and aesthetics as well. (Kvale, 1992a, pp. 2-3)

Due to the entrenchment of psychology in modernity, the question inevitably arises whether a postmodern psychology is a contradiction in terms. An answer is not yet forthcoming, but if psychology itself is viewed as a construct situated in language and validated socially, the question may be irrelevant from a postmodern perspective. Kvale (1992b) and Polkinghorne (1992) point out that current psychological practice is already moving towards postmodern thought by focusing on situated knowledge, with an openness to the heterogeneous and qualitative knowledge of the everyday world, and validation through practice. Social psychologists (Henriques et al., 1984; Michael, 1990; Parker & Shotter, 1990; Shotter, 1992) have reinterpreted individualistically conceived topics in terms of postmodern formulations. The Soviet historical cultural school after Vygotski come close to social constructionism and offers ways out of modernist dilemmas, as recognised by Manganyi (1991). There also exist trends in practical psychology which are close to postmodern conceptions of knowledge, such as systemic therapy, system evaluation, and participative and action research models (Kvale, 1992b). These have in common a view of knowledge as heterogeneous, qualitative, and linguistic, and view legitimation of knowledge as a process through local and practical knowledges and narratives (Kvale, 1992b, p. 49). These lines of thought exist on the peripheries of psychology; they have been marginalised. One task of a relevant psychology would be to excavate more of these context-sensitive approaches, a process that is already under way in the relevance discourse.

In postmodern psychologies, concepts such as consciousness, unconsciousness, and psyche recede into the background and knowledge, language, culture, and myth appear in the foreground. "There is a move from the archaeology of the 'psyche' to the architecture of current cultural landscapes" (Kvale, 1992a, p. 15). Postmodern thought breaks with major assumptions about the subject matter of modern psychology, by a decentring of the self, a move from the inside of the psyche to the text of the world, and an emphasis on practical knowledge (Kvale, 1992a, p. 1).

An important advantage of postmodernism (in contrast to romanticism) is that it does not argue against investments in technology and technological inquiry. As such it in no way disconfirms what has been identified by many Africans as a priority. "It is not technology (or

'knowing how') that is called into question by postmodern thought, but the truth claims placed upon the accompanying descriptions and explanations (the 'knowing that')" (K. J. Gergen, 1992, p. 26), not the terms (aptitude, evaluation, psychotherapy) produced by psychology, but their objectification and reification, and, above all, the manner of their validation, which is not to be sought in external grand narratives of truth, but in the practical, local context that includes subjects. Technology is placed directly and openly in the service of values.

A frequent criticism of postmodernism is its "rampant relativism" (Kvale, 1992a, p. 8). However, the polarisation of objectivism and relativism, as we have seen in previous chapters, is a modern issue. Both an absolute objectivism and subjectivism are untenable, as all realities are intersubjectively generated. Postmodern thought would accept epistemic relativity, where all beliefs are socially produced, while rejecting moral relativity. Moral questions, such as oppression, domination, and power, have to be addressed locally, and morally validated in local processes. Postmodern thought recognises cultural pluralism, while exposing power and promoting activism. The postmodern psychologist can become an active participant in a morally and ethically constituted enterprise, with others, while recognising the relativity of truth at an epistemic level of analysis.

Postmodern thought is, however, dangerous. It is, in itself, largely still a western endo-cultural enterprise, and the main body of its literature tends to ignore the problems of cultural translation (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991). Its esoteric language and concern with epistemological issues may alienate its users from more local languages and concerns. Said (1993) offers the following description of intellectuals who have been colonised by postmodernism:

> Cults like post-modernism, discourse analysis, New Historicism, deconstruction, neo-pragmatism, transport them into the country of the blue; an astonishing sense of weightlessness with regard to the gravity of history and individual responsibility fritters away attention to public matters, and to public discourse.... Racism, poverty, ecological ravages, disease, and an appallingly widespread ignorance: these are left to the media and the odd political candidate during an election campaign. (p. 303)

The danger is real. However, it is not postmodernism that produces anomie, it is the legacy of the modern age (T. A. Parry, 1987). Whereas modern thought created or at least failed to deal adequately with most of these obstacles, postmodern thought offers alternative responses. If it is possible to negotiate a trajectory between epistemology and poverty, relativity and racism, deconstruction and disease, the postmodern psychologist may be better equipped than his/her predecessor in dealing with public concerns.

An Ecological Holodigm

One response to the epistemological hostagehood imposed by the dominant modern knowledge is the emergence of what has been termed the New Epistemology of ecosystemic thought, or the ecological holodigm (Auerswald, 1992). Being an extension of western scientific thinking, rooted in experimental work, it provides a response to the call of African intellectuals for advanced scientific thinking, while avoiding many of its pitfalls, emerging from the dominant Cartesian-Newtonian worldview of the Modern age (Keeney, 1979), which is based on dualistic thinking (Manicheanism) a subject-object split (othering), a hierarchical structuring of reality and the assumption of one, objective truth, independent of the observer (solipsism), allowing intolerance of difference, cultural imposition, and violence. Side-taking, mutual blame systems, pejorative exclusion, polarisation, and violence are inherent in such an epistemology (Auerswald, 1992).

In contrast, the emerging ecological epistemology (Auerswald, 1992; Bateson, 1979) emphasises ecology, relationship, whole systems, interrelation, and context. The observer is assumed to be part of the observed, reality is viewed as co-created by participants in interaction, society is viewed in terms of mutual, circular influencing processes, and multiple and relative truths are assumed to co-exist. Such an epistemology allows a tolerance of differences and opportunities for dissolving conflict through post-political thinking (Auerswald, 1992). Recently, ecosystemic epistemology has expanded to include textual analogies and the imbeddedness of human interactions in language, by which humans construe realities (Le Roux, 1987). The focus has shifted from systems concepts borrowed from computer analogies, which tend to be an extension of the "mechologic" (Auerswald, 1992) of Newtonian science, to

ecological and textual analogies, bringing the paradigm closer to the human sciences.

An ecological holodigm transcends the limitations of both scientism and romanticism. Although it poses the danger of being embraced as a new overarching metanarrative, it has the advantage of controlling the excesses of western science through the integration of ethical and aesthetic concerns (Bateson, 1979). It offers congenial companionship to indigenous African holistic knowledges (Bodibe, 1994), with the advantage of integrating holism with scientific and technological concerns (Auerswald, 1992). However, many ecosystemic models tend to neglect spiritual, religious, and political domains of experience. A concern with systemic patterns of connection may engender a new hermeneutics of suspicion, creating alienated relationships. The meta-theoretical stance of ecosystemic thinking, its hovering in layers of description upon description, of patterns within larger patterns, may effectively remove the observer from imbeddedness in the local.

> Although cybernetic and ecological models of human behaviour enable us to view our everyday life situations as connected with and mutually caused by a series of successively larger operations, the wide-spread diffusion of this framework may lead to substantial declines in individual initiative, activism, and risk-taking. Increasingly, individuals come to see the world in terms of a certain universality, where differences in world view, articulating diverse social positions in the world system, blur into one another. (Simone, 1993, p. 90)

The greatest danger of ecosystemic thinking is its relativity. Its emphasis on circular patterns of causation, and sometimes total rejection of causation concepts, tend to obscure power imbalances. According to Dell (in Fish, 1990)

> systems theory is a very powerful conceptual tool, but it has limitations. I very much doubt that it can provide us with an adequate understanding of human violence. For that, psychology will be necessary. Violence exists in the domain of human lineal experience, not in the domain of systemic explanation. (p. 35)

However, Fish (1990) offers a reminder that ecosystemic thought also includes linear causality, depending on the level of analysis employed. It appears that systemic thinking should be tempered with a continual crossing of levels of analysis. The danger is to remain in the realm of systemic explanation, without continually descending to the level of human lineal experience, where urgent realities of oppression and liberation await action.

Constructivist Alternatives

Although there is no unitary approach that may be labelled "constructivism" (Van der Watt, 1993), various theoreticians and philosophers have contributed to the postmodern idea that knowledge is co-constructed by human interaction, that humans are observing systems who distinguish meaning in words and symbols through language, and that humans do not have access to one objective reality, only multiple constructions of reality by multiple observers. Maturana (1975), for instance, proposes to displace the concept of an objective, unitary universe waiting to be discovered, with that of a "multiverse", where many observer "verses" co-exist, each valid in its own right.

The social constructionists, such as K. J. Gergen (1994), emphasise the social and historical co-creation of knowledge and the imbeddedness of current knowledge in a community of co-observers.

> The key ideas here are that knowledge, including psychological theory, is a cultural artefact and historical product; that the production of human knowledge is a social enterprise; and that this occurs "in relationship".... What is most important about human action is meaning and how it is communicated; that the assignment of meaning to action is mediated and constructed socially; and, finally that we are born into a world of given and evolving sign or meaning relationships (culture). (Dawes & Donald, 1994, p. 19)

Re-enters the spectre of relativism. Social constructionists answer with a new kind of pragmatism: That all views are not equally valid from a social perspective, and that the psychologist actively enters into this perspective. An implication of a constructivist view of

psychology as productive of cultural discourse opens liberating possibilities. This allows the psychologist to escape from blindly reflecting the cultural values of society, and the hegemony of the dominant knowledge, and instead to become part of the construction of its discourse (Shotter, 1975). "Rather than simply recanting the taken-for-granted presumptions of the culture, the psychological scholar is in an optimal role to transform this discourse - and, by implication, the culture itself. Rather than 'telling it like it is' the challenge for the postmodern psychologist is to 'tell it as it may become'" (K. J. Gergen, 1992, p. 27). Gergen proposes the concept of "generative theory", or theory designed to unseat conventional thought and thereby open new alternatives for thought and action, so that scholars can contribute to the symbolic resources available to people to carry out their lives together. "By demystifying the great narrative of modernism, it attempts to bring psychologists and society closer together" (K. J. Gergen 1992, p. 28). However, moving closer to society implies losing some of the pseudo-security and pseudo-power of living closer to truth than ordinary people.

> To see ourselves as others see us can be eye-opening. To see others as sharing a nature with ourselves is the merest decency. But it is from the far more difficult achievement of seeing ourselves amongst others, as a local example of the forms human life has locally taken, a case among cases, a world among worlds, that the largeness of mind... comes. (Geertz, 1983, p. 16)

Open-ended Analogies

Instead of representing society and humans as machines or quasi-organisms, as modern science and early systems theory tend to do, it may be possible to explore alternative analogies. Recently, the social sciences have started viewing social life in terms of serious games, dramas, ritual processes or texts (Geertz, 1983). The choice of analogy employed depends upon the unique circumstances of the scientist. These analogies offer alternative, less alienating constructions of problems and possible solutions, which counter the normalising tendencies of modernistic psychology (M. White, 1990). Game theory opens the possibility of devising countermoves and strategising in power games; drama of revising roles or selecting alternative dramatic forms; ritual process analogies may facilitate change between developmental stages;

textual analogies open a space for the authoring of alternative stories (M. White, 1990). All these analogies may live more comfortably with African indigenous and religious knowledges than those of Newtonian science, as they do not propose objective realities but attend to all the various meanings that may be ascribed to behaviour across time. Africa has numerous local analogies waiting to be discovered and to enter psychological discourse. Gilbert, Van Vlaenderen & Nkwiti (1995) offer a recent example of research employing a local metaphor.

Rediscovering Narrative

The analogy between social process and text allows us to build narratives into our theories. It shows how we create and read meaning, in the same way that texts are written and read, and stories told and retold. In a world of multiple epistemologies, narrative provides us with an analogy that crosses the barriers between science, religion, culture, common-sense, and ideology. In Lyotard's (1984) terms, it bridges the artificial gap created by modernism, between narrative knowledge and scientific knowledge. It creates "experience-near", rather than "experience-distant" concepts (Geertz, 1983, p. 57) that are easily translatable, while providing a mode of thought fully as legitimate as that of abstract logic, which can offer validation to the subjugated local knowledges of Africa, hitherto invalidated or romanticised by the modern scientist knowledge.

The narratives we live are partly retellings of narratives derived from the discursive practice of our historical era (Bruner, 1986), or epistemes in Foucault's terms. They are "instances of never-ceasing reflexivity" (p. 149). For instance, the story of exploitation, resistance, and resurgence is not confined only to Africa; it is the story of the world today. From this point of view, Bruner argues that a narrative approach dissolves the sharp distinction between subject and object. The psychologist as well as the subject/object of psychology are shaped by the same dominant narratives. Even if they belong to different cultures, they share at least certain narratives dealing with intercultural relations (such as that of exploitation, resistance, and resurgence). Through their interaction, they retell and create narratives; they do not only copy existing knowledge, but co-create it. It is through interaction, through creating and living stories together, that we can attain relevance. According to Bateson (1979), a story is

"a little knot or complex of that species of connectedness which we call <u>relevance</u>.... I would assume that any A is relevant to any B if both A and B are parts or components of the same 'story'" (p. 22).

Psychology's lack of relevance to date in the African context may be related to the fact that it has largely failed to create narratives that encompass large segments of the experience of its subjects; psychology and the narratives by which Africans live have not always become part of the same story. Psychology is dominantly situated within the logico-scientific mode of thought, creating alienated relations with its subjects. Following Lyotard (1984), the narrative mode, in contrast, is concerned with the particulars of experience and the connectedness of events across time. It "subjunctivizes" reality (Bruner, 1986), privileges lived experience rather than constructs, classifications and normalisations; includes rather than excludes the dimension of time, so that it does not search for reliable, universal truths; uses implicit rather than technical meanings, and installs multiple perspectives (M. White, 1990). In contrast to an extrinsic legitimation through metanarratives, narrative knowledge contains its own intrinsic legitimation. "Narratives themselves contain the criteria of competence and illustrate how they ought to be applied" (Kvale, 1992b, p. 34). A narrative viewpoint may be the entry point for psychology to attain the legitimation it needs in local contexts. Such a psychology, which Bruner (1990) terms a "culturally oriented psychology" (p. 19) enters readily into the ordinary narratives of any culture.

Whereas the logico-scientific mode represents personhood as a passive arena that is reactive to impersonal forces, the narrative mode locates a person as protagonist-participant in her own world. In such a context, persons (including psychologists) can participate with others in the re-authoring of their lives, relationships, and work, which makes resistance possible. The challenge is to revise our narratives and to co-create new narratives that allow for more liberatory outcomes.

Although narrative structures organize and give meaning to experience, there are always feelings and lived experience not fully encompassed by the dominant story (Bruner, 1986). We saw this in colonial narratives of assimilation. However, dominant narratives may be displaced

by new dominant narratives, in historical breaks.

> Only when the new narrative becomes dominant is there a re-examination of the past, a rediscovery of old texts, and a recreation of the new heroes of liberation and resistance. The new story articulates what had been only dimly perceived, authenticates feelings, legitimizes new actions, and aligns individual consciousness with a larger social movement. (Bruner, 1986, p. 143)

Fanon would agree, so would most New South Africans. However, no dominant narrative, in fact no narrative, can fully encompass the experience of all. Narratives continually co-exist, change with every retelling, and are shaped by historical and cultural changes. Every narrative carries power - the power to exclude, victimise, and make Other, but also the power to resist. The point is to be sensitive to how our narratives are shaped by dominant narratives, and to be aware that "with each retelling the context varies, the audience differs, the story is modified, and... retellings become foretellings" (Bruner, 1986, p. 153).

Subjugated Knowledges and Untold Stories

One way to challenge the isolation of the knowledges of professional disciplines from the field of discontinuous knowledges, to overcome the scientism of psychology, and to attain local legitimacy is to excavate subjugated knowledges. Previously established erudite knowledges that have been written out of the record (Foucault, 1980b) can be resurrected through scholarship, and truth claims challenged through their resurrection. Such knowledge may be discovered in the erudite traditions of African thought, Christianity, Islam, and psychology itself.

The time has come for psychology to excavate and reaffirm knowledges of collectivism in order to "promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality that has been imposed on us for centuries" (Foucault, 1982, p. 216). Alternatives to the lonely, self-contained individualism of modernism have to be sought. Alternatives such as "embedded individuality" (Sampson, 1990, pp. 123), that is, "being an individual by virtue of one's

connections and inter-connections" (p. 124), and "social individuality" (Shotter, 1990, p. 155) have been proposed. These concepts do not build upon firm boundaries that mark territories separating self and other. Abandoning individuality and attempting to re-create the communality of traditional life, may, however, be as maladaptive (Le Roux, 1987) as promoting the myth of the self-contained individual. The search beckons.

Further knowledges that demand excavation are ethics, in order to escape from the essentially a-moral "objective observer" stance of modernism and refashion "psychology as a moral science of action" (Shotter, 1975, p. 84), and aesthetics, to transcend the fragmentation and isolation of modernism and designate "the pattern that connects" (Bateson, 1979, p. 17). Foucault's "ethic of aesthetics" (Bernauer & Mahon, 1994, p. 153) may be an antidote to psychology's normative limitations. However, as Bateson (1979) has warned, an overemphasis on aesthetics may be dangerous. "Rigour alone is paralytic death, but imagination alone is insanity" (p. 233).

The local, popular, indigenous or regional knowledges that are currently in circulation, but are deprived of a space in which they could be adequately performed, can be resurrected through interaction with local communities and individuals. Religion, literature, and art offer further opportunities at uncovering subjugated narratives that can inform psychology. Psychologists can look towards the fringes, the shadows, the mute, the current Others, to challenge existing norms, but we have to remember that those who are mute in our stories may speak eloquently in other stories and other languages, and that some prefer not to speak.

The excavation of subjugated knowledges can offer another point of entry into the history of struggle and conflict; a potential source of criticism that does not depend on the approval of established regimes of truth. Rather than proposing alternative ideologies or overarching truths, the uncovering of untold stories offers a continual source of resistance against the effects of centralised powers. "This is not a political activity that involves the proposal of an alternative ideology, but one that challenges the techniques that subjugate persons to a dominant ideology" (M. White, 1990, p. 29). Examples of informative untold

stories resurfacing can be found in Foster (1993b), Gebhard (1991), Keegan (1988), Simone (1990) and Straker (1992).

Empowerment and Legitimation

Empowerment has become the catchword of liberation. Uncovering untold stories may be empowering, but there are questions to be asked, such as who is being empowered, and whose interest the empowerment serves. Silence can also be empowering, by not giving a voice to ideas that have oppressed (Bhavnani, 1990). Certain strategies of power and survival of the oppressed, once given a voice, may be disempowered by being absorbed by the dominant discourse. Said (1989) cites studies that investigate the forms of resistance to domination employed by dominated groups that, paradoxically, disempower these groups by publishing their secret knowledge of resistance. In such a situation, although the researcher may "present a brilliant empirical as well as theoretical account of everyday resistances to hegemony, he... undercuts the very resistance he admires and respects by in a sense revealing the secrets of its strength" (Said, 1989, p. 220).

The power of silence (Bhavnani, 1990) is often overlooked in the clamour for "indigenisation". By "integrating" indigenous local knowledges, science can reify, freeze, normalise and objectify. The paradox of scientific power/knowledge is that it may destroy by its intrusive presence, as illustrated in the following postmodern narrative of Baudrillard (in Lather, 1992):

> Ethnology almost met a paradoxical death that day in 1971 when the Phillipine government decided to return to their primitive state the few dozen Tasaday discovered deep in the jungle, where they had lived for eight centuries, undisturbed by the rest of mankind, out of reach of colonists, tourists, and ethnologists. This was at the initiative of the anthropologists themselves, who saw the natives decompose immediately on contact, like a mummy in the open air. For ethnology to live, its object must die. But the latter revenges itself by dying for having been "discovered", and defies by its death the science that wants to take hold of it. (p. 88)

Problems with empowerment arise when the source of legitimation of knowledge is located outside the field of enquiry, so that we end up "representing" those we want to liberate through our knowledge. Community psychology is especially vulnerable to this danger. As Butchart and Seedat (1990) have pointed out, the dominant models of community work disconfirm ordinary people "because their commonsense is not significant enough to be considered in the construction of theory. Between 1974 and 1987, only two articles in The Journal of Community Psychology examined communities' own accounts of psychosocial problems" (p. 95). Foucault has taught us the indignity of being represented and of being interpreted. We cannot continue to believe that we know "our" subjects and clients better than they know themselves. The most we can do is to offer our perspective, be it a statistical or an interpretative one, to them, in a mutual conversation and dialogue legitimised by locally co-created narratives. As long as psychologists export knowledge only to external sources of legitimation, they will not earn themselves expert status in the communities they serve. Legitimacy has to be plural, local, and context-specific for empowerment to be conceivable.

Multiple Perspectives

Does this imply that all generalisations and global views have to be abandoned? Postmodern thought tends toward an emphasis on the specific. It stresses heterogeneity rather than homogeneity, local rather than global patterns and configurations, the exception rather than the rule, the fringe rather than the centre. "The local interaction, the communal network, is the point of departure; universal laws and unique individual selves are seen as abstractions... we may here talk of a contextual relativism where legitimation of action occurs through linguistic practice and communicative action" (Kvale, 1992b, p. 34).

Faced with the "radical variousness of the way we think now" (Geertz, 1983, p. 161), it may be necessary to attempt some form of escape from the modern polarities of the universal and the specific, the objective and the subjective. This study, due to its archaeological nature, necessarily had to work with generalisations and large configurations of epistemes and powers. However, it may be dangerous to do the same when working on a different level. Whether to use generalisations (the West/Africa) or more specific, local terms, depends on the level of

analysis (Pieterse, 1992) and the context of the research. It may be necessary to move between macro- and micro-levels of analysis and validation (Dawes & Donald, 1994) or to negotiate "a continual dialectical tacking between the most local of local detail and the most global of global structure in such a way as to bring them into simultaneous view" (Geertz, 1983, p. 69) in order to arrive at double descriptions (Bateson, 1979) and co-created outcomes.

> The world is a various place,... various between little traditions and great, various between colonial thens and nationalist nows; and much is to be gained, scientifically and otherwise, by confronting that grand actuality rather than wishing it away in a haze of forceless generalities and false comforts. (Geertz, 1983, p. 234)

A New Critical Stance

A constant critical stance is imperative in order to deal with both psychology's past and its present, to de-objectify existing "realities" in psychology, to demonstrate their social and historical embeddedness, and to explore their implications for social life. It is not possible to remain neutral on questions of value, as in the modernist frame, and the psychologist has to conjoin the personal, the professional and the political (K. J. Gergen, 1992). This requires a constant vigilance; a being "on guard against idées reçues all too easily handed down in the profession" (Said, 1978, p. 326). It requires being both discreet and concrete, by focusing on the specific situation at hand, not the rituals, preconceptions, and doctrines of either psychology or the field of "African studies".

Postmodern thought offers a new critical tool in the form of deconstruction, a term derived from the work of Derrida (in Parker & Shotter, 1990) who shows how texts can be subverted, by being revealed as containing hidden, internal contradictions. Deconstruction excavates the hidden presuppositions of a text, the suppressed terms that give them their meaning and supposed objectivity (Michael, 1990), and is similar in certain respects to Foucault's archaeologies. Derrida's project allows the re-assertion of the suppressed terms, to show how they are always covertly incorporated into a text, shaping the present(ed) terms through their absence. The intermediate goal of deconstruction is to overturn the hierarchy of

present and absent terms; the eventual aim is to neutralise the opposition by, for example, developing a transcendent term. We have seen how both Senghor and Fanon have partly deconstructed the colonial text.

However, in practice, deconstruction is often reduced to only a method or technique of critique. Such a limited view has been criticised by Norris (1987) for assuming that meaning can be grasped in the form of some proper concept - an idea that Derrida aims to deconstruct. Norris (1987) proposes another view of deconstruction: "The dismantling of conceptual oppositions, the taking apart of hierarchical systems of thought which can then be reinscribed within a different order of textual signification" (Norris, 1987, p. 19). The danger inherent in a reductionist view of deconstruction is the illusion that

> there is little left for the intellectual to do, but to demystify or deconstruct the illusory claims to knowledge made by the uninitiated. The task for the critic is to unmask the pretence behind the propositions - demonstrating the knowledge maker to be a fool after all. (M. Gergen, 1992, p. 183)

As such, it becomes but a repetition of the hermeneutics of suspicion of modern thought; another move in the modernist games of academic élites, who produce discourses that are alienating to both fellow-academics and subjects. Its counterpoint should be an emphasis on the constructive and reconstructive potential of knowledge (M. Gergen , 1992, p. 183). We are again faced with the problem of the alienating effects of professional discourses, which give currency only to the voice of the professional.

> No matter how benevolent one as a psychologist may be towards those one studies, no matter how concerned with "their" liberation, with "their" betterment, with preventing "their" victimisation, etc., the fact is that "their" lives are made sense of in terms which do not in fact make sense to "them".... What seems to be required is the deconstruction of the whole (Enlightenment) project of an intellectual élite discovering the basic principles of mind and society. (Parker & Shotter, 1990, p. 13)

The danger of professional critical discourse is that it may alienate not only our subjects, but also fellow-professionals, who may be marginalised and made Other by a normalising critical discourse.

Living with Otherness

Others are plural. Many analyses, by focusing on a generalised Other, objectify and reify otherness. Pieterse (1992) argues that there is no "the Other", for such a view implies a stable "we".

> There are <u>others</u> - there are many, and their identities vary according to time, location, and the status, gender, relationships and so on of the labelling groups. To generalize and pontificate about "the other" means losing sight of this multiplicity and complexity, homogenizing the process of othering, introducing an essentialism of otherness, and creating a static dualistic relationship between Self and Other, us and them. (pp. 233-234)

It is not possible to disregard Same/Other, them/us distinctions and a position of relativity does not remove otherness.

> No one can escape dealing with, if not the East/West division, then the North/South one, the have/have-not one, the imperialist/anti-imperialist one, the white/colored one. We cannot get around them all by pretending they do not exist.... Yet an openly polemical and right-minded "progressive" scholarship can very easily degenerate into dogmatic slumber, a prospect that is not edifying either. (Said, 1978, p. 327)

Every grouping, every subculture construes otherness. The centre is, however, less fixed in the postmodern world.

> We are all natives now, and everybody else not immediately one of us is an exotic. What looked once to be a matter of finding out whether savages could distinguish fact from

fancy now looks to be a matter of finding out how others, across the sea or down the

corridor, organize their significative world. (Geertz, 1983, p. 151)

In the psychology relevance debate, the colleague down the corridor is often denied the respect

accorded to "the native", and the culture (of psychology) of the critic, reified in opposition to

that of the colleague.

It is more rewarding - and more difficult - to think concretely, sympathetically,

contrapuntally, about others than only about "us". But this also means not trying to rule

others, not trying to classify them or put them in hierarchies, above all, not constantly

reiterating how "our" culture or country is number one (or not number one for that

matter). (Said, 1993, p. 336)

It may be useful to view every person as representing another culture and epistemology

and every conversation as cross-cultural, as suggested by Lifschitz (in Lifschitz, Kgoadi & Van

Niekerk, 1992). But how can agreement be reached or conflicts solved without reverting to

hierarchies and classifications? In contexts "where dissensus is chronic, probably worsening,

and not soon to be removed...[where] agreement about the things that are fundamental... is

rather spectacularly absent" (Geertz, 1983, p. 224), such as the battle-field of African gods or

that of psychologists arguing about relevance, the "standard discourse" (p. 222) which scientists

usually imagine themselves to have, proceeding under a set of rules and criteria of how to go

about settling issues and solving conflict, may not carry the weight these scientists expect.

"Standard discourse", a concept derived from the work of Richard Rorty by Geertz (1983),

embodies agreed-upon criteria for reaching agreement. Such criteria disappear in a world

populated by multiple others, situated within different sets of rules. In contrast, "nonstandard"

discourse abandons hope for agreement, and searches for communicative, locally agreed-upon

outcomes. In such discourse, "exciting and fruitful disagreement" (Geertz, 1983, p. 223) is

recognized as a no less rational process. Such non-standard discourse may result in productive

"working misunderstandings" (p. 233), which may not be as secure a position as authoring

normalised truths, but may be the best we can do anyway, as an other in a world of others, at

least in terms of a constructivist view of knowledge (Maturana & Varela, 1992).

Between Danger and Curiosity

The position of the psychologist that emerges from the preceding explorations is an ambivalent one, situated between the inevitable danger of creating new imperialisms and the expanded constructive possibilities of power/knowledge. Archaeologising psychology in Africa forces an awareness of the potential dangers lurking in psychological practice and urges the psychologist to a continual deconstruction and reconstruction of knowledge, while also urging him or her to act. It demands "a pessimistic activism that expects to find domination and control in the most innocent places, especially in the innocent places" (Richer, 1992, p. 116). Danger is the link between truth, power and ethics. Freedom and power/knowledge are active states. Any new formation of power/knowledge inevitably carries with it multiple dangers. Foucault (in Rouse, 1994) shows that there is no choice but to confront them:

> My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism. I think that the ethico-political choice we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger. (p. 112)

An awareness of danger is inevitable if there is an awareness that "there is no discipline, no structure of knowledge, no institution or epistemology that can or has ever stood free of the various sociocultural, historical, and political formations that give epochs their peculiar individuality" (Said, 1989, p. 211). All knowledge feeds into, connects with, impedes, or enhances active processes of dependency, domination, or hegemony. However, awareness of the historical field of emergence of psychology may offer new avenues of resistance and liberation from what many would describe as "the sterility of thought, the restricted and bleak horizon" of psychology in Africa, to borrow from Foucault (in Norris, 1994, p. 207) in a discussion on the current state of philosophy. Our knowledges may not offer the pseudo-security of objective truth, but they do offer a plethora of possible alternative realities and practices. An expansion of the historical boundaries drawn around psychology, to a multiverse of possible psychologies, may free psychologists to new applications of existing

knowledges and an extension of their creativity. It may open a space for a new form of critical curiosity, a postmodern reworking of an Enlightenment value by Foucault (in Norris, 1994):

> And then there is an immense curiosity, a need or desire to know. Curiosity is a vice that has been stigmatized in turn by Christianity, by philosophy, and even by a certain conception of science. The word, however, pleases me. To me it evokes something altogether different: it evokes "concern", it evokes the care one takes for what exists and could exist; a readiness to find strange and singular what surrounds us; a certain relentlessness to break up the familiarities and to regard otherwise the same things; a fervour to grasp what is happening and what passes; a casualness in regard to traditional hierarchies of the important and the essential. I dream of a new age of curiosity. We have the technical means for it; the desire is there; the things to be known are infinite; the people who can employ themselves in the task exist. (p. 207)

Such curiosity may find application in a myriad of ways in the multitude of Africas and psychologies that are being construed and may be construed in the future. The technical means exist; the psychologists who are creating these psychologies may already have the qualities necessary to the task. What are these qualities? At the risk of construing an oppressive norm, it may nevertheless be informative to be curious and speculate on the personal qualities of a new African psychologist that emerge from this archaeology.

Towards a New African Psychologist

It is relatively easy to delimit what a relevant African psychologist is not: Certainly not a missionary, saviour, power-broker or victim of dominant power/knowledges; not someone who hides behind expert knowledge or objectifies others; never only a technician. But how to describe this new psychologist in positive terms? His or her foremost qualities, as discussed in the previous section, are a propensity to live with a constant awareness of the dangers of knowledge and an unsatiable curiosity (in Foucault's sense of the term). For the rest, he or she appears somehow enigmatic and tends to elude precise formulations, maybe because he or she consistently refuses the dictates of either/or thinking, lives beyond the margins of conventional

truths and certainties, and feels comfortable within domains of multiplicity and ambiguity.

A new African psychologist possibly differs from his or her predecessor in that he or she values and prioritises everyday lived experience and its expression in local narratives above metanarratives, grand abstractions, sweeping generalisations, and taken-for-granted truths, be they the current dominant truths of a certain cultural or organisational milieu, or that of a dominant western psychology. However, he or she also respects the adherence of others to many of these truths, and does not launch attacks against or make Other those who think differently.

An immersion in everyday life and lived experience presupposes a personal involvement in such experience. This psychologist functions above all as a person among other persons, not as an élitist expert who objectifies others. This is a streetwise, experience-wise person, who is fully immersed in the everyday concerns of the community where he or she works. It is a person who tends to include, rather than exclude, persons of all walks of life in the task at hand, and who values the contributions of all towards the construal of resolutions to problems that are co-defined by all participants. It is a person who enjoys working with others to search for positive outcomes within co-created, open-ended narratives.

Does he or she then become only a spokesperson for others; a servant to the current concerns of the systems he or she serves? Does he or she disregard all expert knowledge? Again, our psychologist escapes either/or reasoning: Being involved in and legitimised by a community does not exclude the possibility of contributing original or expert knowledge. We can look towards African societies for models so as to form an image of the relationship between the new psychologist and the community. First, there are indigenous healers and diviners, who are granted the status of experts by the community, have to continually work to maintain legitimacy, are central to the total life of the community, facilitating transitions and adaptations to changing conditions, while retaining a marginal position (as part of a community of marginals - the professional body), and contributing innovative knowledge. There is the African sage (Oruka, 1990), who guards traditional wisdom but also adds innovative, individual thinking to this wisdom, offers practical solutions to everyday problems, and contributes

edifying narratives to guide the community. There is the African story-teller, who not only re-tells ancient tales but adds individualised variations, and adapts the tale to each particular audience, so that it always brings news of difference. There is the African hero, who obtains this status by transcending the limits of dominant knowledge and practices, but always to the ultimate benefit of the community. There is the Islamic holy man, who, again, depends upon a local community for legitimisation through practice, and serves as sage, healer, educator, translator, and intermediary between the community and the dominant knowledge, while facilitating the translation of this knowledge into local forms. There is the prophet of the African churches, who heals, integrates, initiates new communal bonds, and facilitates the creation of contexts where wholeness and renewal become possible.

It may be argued that many African experts also become, like psychologists, extensions of oppressive dominant traditional knowledges, and thereby fail to provide conditions for innovative and regenerative alternatives. However, for the purpose of the present discussion, we will concentrate on innovative African experts, who function in and by virtue of a community, form part of a body of experts, but derive their transformative and regenerative power from a certain marginality that escapes the limitations of the dominant knowledge. All view life holistically and their work as sacred. Maybe a new African psychologist is also a person with a calling, who recognises the sacred, the numinous, and the mysterious as part of life, prefers holistic to dualistic thinking, and values intuitive, aesthetic, ethical, as well as rational ways of knowing. Like other African experts, he or she has proven his or her ability to co-create new meanings within transformative contexts, whether these contexts are created in a private practice, community, university, hospital, or other organisation. Like other African experts, a new psychologist does not compete with other experts or try to colonise their knowledge. He or she may simultaneously be subversive of dominant narratives that exclude or subvert, and respectful of traditional and local, subjugated narratives that people live by.

Educationally, this psychologist has been provided with knowledge that is always contextualised, and taught to re-situate all existing knowledge within local contexts. Such education is primarily aimed towards the extension of the self-in-relation-to-others of the student, not the extension of dominant power/knowledges. He or she is taught to value this self

as primary source of knowledge, rather than "external, objective facts". Perceptually, he or she becomes a sensitive reader of contexts, not in terms of idealised imposed meaning systems, but in terms of local meanings and the self, so as to discern those narratives and meanings which are sanctified and precious to local participants, and to be able to guard these. For, paradoxically, it is only by conserving what is most valuable and sacred to a person, family, organisation or community, that renewal can become possible (Le Roux, 1987). Conceptually, this psychologist views existing theories as historical narratives that may or may not prove constructive if retold in new contexts, and tends to prefer holistic to dualistic conceptualisations. Executive skills include a willingness to enter fully and actively into local concerns and contribute, as marginal participant, narratives that offer the possibility of constructive outcomes.

This psychologist appears, paradoxically, as a humble expert; a marginal person who nevertheless easily forges links with a wide variety of people; a care-ful risk-taker; a subversive conservationist; irreverent of dogma and traditional hierarchies but respectful of people and their personal experience; a pragmatist, yet acutely aware of the limits and dangers of action without reflection; curious, yet comfortable with not knowing. He or she is not a consumer but a creator of knowledge; appreciates diversity rather than enforces sameness; confirms rather than disconfirms or disqualifies; readily enters problematic territories as a participating actor and meaning-maker.

Above all, a new African psychologist does not objectify and reify the role of "the psychologist" in terms of some universal norm, but thinks in terms of self (a multiple self) in relation to (multiple) others. This self is constituted of meanings defined both by the community and the individual, as well as its uses in practice (Bruner, 1990), and is recursively connected with other selves. This psychologist is aware of the self and others as partially constituted by dominant knowledges and cultural constraints, and thinks recursively, so that the multiple, indeterminate self, with all its historical limitations and advantages, is included in explanations. Although this psychologist is often deeply immersed in a field of specialisation and technical expertise, this knowledge is always viewed as part of an encompassing recursive meaning system. Ultimately, this psychologist values wisdom, knowledge integrated with everyday life, above technical expertise. This attitude does not imply a rejection of technical

expertise or of the existing body of psychological knowledge, but integrates these into social processes, so that their value are gauged by their validation in a specific contexts of meaning and not only in grand narratives of science. A new African psychologist uses technology as a tool, an extension of self, and refuses to be seduced into becoming a tool or extension of dominant technologies and power/knowledges. He or she constantly re-adjusts expert knowledge in terms of feedback from others, in a continuing, creative process of weaving ever-changing meanings into new forms.

A new African psychologist may be less concerned with extending the domain of psychology than with extending the self, for it is from the indeterminate domain between self and other that power/knowledge evolves. Such a psychologist has moved beyond technology towards art and wisdom; has refused the constricting role of technologist of modern power so as to become a facilitator of processes of conservation, regeneration, and transformation.

237

CODA

This study, like all knowledge, delimits a terrain of meaning that is limited by its recursive context. It emerges from a society that is in the midst of dramatic changes; where previously established hierarchies of power and knowledge are being overturned, where narratives of resistance are turned into new dominant narratives, and where the periphery is drawn towards the centre. This study reflects this process, as it, too, challenges dominant narratives, excavates subjugated knowledges of resistance, and draws peripheries towards the centre. Its subject matter, psychology in Africa, and the struggle of African psychologists with relevance, has long existed only at the margins of psychology. However, as the New South Africa has been drawn back into the world, this study attempts to forge links between the local struggles of African psychologists and those of their colleagues who function closer to the centre of psychology.

This study, like all knowledge, is but another narrative which recursively reflects upon the self of its author. It is the narrative account of my search for relevance, from a position which is marginal to the dominant narratives of assimilation, resistance, and resurgence that characterise South African psychology, and which aims to expose the potential of dominant narratives to oppress and exclude. This marginality manifests itself in the wide-angle approach of the study, which relativises existing knowledge, searches for overarching, holistic patterns of meaning, deconstructs, and reconstructs. Such an approach also has definite limitations and dangers, however. A wide-angle lens cannot include the texture of local realities nor address specific local problems. Working with overarching generalisations, such as strata of knowledge, may reify these same generalisations. Exposing and dwelling upon processes of domination may fix rather than loosen the constraints of the dominant narrative of domination and liberation. The postmodern slant of this narrative may limit its accessability to those most in need of liberating narratives. However, all knowledge is partial; no narrative can tell the whole story; no single instrument create a symphony. This study offers a theme to serve as source for further development and variation. A next chapter may take up the challenge to translate this theme into many local vernaculars, and, hopefully, be followed by many chapters telling of many other journeys towards relevance.

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