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AFRICA TOMORROW

Inculturation is a difficult and delicate task, since it raises the question of the Church's fidelity to the Gospel and the Apostolic Tradition amidst the constant evolution of cultures.

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

It is our privilege and joy to present to you this current issue of *Africa Tomorrow*.

The lead article opens doors to the intellectual pursuit of the truth about African identity. Using post-modernist thinking as a key, the implicit proposal that the article is making is: If you wish to discover who you are, do not clog your soul with the deceptions of meta-narratives. The over-generalizing meta-narratives that seem to have prevailed for many generations on many continents push the unwitting soul over the cliff of rash judgment, discriminatory ideology, and categorical distinctions that promote the division of human beings into who is superior and who is inferior: with this mindset, all people everywhere cease to be human.

The one who follows the post-modernist thesis is likely to acknowledge that if one wants to discover the truth about the African soul, and hence tap the spirit of wisdom and compassion, the spirit of community, the inviolable dignity of the family that prevails in vast regions of Africa, one is not likely to take into serious consideration those who have failed to open the eyes of their hearts – in other words, those who have failed to show at least an initial inclination to appreciate what happens in the African soul.

One collaborates with the post-modernist collage of theses when one strives to foil the generalizing, discriminatory ways of thinking that meta-narratives have produced.

By debunking the meta-narrative, our lead article also opens a whole new path of historical research into those who indeed have been confirming the virtues and dignity inherent in African identity. One such person is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The historical friendship between the American, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Canadian, Father Richard John Neuhaus, presents a paradigm of brotherhood between African-Americans and Protestant Canadians that saps meta-narratives of their force

and influence. During Dr. King's most public years, when he was already receiving international recognition as a truly African prophet and one must say as a truly American prophet, his daily friendship with Neuhaus – a friendship in the true sense of the word – brought into focus what Dr. King preached insistently to be the greatest challenge to African identity in the world today.

And what was/ is that challenge?

According to Dr. King, and after Dr. King's death, Fr. Neuhaus¹, what disfigures African identity today is not a meta-narrative; what despoils Africans and non-Africans alike is the scourge of abortion, the moment when an African woman, pressured by personal distress, by economic poverty, by a man, by a family, by colleagues who may or may not be African, chooses to take the life of the infant that is in her body.

Are we listening to the voice of Dr. King that still echoes deep within our souls as he states emphatically that, whoever I am, to whatever nation or race I belong, I find my personal identity only at the very moment when I discover my sister and help her to cultivate the most precious gift that God can give to her – and to us – in a word, the gift of a new African child?

Dr. King's message was simply that of the Gospel. A woman who took to heart the Gospel of Life and lived that Gospel was Mother M. Teresa of Calcutta. Anyone who is aware of the simple message that she was communicating before presidents, dictators, national political bodies, universities, large masses of people in every corner of the world and especially before the United Nations... we all know the insistence written into her face and body when she said over and over again: "The greatest obstacle to peace is not war; rather, it is abortion. When a mother takes the life of her own child, the world cannot know peace."

And we might add in light of the articles this current issue offers, in a clinic or a village where a woman takes the

¹ After Dr. King's untimely and violent death, Richard John Neuhaus converted to Catholicism, received ordination to the Catholic priesthood, and became the Editor of *First Things*, a journal that accepted the opportunity to make ever more public Dr. King's convictions.

frightening step of aborting her child, that woman, that village cannot hope to find its human and communitarian identity.

Enrooted in the conviction that one finds one's identity in God's thirsting love, Mother Teresa offers a contemplation that crosses national and ethnic boundaries, a contemplation that can be enlightening to every woman, child and man whoever and wherever we may be. You find this contemplation in the Postscript to this issue. It is Jesus' way of saying to each and every one of us: "You have an identity: the one who gives it to you is God himself. You are unfathomably precious in the eyes of God. Your identity comes from the God who created you. God honors you; God respects you; God loves you; and his love for you is eternal."

Unfortunately, there are individuals and groups who do not commit themselves wholeheartedly to the philosophy of sisterhood and brotherhood inaugurated by Jesus of Nazareth and espoused by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Father Richard J. Neuhaus, and Mother M. Teresa of Calcutta. We present thoughtful and informative articles that give very clever insights about how those vying for power can use and abuse language to get what they want at the expense of true justice, unity and peace.

Moses Olenyo James Malande and Hilda J. K. Masiolo-Malande offer us a practical guide for deciphering the current political jargon in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. But they also offer us much more: they sensitize our political instincts so that we can be ready to detect political manipulation of language in all future electoral contests, and thus be ever more capable of making prudent decisions regarding who is "really" telling the truth.

Florence Rutechura writes within the same domain of the political manipulation of language. He gives a significant twist to this topic, however, a twist that deserves not only intellectual appraisal but an examination of conscience on the part of all of us. He illustrates in a very dramatic and insightful manner how one can speak not so much in a manner that brings peace to the international community, but, on the contrary divides it, by introducing personal agenda items of hate, anger, ridicule and scorn when making even a formal presentation before an international body like the United Nations.

Aidan G. Msafiri, on the other hand, presents a new theological paradigm that would transcend the divisiveness of political maneuvering, the pride and the arrogance of meta-narratives and their authors, the manipulation and the scheming one finds in political contests, in a word, the confusion engendered by those who would not shape their language and behavior according to ethical norms that find their origin in the Creator. Indeed Msafiri sketches an outline of practical possibilities – some of which are already operative at Saint Augustine University of Tanzania – so that the vast numbers of people suffering directly or indirectly from the onslaught of HIV/AIDS may collaborate to implement the decisions that must be made with complete moral integrity so as to arrest the development of what he calls the “condomizing” mindset and put in its place an ethic that respects the sacredness of the human person, the inviolability of human sexuality, and the purity that should characterize all forms of interpersonal love.

The article we provide for you on Christian discipleship not only accentuates the need to be free of power plays, but also offers a beautiful foreground to the insights Mother Teresa shares with us in the Postscript. This Postscript in turn is not only a spiritual aid for Christians; but rather it offers insight and wisdom to all peoples of good will.

We pray for unity, with the full recognition that the Spirit of God delights in our diversity. It is the divine Spirit who urges us to be for each other sure signs of peace, justice and solidarity. God pushes us forward: he ignites within our souls the ardent desire to live as brothers and sisters from now unto eternity.

Within the Spirit of God, we wish all our readers a peaceful future, full of prosperity and hope!

The Editor

PHILOSOPHY & HUMAN SCIENCE

Postmodernism: A Philosophical Reflection on the Answer to the Lost African Identity

**Evance G. Msechu
under the direction of
Fr. Sahaya Celestine Soosai, CPPS**

The debate on African identity finds historical association with two poles of discourse: what Europeans have said about Africa, and what Africans have responded. The give-and-take of this discourse has appeared in many guises; and in the process there has been a discussion of ideas that depict the individual's impact on the shaping and control of his or her identity and destiny.

At the centre of this philosophical reflection is the concept of 'identity', a concept which is believed to pose a great contrast between those who are supposedly civilized and those considered uncivilized, between the logical and the mystical. The African reaction to Europeans traces as far back as the time of slavery in the 15th and 16th centuries; and during that period, it took shape as a defense of African humanity in an era when Africans seemed to have to apologize. The humiliating situation to which the slaves were subjected, under a pretext that they were inferior, gave rise to a dichotomy between the set of values corresponding to the racial identity of white people and the set of values some were associating with black people, a dichotomy that in a way lingers even to our day.

In other words, there was hostility between the violent, racist, expansionist, and imperialist sectors of Europe, on the one hand; and, on the other, the powerless yet resistant and reactive Africa.

Philosophically speaking, it was Postmodernism that, while it is not strictly a uniform school of thought, nevertheless has shown that it is capable of joining those of good will who intend to

defend the African masses from the untoward consequences of their long journey of suffering, alienation and the subsequent loss of its identity.

Indisputably ever since the trans-Atlantic slave trade, certain Europeans have become rulers over Africans. Admittedly, Africans could not be forced to retreat in such a way that they would be surrendering their minds – in the manner of a submission that was total – to the Europeans; but both internal and external influences were at work in a hidden manner that indeed provoked a continual process of weakening the mental image that Africans had of themselves.

To the dismay of many postmodernists, it is noticeable that what is called ‘Meta-narrative’ has been much in vogue even up to the present among the multinational organizations and among the regions of those who consider themselves to belong to the First or Second World, by means of their achievements in science and technology, in mass media and in business; and in the process, they have invaded the culture and lifestyle of the African masses.

As a negative effect of globalization, Africans have unwittingly embraced contemporary culture and civilization in an ambiance where some look upon African cultures and civilizations as primitive and lacking in values.¹ This way of looking down on others as belonging to an inferior class has been a principal motive for creating meta-narratives among the peoples of this world. Some consider themselves to be more rational than others; therefore the inferior becomes subject to the superior.

This is the first and foremost criticism of many of the postmodernists who cry from time to time for the suppression of the various forms of meta-narratives, for such meta-narratives have changed dramatically the way Africans feel, think, and act. The actual effect in practical terms is that new world culture (for the sake of convenience it is called “modernity”) is sweeping away many of Africa’s best traditions and manner of living thereby corrupting African identity.

The African who is paying attention to the meta-narrative is led to believe that his/her best traditions and ways of life bear the

¹ Cf. D. RWOMA, *Inculturation*, 2.

mark of being old-fashioned so that he or she is outdated, non-modern (primitive) and anachronistic.² No one may be exempt from this effect, from the newborn baby to the most elderly. The modern world has developed a system whereby some have primacy while others become subject to them hence developing a perverse sense of upper class society and lower class society.

This research article aims at putting forward the postmodern style of thinking, the reality touching the question of African identity, the concept of civilization, the applicability of postmodernism to the question of an African identity crisis and the opposition of postmodernism to globalization. The purpose of the present article is to conduct from within this milieu a critical, constructive analysis of the contribution of Postmodernism to the enterprise of creating a self-reliant African identity which would be solely for Africans themselves without subjugated admixtures with the identities of certain Europeans.

CHAPTER ONE

Understanding Postmodernism

1.1 Introduction – The Meaning of Postmodernism

Postmodernism is a philosophical incredulity or disbelief toward meta-narratives.³ Even though it is not confined to a particular system of thought, one may characterize postmodernism by its intent to liberate the world from the intellectual prisons established by master narratives or by the correlated grand sets of values that some impose and others are forced to follow.

According to the postmodernists, two principal trends of our time are individualism and relativism, not in a selfish or egocentric sense but in the sense that the importance of a person or of a thing should not be determined by some external standards existing apart and therefore imposed upon the very thing itself or on people's traditions and environment. Postmodernism is also known through other names like postmodernity or the postmodern style.

² Cf. D. RWOMA, *Inculturation*, 6.

³ Cf. C. Butler, *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*, 11.

1.2 The Postmodern Era and its Proponents

Each era has its own turning point in history. It would seem that something similar to the post-war ethnographic surrealism that seems to be taking place under our very noses is the new form of pragmatism named postmodernism.⁴ As one of the new philosophizing styles of our time, postmodernism betrays a growing boredom with and rejection of formalistic scientism, positivism and even rigorous and systematic manners of doing philosophy.⁵

Against these former philosophical styles, postmodernism prioritizes, to use Richard Rorty's words, "the need to de-philosophize the conversation of mankind and to make wider openings to cultural pluralisms."⁶

The primary founder of postmodernism is F. Nietzsche who is considered the proto-postmodernist due to his 'meta- thought' as he questions every sort of belief within the rubric of 'a will to power'. Because Nietzsche believed in the manner of a determinist that the human heart is irretrievably dominated by the will to power, Paul Ricœur and Pope John Paul II designated him as a "master of suspicion".⁷

⁴ Cf. Cf. D.A. MASOLO, *African Philosophy*, 28.

⁵ Cf. C. BUTLER, *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*, 13.

⁶ Cf. C. BUTLER, *Postmodernism: A Brief Insight*, 59.

⁷ Paul Ricœur's analysis of the masters of suspicion highlights the fact that Nietzsche, together with Freud and Marx have established the conscience as an enduring object of suspicion. This is no mere skepticism; rather it is the destruction of the human conscience. The words of Paul Ricœur cited – approvingly – by the phenomenologist Pope John Paul II are as follows:

“Le philosophe formé à l'école de Descartes sait que les choses sont douteuses, qu'elles ne sont pas telles qu'elles apparaissent; mais il ne doute pas que la conscience ne soit telle qu'elle apparaît à elle-même...; depuis Marx, Nietzsche et Freud nous en doutons. Après le doute sur la chose nous sommes entrés dans le doute sur la conscience. Mais ces trois maîtres du soupçon ne sont pas trois maîtres de scepticisme; ce sont assurément trois grande "destructeurs"... A partir d'eux, la compréhension est une herméneutique: chercher le sens, désormais, ce n'est plus épeler la conscience du sens, mais en déchiffrer les expressions. Ce qu'il faudrait donc confronter, c'est non seulement un

The "turn-overs" in thought provoked by the postmodernists have brought controversial but at the same time very fruitful discussions on the role of metaphysics, epistemology and ethics in philosophical valuation. Take, for example, the discussions presented in the works of such influential postmodernist philosophers as Richard Rorty, Hector-Neri Castaneda, Hilary Putnam, Donald Davidson, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jean-Francois Lyotard, the currently influential Emmanuel Levinas and many others up to our own day. Within this group are to be found humanitarians, environmentalists and philosophers. They pose ideas and convictions related to pressing issues that are precisely pattern-forming in our contemporary societies including issues related to science, human dignity, feminism, culture, and environment.⁸

1.3 Factors for the Rise of Postmodernism

Existentialism had stressed individual freedom. While Postmodernism stepped back from individualist premises per se, Postmodernism nevertheless chose to argue against all totalities and grand stories that develop general principles to be imposed upon the minorities. Among the factors which led to the rise of Postmodernism are:

- The great awareness of the plurality of culture and traditions around the world. This gave postmodernists ample space to reflect on the weaker cultures and traditions which are suppressed by the powerful nations seemingly on a daily basis.
- The end of the colonial era in India and in Asian and African nations that gave people liberty, including the liberty to express their particular cultures and the

triple soupçon, mais une triple ruse... Du même coup se découvre une parenté plus profonde encore entre Marx, Freud et Nietzsche. Tous trois commencent par le soupçon concernant les illusions de la conscience et continuent par la ruse du déchiffrement... [Paul Ricœur, *Le conflit des interprétations*, Seuil, Paris 1969, 149-150, cited by Pope John Paul II at his General Audience of 29 October, 1980 (editor's note)].

⁸ "Elements of Postmodernism": <http://www.allaboutphilosophy.org/elements-of-postmodernism-faq.htm>.

uniqueness of these same cultures, a liberty they began to exercise immediately.

- The advent of radical critical methods and styles of inquiry that addressed issues and positions formerly held to be sacred and unchallengeable. Among those making use of radical critical methodology were Karl Marx in his dialectics, Sigmund Freud in his insistence on rethinking the nature of consciousness, Isaac Newton in his radical revision of the laws of physics and Albert Einstein in his theories on motion and relativity. All these and others laid new foundations for a more contemporary style of thinking. They offered an alternative possibility for how to see reality.
- The new realization that science and technology are not the only solutions to the problems of the human person.
- The growing awareness of the part played by non-rational faculties in day-to-day life, i.e. emotion, affection, feeling, sentiment as modes that play their role in human intelligence (this is central to Johannes Messner's ethics).
- The awareness of cultural conditioning in philosophy, ethics, and religion to a level which was never realized before.

1.4 Concerning Meta-Narratives

A meta-narrative is a grand story that corresponds to general and universal theories which claim to be adequate for explaining even what seem to be concrete exceptions to the universal thesis. Postmodernists argue that an intelligent scan of history shows that meta-narratives grew to be important in order to buttress the survival of the superior. In this sense, the meta-narratives were ultimately relative to the cultures from which they arose, were doubtfully adequate even to explain their own cultures, and starkly ignored the freedom, the cultural identity, the intellectual and spiritual resources, and the fundamental human rights of other cultures whom the authors of meta-narratives most often considered inferior.

The range of meta-narratives is almost all-inclusive. They contain elements and styles that affect every domain of human

life: civilization, culture, science, technology, education, environment, gender, morality, and rationality, to name but a few. Example: many of those who consider themselves to be from developed countries seem to think of themselves as cultured, civilized, and highly skilled people, rational and philosophical. Consequently, the unwitting among them may tend to treat those who are not of their sort as barbarians, uncultured, less rational, unskilled and primitive.

Postmodernists are not ready to accept such meta-narratives and, accordingly, are now taking measures to question all forms of meta-narrative by forming a newly independent consciousness and spirit in those formerly considered to be the "weaker" subjects.

1.5 Principal Features of Postmodernism

Philosophers today who describe themselves as "postmodern" say that such "modern" 18th and 19th century philosophers as Kant and Hegel were advocating the position that one is able to know an independent reality with certainty, that is to say, with an objective grasp of "historical" facts. Given the fact that Kant's critique of pure reason actually places a limit on the intellectual capacity to grasp the thing-in-itself and hence by implication truth-in-itself within the context of history, it is doubtful that the postmodernist position here is an accurate reading of the Kantian position. In any case, postmodernists do seem correct in their assessment of the Kantian and Hegelian premise that knowing is centred on the attempt to take an intelligent look at a supposed already-out-there-now-real. This attempt has faltered.

The new thinking that characterizes the postmodernists' position, on the other hand, offers as points of emphasis:

- the phenomenon that culture and language are always changing;
- the lack of certainty about the data of knowledge;
- the impossibility of going beyond "language" to "reality";
- the actuality that political self-interest may often corrupt the pursuit of knowledge with prejudicial mindsets;

- the absence of any objective foundation for truth-claims and the absence of an objective criterion for determining the facticity of historical data – these data, therefore, can very well be reduced to imaginative reconstructions of the past;
- the continuing attempt of a superior class that anchors itself in its own “credo” to posit relativism as a worthwhile criterion for measuring today’s lifestyle – hence relativism becomes a cognitive tool by which one class subjugates others to an inferior class.

The tenets of postmodernism affect the very nature of philosophy. The notion that philosophy is a “search for truth” is replaced by: pragmatism (Rorty); deconstruction (Derrida); paralogy (Lyotard); genealogy (Foucault); alterity in the ‘I - thou’ relationship (Levinas).

Some thinkers (Ricoeur, Gadamer, Habermas, MacIntyre) prefer the term “late-modernity” to “postmodernism” to describe their positions. They try to avoid relativism by stressing an inter-subjective community of belief whereby each unique person with his or her cultural perspective and unique history learns to respect the views of others in such a way that the objective truth gradually becomes clearer through a process of open dialogue and shared communication.⁹

1.6 The Postmodernist Refutations of Meta-Narratives

Postmodernism concentrates on the tensions of difference and similarity occasioned by processes of globalization and capitalism: the accelerating circulation of people, the increasingly dense and frequent cross-cultural interactions, and the unavoidable intersection of local and global information technology.¹⁰

Among the meta-narratives that are rigorously attacked by the postmodernists are those of the progressive emancipation of humanity and that of the triumph of science. Many of today’s discoveries and preferred processes of science consume people’s lives without taking into consideration the basic and fundamental

⁹ Cf. C. Butler, *Postmodernism: A Brief Insight*, 60.

¹⁰ Cf. C. Butler, *Postmodernism: A Brief Insight*, 58.

right to life: take, for example, the research performed on human embryos. This is because one considers himself or herself superior and hence can ruin the life of the other at any cost just to achieve his or her goal.

These meta-narratives traditionally have served to give certain cultural practices some form of legitimation or authority; but as the postmodernists have pointed out, ever since the termination of the Second World War, these meta-doctrines have lost their credibility.¹¹ They are outdated. The impersonal and faceless bureaucracies that one has found in Europe, for example, whose concerns might include the making and the using of weapons of mass destruction and an unbridled enthrallment with consumerism, that in its turn fosters a wasteful, throwaway or a produce-perish society at the sacrifice of the earth's resources and environment while not serving the fair and equitable socio-economic needs of the population¹²: meta-doctrines purported to support these life styles are no longer relevant to an international forum where even the smallest of minorities are recognized for their individual identity: now everyone, no matter how small, powerless or poor he or she may be, has a voice.

Postmodern sensibility does not lament the loss of narrative coherence any more than the loss of the sense of being. The dissolution of narrative, indeed, gives rise to a legitimation that is based on a new unifying criterion, a kind of knowledge-producing system whose form of capital is information and the consciousness-raising of the so-called weaker mass. The loss of a continuous meta-narrative, therefore, gives fluidity to the subject, who now becomes a complex of heterogeneous moments of subjectivity without necessarily cohering into a self-identity.

The Catholic Church before Vatican II is a good example of a consistent foil to meta-narratives. When a Jewish meta-narrative looked like it was going to subject Greek-speaking Gentiles to an inevitable position of inferiority, the Council of Jerusalem showed its opposition to the meta-narrative. Greek-speaking Gentiles were not to be considered an inferior class. When

¹¹ Cf. C. Butler, *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*, 14.

¹² Cf. C. Butler, *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*, 13.

Patriarch John the Faster, exercising a will to power in Nietzsche's sense of the term, looked like he was going to dominate the Church with a Greek meta-narrative, the Pope of that epic, Gregory I, followed the lead of three African church fathers, Augustine, Cyprian and Tertullian to introduce the language of the masses – at that time it was Latin – into the mainstream conduct of the Church. John the Faster, master of the Greek meta-narrative, proclaimed himself “universal bishop”. Gregory chose the less superior term *Servus Servorum Dei*, Servant of the Servants of God.

Now we arrive at the year 1590: at a time in history when skeptical Europeans thought that the Church was going to impose a Latin meta-narrative on indigenous peoples, the Church, surprised and shocked everyone by showing its explicit rejection of meta-narratives: the Church chose to print the first catechism for the Philippines – not in Latin, not in Spanish, not even in the indigenous language of the majority, Tagalog. The Church published the first Filipino catechism in this very populous country in the language of the small, the weak, and the powerless that everyone despised as inferior: namely, the Chinese immigrants. This was hundreds of years before postmodernism would begin thinking in the same fashion. It was a major manifestation of what postmodern thinking calls “inculturation”. It was also solidarity with the marginalized few.

In the 1960's the Second Vatican Council confirmed what the Council of Jerusalem initiated 1900 years before in 50 A.D. and what the Church had already been doing throughout the centuries: inculturation was to be the order of the day in whatever country or culture Christians were to be found.

A simple example of a meta-narrative that seemed to provoke the deformation of many cultures is the Marxist belief in the predestined and privileged function of the proletariat, with the party as its assistant, in bringing about revolution and a consequent utopia. The utopia is supposed to follow when the state has withered away.

In the period since 1945, the governments of many formerly colonized territories have developed similar would-be masterful political narratives about the history of nationalist struggle. It is

difficult to avoid such narratives and nearly all nation-states, and in particular most African states, have them.¹³

There are good reasons for taking a stance against such grand narratives on the grounds that they do not allow for free debates about value and often enough they lead to totalitarian persecution.

It is the claim of most postmodernists that, a decline of meta-narratives in this early part of the 21st century ultimately depends upon an appeal to the cultural condition of an intellectual minority in the third world, particularly in Africa. The postmodernists are skeptical about any claim that tries to accept the macrocosmic, totalizing explanations of meta-narratives as intellectual possibilities.

In a word, postmodernism has corresponded to the point of view that lends intellectual support to those who have not fit the grand stories, namely, the subordinated and the marginalized, in contradistinction to those who have the power to propagate master narratives and hence seem tempted to think of themselves as being the representatives of a rational, law-abiding, global infrastructure.¹⁴

1.7 Conclusion

Most postmodernists suggest that everything on earth has its special usefulness and meaning. To hold that only some things have meaning and that other things lack meaning is the position that these thinkers intend to refute: in this manner, they intend to prevent people from manipulating language to explain things in a way that takes advantage of the mental representations that listeners may adopt in the associations they make to the meta-explanations.

In the next chapter we are going to see how far Africa is made to suffer an identity crisis on account of such manipulations of language and how postmodernists strive to bring independence for Africans so that they may cherish once again their own identity and live again according to that identity.

¹³ Cf. D. RWOMA, *Inculturation*, 5.

¹⁴ Cf. C. NORRIS, *The Deconstructive Turn*, 128.

CHAPTER TWO

The African Identity Crisis

2.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the notion of an African identity and then situates this notion within what observers and commentators are calling an African crisis of identity.

There are some who say that the prevalence of communalism in African society is the main barrier to the process of individual, subjective becoming; that it is communalism that occasions the failure of the continent to sufficiently address its problems and hence that it is communalism that lies at the root of the African crisis of identity. Now is a proper moment to consider the contrary, namely, that communitarianism is indeed a flowering forth of the African's cosmic vision. One adds as a footnote that there is a suggestion floating in the air that lack of recognition of self-hood is attributable to an excessive objectification of the cultural community. Is this really true?

2.2 The Notion of Identity

Any talk about identity can swing towards an emphasis on personal self-identity or can tend in the opposite direction, towards a stress on corporate social identity. When a culture's focus is on community, identity has more to do with a strong sense of belonging, of being well integrated into the community so as to become a significant sharer in wider corporate life.¹⁵ The sustaining narrative depicts the journey by means of the forms and figures of its imagined history within the wider community in which the self is a participant pilgrim. Within this context, the boundaries set by various kinds of kinship and the sharing in the binding life of a community acquire the highest value.¹⁶

Within this ambiance, the community's place, its history, its traditions and culture are sacred and inviolate. Nevertheless, there can exist dynamics of change that reconfigure the essential elements of the community, no matter how slow and hidden the

¹⁵ Cf. E. LOTT, *Religious Faith*, 11.

¹⁶ Cf. E. LOTT, *Religious Faith*, 12.

change may be. This reconfiguration has its own place within the characterizations of all cultures and traditions.¹⁷

2.3 The Meaning of African Identity

African identity is so diverse that one may fail to decipher a specific notion of African identity that is common to all Africans, and consequently be hesitant to talk about it as such. This seems to be due to the great influence exercised by first and second world countries whose past histories seem to include moments of having tried to suppress practically all major elements of a common African identity, especially those elements which were most precious in African traditions. Up until now, there is no distinct notion of an African identity that characterizes an African precisely as an African, unequivocally distinct from a non-African.

From the outset, one can say that the identity of Africans is inherently grounded in their own culture. The culture determines the parameters of African identity. This is to say that social corporate identity seems more a propos to Africa than the individual, personal dimension of identity.

When Africans consider historical characterizations of their identity, they discover that they carry two identities that have been indeed imposed from outside of their cultures: the 'Continental Identity' that carries with it the label of African and the 'Racial Identity' under the label of Black. They also discover that, as a consequence of the imposed racial identity of being black, they suffer the label of a temporally displaced identity, that of being "primitive".¹⁸

As far as the word itself is concerned, if "identity" is considered to be that feature which is common to an entity, even a corporate one, and at the same time functions so as to differentiate that entity from all that does not belong to the entity, then in that case Africans have an identity.

Communal solidarity is most often cited as a defining, key feature for identifying who is an African. Holistically speaking, the distinctive features of an African – those which define an

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Cf. K. Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, 24.

African as an African – align themselves with the togetherness inherent in their manner of living, their cultures, and their common styles of coping with their environment. It is within the attempt to define these distinctive features that the postmodernists have raised their voices against all forms of Europe-related meta-narratives so that African identity may enjoy the respect it deserves.

What constitutes African nationalism or, for that matter, Pan-Africanism? Africa is as much a reality as it is a construct whose parameters – geographical, historical, cultural, and representational – have shifted according to the prevailing conceptions and configurations of global racial and power networks.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the geography and lexicology pertaining to “Africa” and “African-ness” are undergoing a re-conceptualizing due to the processes of contemporary globalization and the current projects of African integration on the continental level.

What are some of the racial, representational, geographical, and historical notions of African identity? What are the challenges involved in conceptualizing African identity in the colonial and postcolonial eras?

2.4 What Characterizes an African Identity

The characteristics of African identity may be delineated as follows:

2.4.1 African Wisdom and African Identity

Africa is not a tabula rasa as far as Wisdom is concerned. African Wisdom exists and serves as good philosophy just as the wisdom of other societies throughout the world. Inquiries into African Wisdom and the ensuing discussions about Wisdom in Africa are reaching greater and greater segments of the general population.

Philosophy deals with universals: philosophical activity is open to the entire human species and it is on the basis of this openness that philosophy as a systematic discipline is

structured.¹⁹ It is in the light of this openness that Tempels' affirmation on the value of the thought of primitive peoples should be understood. His words: "Anyone who claims that primitive peoples possess no system of thought excludes them thereby from the category of men [human beings]."²⁰ Wisdom has to be consistent, and a consistent Wisdom cannot shy away from the universal character of philosophical speculation. As Tempels notes again:

To declare on *a priori* grounds that primitive peoples have no ideas on the nature of beings, that they have no ontology and that they are completely lacking in logic, is simply to turn one's back on reality.²¹

Oruka goes even further to demonstrate that there existed not just the first order level of philosophy in traditional African thought, but also the second level of philosophy, that is to say, that there was critical reflection on what the first order philosophy offered. In distinguishing the folk sage from the philosophic sage, for example, Oruka wants to stress the critical orientation of the latter as opposed to the conformist orientation of the former. Oruka says:

One of the major aims was to help substantiate or disprove the well-known claim that "real philosophical thought" had no place in traditional Africa. Implied in this claim is that any existence of philosophy in modern Africa is due wholly to the introduction of western thought and culture to Africa. If, however, sages of the second order type were found in traditional Africa, or who are at least deeply rooted in traditional Africa, then this fact should amount to a proof for the invalidity of the claim in question.²²

Europe-related philosophers like Hegel, Immanuel Kant, Levy-Bruhl and Hume seem to have hinted that there is no Wisdom in Africa. Secondary sources opine as follows: "Can philosophical reason and morality be found among the African people? Some have come up with a notion that there is an African

¹⁹ Cf. M.M. MAKUMBA, *Introduction to Philosophy*, 134.

²⁰ P. TEMPELS, *Bantu Philosophy*, 21.

²¹ P. TEMPELS, *Bantu Philosophy*, 22.

²² H.O. ORUKA, *Sage Philosophy*, 34.

philosophy but it is different from what is normally called the Western philosophy.²³

A main aim of this reflection is to analyze whether Afro-centrism is a satisfactory response to Euro-centrism. Afro-centrism is a position that defends the presence of Wisdom and Civilization in Africa, just as the position called Euro-centrism puts forth a claim that Europe-related cultures hold the key to philosophy and civilization. At this juncture in our exposition we will first make explicit certain ideas that seem inherent to Euro-centrism. Then we shall advance a step by discussing the position of Afro-centrists who defend African wisdom. This segment of the inquiry will conclude with an analysis of whether Afro-centrism is a satisfactory counter-position to Euro-centrism.²⁴

Afro-centrism is basically a critique that seeks to disqualify the principal ideas of the Euro-centrists. The viewpoint of Afro-centrism does not claim that Africans have a capability of exercising their reason that is greater than that of any other people. In other words, it is not by nature comparative. The main aim of Afro-centrism, rather, is to bring dignity to the African people and restore the legacy that seems to have been stolen by such Europe-related philosophers as Kant, Hegel, Levy-Bruhl and Karl Marx. My analysis will indicate that they were simply incorrect in their thinking about African people.

The Afro-centrists offer as a corollary to their way of thinking their conviction that it is false to say that there are no academic philosophers in Africa. Africans are able to reason, live a moral life and hence live as civilized human beings. Among the many African writers who have tried to restore the dignity of Africans are to be found John Mbiti, Kwasi Wiredu, Placide Tempels, Nkafu Nkemkia, and Henry Odela.

2.4.2 The African Identity in Terms of a Notion of Civilization

Civilization is the conformity to the conventual patterns of behaviour and expression that advance by way of a continual

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ “Eurocentrism”, <http://science.jrank.org/pages/7680/Eurocentrism.html>.

refinement of thought and of manner of living. Civilization refers to the continual progression of human culture and aspiration. This includes technique and the creative power of thought.

Culture is the totality of the ways – customs, mores, and traditions – by which people live their lives; it is within the realm of culture that civilization is determined and propagated from one era to another in any given place. Thus change in cultural settings necessarily implies a change in civilization.

Any society draws its civilization from its own culture and traditions. One becomes civilized if he or she observes and acquires a personal foundation in his/her cultural values and customs. It is by the faithful adherence to social values, traditions, and norms and by the faithful application of these norms, values and traditions to the development of resources and skills that bring a particular people to advance. At the same time, the people become more capable of devising systems that are adequate for determining precisely to what degree a particular culture is developing at any given moment.

Human societies and cultures are subjected to regular internal changes, the hopeful outcome of which is the development of civilization, science and technology. The change that a given culture desires begins in the mind: and people's minds can often change radically.

Hence civilization means the proper communal use of society's cultural capabilities in the advancement of the human person.²⁵ Given this understanding of civilization, it would be quite illogical to proclaim that Africans are primitive. The fact that the notion of primitivism is quite inappropriate for Africans becomes clear once one questions the standard that has been used to determine whether a given people are barbarians or primitive. Since civilization is a term that pertains to every individual society in its proper use of culture for the advancement of the human person, then every African society is a civilized one.

It would be awkward, indeed ridiculous, if as a non-African, I were to propose my culture as a standard and then label others

²⁵ Cf. K. THAIRU, *The African Civilization*, 18.

as primitive and less capable as thinkers only because they do not cohere with my culture's way of thinking and behaving.

In Tanzania, for example, the current, concrete understanding of the word civilization goes beyond what the term should be signifying. It is true, on the one hand, that civilization is part and parcel of the people's manner of living in the sense that one cannot separate civilization and the lifestyle that expresses it. It is certainly strange, however, that during my investigation I come across a notion of the word civilization, expressed here in Tanzania by the word *Ustaarabu*; and so to be civilized means *Kustaarabika*.

Why is this strange? It is puzzling because it carries a connotation of being "Arab-like" or "followers of Arabic culture". But is it true that civilization in Tanzania means to be like that which is Arabic? I think, No! This term carries us outside the boundaries of Tanzanian civilization. Civilization in Tanzania refers to the cultural ways of life and the use of resources in bringing about betterment in life which are proper to Tanzanians, and not to another people, society or culture.

2.4.3 The African Cultural Identity

It is said that, 'a culture which is not challenging itself is doomed to death.' Because they allowed themselves to be challenged, societies have historically adopted and integrated different languages, political or legal systems, religions, and traditions into their own cultural identity. Culture becomes the influential tool for the life of any people or society.²⁶

To the Africans, the sense of culture is sacred. Culture defines every social dimension and as such is the veritable backbone of African identity. Immediately after a child is born, he or she starts to acquire his or her local culture, the manner of living, eating, working, learning, dressing... hence the culture is transmitted from one generation to another.

The culture to which the child belongs may intersect with a culture that is external to it. Ordinarily two divergent cultures that come into contact with each other tend to influence each

²⁶ Cf. J.S. MBITI, *African Philosophy and Religion*, 6.

other in the manner of a give-and-take that often results in a new, hybrid culture.

Today, however, Africa suffers the problem of 'cultural terrorism' – this give-and-take dynamic is not operative. There are, rather, other dynamics at work that compel African culture to lose its value and to reach even a stage of utter ruin. Europe-related cultural imperialism has resulted in the devaluing of the indigenous African values by imposing Euro-centric values under the pretext that they are to be considered to be of higher standard than those of Africans. This is a quite incorrect notion that leads to the consideration and labeling of others' cultures as 'primitive' and 'barbaric'.

Kwasi Wiredu comments that, through the twin historical facts of Europe-related colonization and Christian evangelization, African cultures have been profoundly impregnated with ethical, metaphysical and epistemological ideas that carry a Europe-related origin. These ideologies are, so to speak, begging to undergo a thorough critical examination both in Africa and in their places of origin.²⁷ It is within the context of a need for such a thorough critique that the postmodernists today offer the emphatic suggestion that all concerned get rid of the grand narratives that sooner or later convey the message that Africans are like objects that have no worth.

2.4.4 The African Moral Identity

Some various elements intrinsic to the moral conduct of Africans – fidelity, hospitality, a sense of justice, love and respect for relatives and traditions, modesty surrounding the relationship between the sexes, the spirit of unselfishness and self-sacrifice – all these ought to set limits to the ever-distorted and perverse meta-narratives. The qualities of the African soul so often omitted from the meta-narratives have indeed surfaced in the vast field of oral literature that the people themselves use for the education and moral formation of the young. The values of which we are speaking are not simply transmitted to an anonymous multitude but, on the contrary, to every specific African, who is known by

²⁷ K. WIREDU, "Anglophone African Philosophy", 27.

name and who in fact has the ability to achieve what is good and praiseworthy.

The identity of Africans should be sought within a healthy harmonization of the self and the community. A true African identity must be capable of sustaining a global dimension. In other words, it must be an identity which is capable of integration into an international context, that is to say into the global panorama without in any way distorting, ignoring, or dissolving any African's particular identity or way of life. A healthy consequence of such integration should be a mutual respect and love for each other and an ongoing, active sharing of talents and skills even on a global scale in order to render fruitful service within the systems of science and technology but always, I repeat, always with due regard for one's cultural and moral manner of conducting oneself.²⁸

African moral and material values blossom forth from their vision of the world. What poses a problematic is a situation where morals depend on obedience/ submission rather than on rationality, and where technological development depends on the permissions that leaders give rather than on free self-expression.

2.4.5 The African Social Identity (Communitarianism)

Communal relations are often cited as a key defining feature of African traditional societies. Some speak of African absolute communitarianism, which they distinguish from the individualistic or relativist communitarianism that may be found in European settings.

African society is often called collectivistic. This indicates that the individual is far less distinguishable from the group than he is in a Europe-related community. African society does manifest a real solidarity, but it does not seem proper to try to fit it into a paradigm whereby the individual is actually "enslaved" to the group even up to the point of absorption.²⁹ It is safe to say that the identity of an African cannot be sought in the individual as an isolated unit – for such individualism is held to be unhealthy,

²⁸ Cf. J.S. MBITI, *African Philosophy and Religion*, 204.

²⁹ Cf. T. RUWA'ICHI, *The Constitution of Muntu*, 162.

unrealistic and abominable even to a sinful degree as is rendered evident by the Luguru tenet: "A good man will not build his house apart from others, but if he has some vice then he is afraid to be known and therefore he separates himself."³⁰

There is an originality that everyone manifests in his or her mode of acting that one comes to appreciate when one notices the rich complementarity among the members of any given African society, a complementarity that manifests a motive of solidarity rather than a motive of strife or competition. That which I lack, my colleague can supplement and vice versa. The proverb that expresses this relationship is as follows: "The blind man carries the lame and the latter shows the way."³¹ Their services complement each other.

For the Africans, it is the role of the community to make, create, or form the individual; for the individual depends on the group. Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: "I am, because we are; and since we are therefore I am."³² This is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of the human person. The society makes, creates or brings forth the individual. It is the community that defines and renders distinguishable human persons.

2.4.6 The African Religious Identity – Essentially Theocentric

In Africa, the concept of Religion is not just the province of one particular class, but it enters into the life of every individual. Religion in Africa constitutes a fundamental criterion for African behaviour. No one can deny that the spiritual is fundamental to African life. The foreigner who may be used to a non-spiritual lifestyle may be puzzled by the supernatural aspects of African society and organization, but he or she cannot evade their presence and importance.

³⁰ J. MAWINZA, *The Human Soul*, 75.

³¹ Cf. T. RUWA'ICHI, *The Constitution of Muntu*, 164.

³² Cf. J.S. MBITI, *African Philosophy and Religion*, 141.

There are certain transitional rites through which everyone has to pass. The religious journey of the individual African is from before birth to after physical death unto eternity. Nkemkya cites John Mbiti, an African philosopher to which I have been frequently referring, who affirms that “Africans are notoriously religious.”³³ According to the African mentality, a person is understood holistically from birth to death as a religious reality.

At the risk of repeating myself, life is ultimately linked with religion. Since religion permeates all aspects of life, wherever Africans are, there is to be found their religion. Their thought is imbued with religion. There is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the religious and non-religious or between the spiritual and material areas of life. The whole of environment and time are imbued with religious meaning so that, at any moment and in any place, a person feels secure enough to act with a meaningful and religious consciousness.

Magesa tells us that John Mbiti examined African traditional religion in a comparative study alongside Christianity and Islam. Correlated to the above cited affirmation, “Wherever the African is, there is his religion,” is the well-established cultural principle that no one can do without the collective elements of religion in their beliefs, rituals, ceremonies and festivities.³⁴

The postmodernist concurs with this religious mode of being and stresses its relativist character, with a particular emphasis on the freedom each culture should have to exercise its beliefs in its own way.³⁵ A postmodern concern for religion is to fight against the false notion that, because Jesus affirmed his oneness with the divine Father, and because Jesus revealed that he is the Way, the Truth and the Life, he was thereby prescribing a note of superiority to the Church he was founding. The facts speak differently: Jesus came as a brother of the silent minority that

³³ Cf. M.N. NKEMNKIA, *African Vitalogy*, 68.

³⁴ Cf. L. MAGESA, *African Religion*, 66.

³⁵ Please note that the author does not seem to be advocating the position that a culture can impose its own religious traditions on families and individuals who live within that culture. That would amount to a cultural imperialism “from within” and would be nothing more than another brand of a “tyranny by the majority”. (Editor’s Note)

espouse meekness and humility of heart, that give the priority to serving, and not being served... and it is from this position of humility, that true religion may take free and vigorous root in African cultures and in the other cultures of the world.

As Jesus had already foreseen, in Africa an attitude of superiority provokes moral friction and division among the people. A new meta-narrative that is ready to capture the African mind is coming from Europe and North America. It is the meta-thought that all religions are valid since all have their own ways of approaching the Supreme Being.³⁶

A postmodernist thesis that orients Africans and all others of good will away from relativism and closer to the truth is that every person, no matter how much in the minority, should have a voice. One voice whose dignity the postmodernists wishes to preserve is that of God. God himself has a right to have his own divine identity: God has the right to have a voice. God has the right to reveal those noble and precious elements in all religions that cohere with his divine truth. God himself has the right to a voice, to speak his Word and to allow his Word to become flesh in every nation and in every culture without a relativist meta-narrative from Europe or America. Africa seems to have preserved a sacred space for God in a marvelously consistent manner from the very inception of her tribal history.

Since African life has been so theocentric by nature, postmodernism calls for Africans to resume their religious spirit even if they are not necessarily committed to the traditional religions but rather have become more Christian in their beliefs. In a word, even Christianity must be inculturated if it is to remain faithful to Jesus' intention as he voiced it, for example, in his dialogue with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4.

In African religions and in African philosophy, Mbiti disagrees with the idea attributed to Georg Hegel that African people lack rationality, morality, and religion. Mbiti argues that,

³⁶ Cf. J.S. MBITI, *African Philosophy and Religion*, 141. Please note that on this point an African relativist would coincide in his thinking with a European relativist (the editor).

on the contrary, Africans are rigorously religious; each people has its own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices.³⁷

Religion has such a grip on every dimension of one's entire life that it is not always easy to distinguish it clearly from life's daily fabric. Consequently, an understanding of the people requires knowledge of their religion. This applies even to the inner world, to the world of thought because as Mbiti maintains:

Philosophy of one kind or another is behind the thinking and acting of every people, and a study of traditional religions brings us into those areas of African life where through word and action, we may be able to discern the philosophy behind.³⁸

According to this position, therefore, religion literally defines the world of the African man and woman.

2.4.7 The African Geographical Identity (Nature)

The development of any particular type of civilization depends on how people creatively, coherently and consistently try to make good use of the resources it has for development. A people's capacity to think determines how it would develop its resources for its own type of civilization in that particular geographical area.

The African environment provides its own vitality and suits the life style of Africans. Their culture and traditions correspond very clearly with their environment. To assume that Africans do not cope with their environment is to assume a falsehood. From what has been explained above, in the African worldview, one cannot think about the human person separately from all other living beings. The human being is part of a whole and he or she must always be considered in relationship to other human beings and in an immediate relationship with his or her natural environment.

The problem that postmodernists fight against lies in the entirely unfounded premise that Africans do not cope intelligently with their environment. Hence it becomes easy for an outside

³⁷ J.S. MBITI, *African Religion and Philosophy*, 1.

³⁸ J.S. MBITI, *African Religion and Philosophy*, 1.

meta-mindset to impose and implant the notion that Africans are "primitive".

But actually Africans sustain a vital, resourceful friendship with nature.³⁹ In the case of food, for example, Africans enjoy a diversity of edibles that are quite natural. Even the manner of preserving foodstuffs is natural: smoking meat and storing milk in the very special calabash so that it could be used at the required moment are two of a variety of examples. Contemporary technologists have ignored the traditional methods by imposing fridges and cold rooms which are not only costly but also, in the opinion of many, unhealthy.

Besides, if one remains on the topic of geographical identity, shelter also says a great deal about the African ability to cope with her environment. African houses truly resemble their natural environment. Whether the regions are cold, hot, mountainous, or flat, the materials used and the designs that guide house building correspond to the environment.⁴⁰

African dress harmonizes beautifully with the African environment. But nowadays due to the influence of modernism, African dress seems to have lost its meaning. Postmodernism awakens the people of Africa to an earnest desire to return to their dressing styles which have been so valuable and so edifying within their colourful environment. It is of no avail to be slaves of another people's culture.

2.5 The African Identity Crisis

2.5.1 The African Identity is Lost: How did this Happen?

If one wishes to consider how African identity has come to be lost, one would have to take note of how Europe-related philosophy has sometimes drawn a picture of the African as someone lacking in rationality and in the essentials of human nature. Secondary sources indicate that this kind of unscrupulous

³⁹ Cf. M.N. NKEMNKIA, *African Vitalogy*, 42.

⁴⁰ Cf. M.N. NKEMNKIA, *African Vitalogy*, 51. An exception may be those houses one finds in regions such as Rwanda that are subject to strong winds and the overpowering rain storms that accompany them; but there is no region on the planet that has construction so sturdy that it can withstand every form of natural catastrophe (editor's note).

thinking characterized Hegel's thought at a particular stage of his philosophizing and that it typified also other anti-African ideologists who thereby have created a perverse picture as if Africans are not part of this mother earth.

Both Africans and non-Africans are human beings who are rational by nature, sharing the dignity particular to human beings. Race and colour do not affect this commonality that is due to human nature. All human beings communicate through language which in turn expresses the culture of each and every particular group. In every culture and set of beliefs there are matters that are epistemological in scope and hence entail proper intellectual methods for transmission. One cannot separate rationality from humanness; they necessarily co-exist.

There are Europeans who formerly used science and reason as a stick to conquer and colonize Africa, not because these were their unique gifts which are not found in other human beings but because these individuals were better instructed in a certain manner of technologizing: consequently they used intellectual apparatus in their favour commercially without regard for proper human ethics.⁴¹

But if one were to trace the technological manner to its distant origins, where would one have to go? It cannot be denied that a principal origin for technology and its notions lies in North Africa, specifically Egypt. Onyewueni explains it this way: "For Hegel and his school in Germany, Greek outline was the origin of German Scholarship and civilizations, even though he could not deny that the Greeks received their 'substantial beginnings' from Egypt in Africa."⁴²

2.5.2 Indicative Features of the Identity Crisis in Africa

Contemporary Africa faces a dilemma. Economic and social adversity, political immaturity, environmental complications, the lack of common languages, and local confusion over cultural identity subject Africa to a heartless spotlight. It is within this context that postmodernists wish to attack the falsehoods that underlie meta-narratives.⁴³

⁴¹ Cf. H.O. ORUKA, *Practical Philosophy*, 213.

⁴² Cf. I.C. ONYEWUENY, *The African Origin*, 101.

⁴³ Cf. D.A. MASOLO, *African Philosophy*, 32.

Historically, Africa may have lagged a bit behind Europe in terms of technology. Long before the coming of Europeans to the continent, however, Africans enjoyed a variety of social and political philosophies that one could not assess as "less valid" than those of their European counterparts. These schools of thought received their vitality – their life sap – from the universal recognition of human worth. African societies were founded upon this recognition.

The name given to this philosophy is Ubuntu (a Zulu word). It is a unifying vision or worldview inspired by the Zulu maxim, *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, i.e., "a person is a person through other persons."⁴⁴ The philosophy of Ubuntu (humanness) in recent times has gained significant attention in African philosophical discourse especially due to the political developments in South Africa and indeed in every corner of the continent. The South African Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes Ubuntu in this way:

Africans have this thing called UBUNTU ... the essence of being human. It is part of the gift that Africans will give the world. It embraces hospitality, caring about others, willing to go the extra mile for the sake of others. We believe a person is a person through another person; that my humanity is caught up, bound up and inextricable in yours. When I dehumanize you I inescapably dehumanize myself. The solitary individual is a contradiction in terms and, therefore, you seek to work for the common good because your humanity comes into its own community, in belonging.⁴⁵

In many ways, this African philosophical approach finds a unique middle position between the objective and subjective approaches to identity. It is a "mediating" concept in the true sense of the world.

2.6 The Historical Background of Identity Crisis in Africa

The African identity crisis goes back to the time of slavery. During the initial period, the 1500's, European colonialists exercised efforts to completely eradicate or suppress native cultures. During the new imperial era of the late nineteenth

⁴⁴ A. SHUTTE, *Philosophy for Africa*, 46.

⁴⁵ D. TUTU, *No Future without Forgiveness*, 22.

century, on the other hand, colonialists were less brutal in their attempts to install lordly, colonial cultures. This period marked the height of European imperialism and the maturation of colonial systems.

This era also marked the formalization on the part of colonial powers of the self-styled mission to “civilize” the indigenous people in areas of Africa and Asia. Institutional racism prevailed during this time period. The so-called “civilizing” masters came with minds saturated with pride and power; and they asserted their confidence in their dealings with Africans with a mindset such as the following:

These savages, whatever they think they have no GUNS! We shall therefore have to convince them that they are sub-human and that we are super-human. We shall use persuasive brain washing techniques where possible and the GUN where persuasion fails.⁴⁶

The priorities they set for themselves involved principally the eradication of African cultures and organizations. Thinking that they knew what a nation is, they forced people who already had organized their nations within the wisdom of their traditions according to the parameters of ethnic unity and system, to redefine their national boundaries according to parameters entirely alien to the African people and so conceived entirely according to the mindset and interests of the imperialists. Today these nations formed according to the mindsets of the colonial masters are fighting among themselves because of their contrived ethnic differences.

2.6.1 The Impacts from the Slave Trade

The impact of the slave trade in the 15th century had devastating effects on Africa as a whole. The era of slave-capturing and exporting drained Africa of millions of its strongest and most capable youth between the ages of 15 and 35. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of Africans who were taken away from the continent during the period between the 15th century and the 19th century.

⁴⁶ Cf. K THAIRU, *The African Civilization*, 2-3.

It is estimated, on the other hand, that over nine million slaves were shipped across the Atlantic during the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries.⁴⁷ Another million or more didn't survive the voyage; untold numbers died on the journey from their point of capture to the coast.⁴⁸ The Africans who were exported out of Africa to Europe and the Americas during this period had no idea of what awaited them at their destination. Neither did the Africans who sold slaves to Europeans realize the devastating effects of what they were doing to the future development of their own societies.

It is safe to state that the exploitation of free African labour by means of the slave trade was a major factor in the accumulation of wealth, that in turn provided the capital that gave rise to the industrial revolution, mass production and the European export of capital to colonial territories (in a manner that was imperialist).⁴⁹ The dehumanizing effect of this trade greatly contributed to the loss of a sense of self-worth and dignity among Africans: hence their great identity crisis.

2.6.2 The Impact of Colonialism

Cultural imperialism is the effort by powerful states to force their socio-cultural systems and networks upon subjugated or less powerful people. Cultural imperialism was responsible for the spread of some values that Africans may consider positive, including democracy and equal rights, but it also brought about

⁴⁷ Before 1492, Europeans did not know that the Americas existed. Once Christopher Columbus and his small fleet of three ships noticed that they had not arrived in East Asia, but rather on continents that were not yet accessible to European commerce, European outlaws and undesirables, especially from Elizabethan England, began plying their trade with the trafficking of human beings. Any Catholics involved in the slave trade were excommunicated *ipso facto* (editor's note – see Eugene IV, *Sicut Dudum*, 1435; Paul III, *Sublimis Deus*, 1537; Urban VIII, *Commissum Nobis*, 1639; Benedict XIV, *Immensa Pastorum*, 1741; Gregory XVI, *In Supremo*, 1839).

⁴⁸ Cf. J. READER, *Africa*, 368.

⁴⁹ A. AZIKIWE, "The Effects of the Atlantic Slave Trade on West African Societies", <http://panafricannews.blogspot.com/2007/03/effects-of-atlantic-slave-trade-on-west.html>.

the demise of many indigenous cultures and languages and provided a justification for colonialism.

Colonialism is a practice of economic, political and social domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. Frequently the twin concepts of imperialism and colonialism are treated as synonyms. Like imperialism, colonialism also involves political and economic control over a dependent territory.

As far as the colonialists were concerned, the most common way to destroy traditionally self-sufficient economies was through the use of force. The colonial state made it illegal to produce certain traditional crafts and thus provoked the collapse of traditional industry. In Congo (Kinshasa) the failure to comply could mean that one's hand would be cut off.

This perverse transformation led to the birth of monoculture and the money-based economy: e.g., Zambia depended on Copper; Libya on Fuel. "Methods of rule which imposed the need for money began to undermine the traditional economics of subsistence where money had little or no place."⁵⁰ The introduction of colonial education further compromised African society and culture. What was offered in colonial schools was more theoretical, and so ignored practical learning and experimentation. Students subject to these systems lacked skills and creativity. The notion of the White-collar job played a role in transmitting European values to Africa and caused division among the people while ignoring the need for technological and vocational education.

In the nineteenth century, the tension between liberal thought and colonial practice became particularly acute, as dominion of Europe over the rest of the world reached its summit.⁵¹ Ironically, in the period when most political philosophers began to defend the principles of universalism and equality, these same individuals still defended the legitimacy of colonialism and imperialism.

⁵⁰ B. DAVIDSON, *Africa*, 284.

⁵¹ Cf. A. OKOTH, *A History of Africa*, 75.

One way of reconciling those apparently opposed principles was the argument known as the "civilizing mission," which suggested that a temporary period of political dependence or tutelage was necessary in order for "uncivilized" societies to advance to the point where they were capable of sustaining liberal institutions and self-government.

Europeans most probably had foreseen the impacts of the establishment of colonial economies because they had an experience of it after they colonized America in the 16th century. "... The general character of the central years of the colonial period was of hand to mouth administration, political decay and economic stagnation."⁵² Forced labor and labor reserve camps such as to be found in Kigoma, Mozambique, Angola, Rwanda and Burundi tormented Africans physically and psychologically.

During the colonial period, the whole of Africa was forced to be a producer of raw materials and a supply source for marketing European industrial goods. In Africa herself, industrialization was abandoned.

During this period, colonial powers confiscated land from African people and resettled them in reserves. Meanwhile the colonial educational system prepared designated Africans to serve the colonial government and to help in controlling the colonies.

2.6.3 The Impact of Neo-Colonialism

In the early 20th century, European nations had almost completed their conquest and partition of Africa with the exceptions only of Ethiopia and Liberia. Many African kingdoms such as Buganda, Bunyoro, Ndebele, Asante Dahomey, Oyo, and Benin had developed strong social and political systems that could not be eroded by the colonial administration without visible and strong resistance. Eventually many African nations obtained their independence.

Currently, international trade is controlled by the most developed nations who aim at getting super profits while giving foreign aid and grants to newly independent Africa. Their manner of proceeding can blind some to the vastness of the riches that

⁵² B. DAVIDSON, *Africa*, 286.

foreign investors excavate and take. They are leaving the continent poor and bare. Even then grants and other forms of aid may carry such high interest rates that in the long run African states can find themselves with an unsustainable amount of foreign debt that, practically speaking, they will never manage to pay. In addition, all the assistance offered to poor countries, mostly in Africa, carry conditions that are certainly detrimental to development but one's eyes must be open to recognize exactly how degrading and corrupt these conditions are.

By the intrusion of colonialism, therefore, Africa has had no chance to develop mercantilism, industrial capitalism, competitive capitalism or monopoly capitalism. But now neo-colonialists are forcing Africans to embrace a kind of capitalism the boundaries of which are quite ambiguous. The leading neo-colonialist agents are World Organizations, including and especially the NGOs.

One question that emerges is: how does Africa compare with Europe?⁵³ Africans are going counter-clockwise to those whose mindset is technological progressivism. Africans are touting Nationalism within the arid space left by the lack of development. Europe, on the other hand, seems to present an image of thorough development in all spheres of life, except the spiritual.

Under present circumstances, if necessary changes are not made, advancement in science and technology can remain only a dream for Africa while in reality Africans buy only the scrap metal – the “leftovers” – and their minds become more and more numb.

2.6.4 Current Effects of Global Mass Media

In our postmodern world, no one has considered that perhaps Africa is like the child who should learn to walk at his or her own pace for his/her fruitful growth. In spite of Africa's low level of economic, social, and political development, in spite of her divergence from global practice when it comes to her communication systems and diverse forms of multicultural

⁵³ Cf. A. OKOTH, *A History of Africa*, 79.

heritage, Africa feels the globalized village pressuring her to deny the reality that her economic systems and mass communication technology are far different from that of Europe, East Asia, and America.

The global mass media has contrived to hide this dichotomy between the African world and the European-East Asian-American world under the one umbrella of globalization. How does one come to combine the two extremes by the link of globalization? And if that is not an issue, why should there be one who plays the master and one who plays the tenant? Why should one be a mere instrument for another to prosper and have more profit in this global village? This is a fundamental question which really needs to be answered by our benefactors and investors who look towards Africa with an exploitative eye, with the wish to deprive Africa of her resources and her life.

Why accept globalization in Africa if this means divorcing Africans from their very being?

In Africa today, we see many business companies seeking to invest in communication networks and other economic enterprises. A simple question is this: do they really want to save the African masses from their supposed technological backwardness or do they simply wish to save their own self-interests?

If one observes keenly, one will see that even the multi-national organizations dealing with mass media, especially the cellular phone industry, promote unhealthy life styles. It is now common knowledge, for example, that with some brands, the materials used in making the mobile can exude radiation, the kind of radiation that facilitates a disease like cancer, or some other kind of anomaly such as a gene mutilation.

The producers know these side effects but when they look to exploit the African market, they seem to carry a devil-may-care attitude. In one of his encyclicals, Pope Benedict XVI wrote that, "science and technology must never compromise human dignity."⁵⁴ Currently, Africa is so affected by the introduction of communication technology that she has managed to lose what is

⁵⁴ BENEDICT XVI, *Charity in truth*, 48.

of value in her African cultures and has allowed perhaps even a majority of her youth to engage themselves shamelessly in pornographic and other sexually-related pursuits.

2.7 The Challenges from Africans Themselves

The present article dares to speak from the vantage point of the weaknesses exacerbated by Africans themselves. It dares to speak so as to defy the psychological assumption that people must avoid self-confrontation in order to preserve the ego from fear. In fact one should not be afraid to speak about one's own self-inflicted wounds.

It is true that many Africans speak of their identity crisis as if it were the outgrowth of a series of manipulations from a European remote control device in the hands of neo-colonialists outside the continent. Africans must consider that they themselves may have contributed to the loss of their identity as indicated by a host of issues that engender emotional upheavals.

I personally have concluded that if there is someone who tosses thoughtless insults in our direction with the thoroughly unfounded remark that Africans are ignorant or primitive, we do not have to respond with anger or some other display of emotion. If someone attacks our humanity as Africans, I would call upon my brothers and sisters to refrain from emotional outbursts. We need to understand what has occasioned our loss of identity. And at this point I wish to suggest that some of the problems related to African Identity signify the failure to actualize precious cultural values. Instead many have donned the artificial masks of other peoples' cultures, cultures which are not African.

Africans must take the immediate initiative to look at themselves, see where they have made mistakes and at the same time consider with foresight the path they would like to pursue. Then it is up to us to remain faithful to that path without submitting in determinist fashion to what has happened in the past. Below are some challenges that Africans face when they consider resolving a crisis of identity.

2.7.1 The Alienation of the Self

It is only rarely that one alienates the 'self' at a given moment of concrete experience. It is possible, on the other hand, to observe many forms of alienation in intersubjective contexts where a subject-object relationship – or as some philosophers would express it, an I-It relationship – dominates what should rather be a subject-subject relationship, an I in interaction with a Thou. The I-It relationship between two subjects governs the dynamics of the relationship when the weaker becomes the means to a certain end or purpose espoused by the stronger.⁵⁵

Karl Marx proposes this scenario in the relationship between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie class. One becomes a tool of the other until the other, the bourgeoisie, disappears.

Africa is experiencing the loss of its identity due to a continuing process of self-alienation. For a long time now Africans have been alienating themselves in spite of the rich, multi-dimensional cultures and the vast natural resources that the continent embraces. Self-alienation can come as a result of an inferiority complex that people might suffer on account of the wounds of exploitation, oppression and torture that they in fact experienced during the colonial era.

Likewise, this process of self-alienation has led Africans to think of themselves as defeated heroes of this mother earth. Hence they might look upon themselves as an inferior race that has nothing to contribute to the global forum where people, groups, even nations exchange solid and substantial ideas about culture, economy, and every aspect of human life.

To be frank, it is because of self-alienation that some Africans seem to be continually cultivating a spirit that venerates the fair skin of foreigners coming from Europe and the yellow skin of east Asians as if it these are the only colours which clothe humanity; at the same time they grow to despise their black colour as sheltering ignorance and a lack of skill. This tendency of self-alienation on the part of Africans has prevailed to such an extent that some Africans have come to the point of devaluing

⁵⁵ M. BUBER, *The Knowledge of Man*, 16.

themselves as if they have nothing substantial even on the spiritual level to call their own. Meanwhile there seem to be females, the so-called *digital ladies* (i.e. the ladies of this digital era) who are tempted to scratch their skins to look more like a *Mzungu* (i.e., of white skin) than of African skin.

Again, some men seem to make an effort, blindly, to take whatever is to their liking from European, Japanese and Arab styles and fashions even without knowing why they wish to copy such cultures. This blind copying of others' cultures is a pure sign of an implicit evaluation that one's own culture is weaker and more primitive. This is a classic example of self-alienation.

2.7.2 The Lack of a Written Heritage

Africans are suffering the loss of their identity due to the fact that their cultures are relying only on forms of verbal expression to transmit traditional values and hence find no more reliable place for storing their cultural heritage. It is obvious that for any culture to endure and to remain significant for the generations to come, something must be stored in a written form.

Today many people experience the long-standing traditions and cultures like that of the Romans, the Sumerians, the Arabs, the Asians, and the Greeks because what was of value was stored in the form of written scripts and could become useful for the generations to come. It is quite safe to say that today many cultures and traditions precisely in Africa have undergone the loss of their heritage due to the reason that new and upcoming generations have nowhere to go, no references to turn to, in order to revisit and relive what is most precious.

According to Africans, the stewards and guardians of the information and the values of any particular society are the elders who are consulted as libraries and reference points for any social matter.⁵⁶ But how often is the wisdom of the elder actually written down?

Language itself, though a very sensitive organ for unifying society, does not easily find its way into a written format. That is why an African often can fluently speak his vernacular but rarely

⁵⁶ Cf. M.N. NKEMNKIA, *African Vitalogy*, 58.

can he/she write that which he/she is saying. Many have experienced first-hand that an attempt to store the society treasures with the elders as the medium of transmission carries an unavoidable risk because, when Sister Death visits this elder suddenly, the elder dies and a valuable piece of the society heritage dies with him or her. Meanwhile for personal reasons, others are reluctant to share the social heritage with their family, for example, if the particular heritage at issue is that of traditional medicines.

It is well known that Africans have a strong bond with their cultural and family heritage, but slowly selective memory creeps in because no human mind has an unlimited capacity for storing everyday experiences. Consequently, since today's young African generation finds it difficult to get access to sources and reference points for their heritage, they hasten to criticize what they can recall about traditional values as outdated and of no meaning. Yet they are ready to don the artificial masks provided by other peoples' cultures and traditions. This becomes a primary reason for the loss of their identity.

Let us look for example at what has happened in Christianity. Assume the Holy Bible had never put into a written form. Would the Christians have the Gospel as it is today? If the word of God were to be given just as an oral myth, it would be exposed to much bias and selectivity.

Africans today are called to develop a written culture so that Africa may enjoy for a long time to come the many cultural treasures and values that have belonged to her even from the distant past.

2.7.3 The African Failure to Influence Others

There is a saying that goes, "A culture which is not challenging itself is doomed to death." A culture that depends only on oral tradition is not sufficient if one wishes to exert influence and challenge others who are not of that particular culture. An exclusively oral culture can impede those from other continents who wish to grow in their understanding and love of Africa. A good culture always welcomes other cultures to a mutual sharing of what is precious to both of them. This spirit

of mutually influencing others is very common to developed countries and can serve as a source for feeling satisfaction when there is authentic mutual learning from each other.

Cultural interchange on an international level has greatly influenced global economic development and the concomitant standard of living in many of the world's regions. For the reasons already mentioned throughout this article, Africa's cultural heritage remains quite neglected and hence she has not been in a position to exercise an influence on others. One adds here the observation that many Africans are imitating cultures from other continents in many details of daily living, even to a point that can only be dehumanizing.

Consider, for example, the issue of death. Africans are very sensitive in the manner in which they conceive death. When one dies, the people show a very deep concern by crying and even wailing. Today, under the influence of some gimmickry on the part of foreign, Europe and Japan-related enterprises, some African families have stooped to the level of hiring some "professionals" to do the "business" of crying during the burial, while the family members occupy themselves quietly with other affairs. Obviously this is entirely unacceptable behaviour that betrays the level to which some Africans have descended in the depreciation of human life and love at the moment when a loved one dies.

It is high time now for Africans to turn their gaze to the treasures hidden in their cultural values for an authentic renewal of their identity.

2.7.4 The Challenge of Seeking Personal Identity

In his perceptive analysis of African communalism, Nze raises questions related to the issue of individual autonomy and freedom. A key question posed by Nze is: "How free is the individual in African communalism?"

In seeking to answer this question, Nze and many other authors seem to be content to believe that the individual is free even when his/her will is determined by the community. Nze states: "Although the individual is swallowed by the society in

African communalism, he still enjoys his freedom and autonomy."⁵⁷

This view is highly questionable, especially since the apparent freedom and autonomy which the individual enjoys is ultimately and in practical reality not only derived from, but even determined by the cultural community. As a result, the existential situation in most African communities is that there is little or no room for individual values such as personal initiative, responsibility, proactive subjectivity, spontaneity and self-determination. If one accepts that each individual human person has an interior dimension to his or her personhood, one would have to say that this interior dimension renders the individual's autonomy essential.

A person cannot be reduced to a mere set of extrinsic relations prescribed by the community. A person is a subject, not simply an object; an end-in-himself/herself and not simply a means.⁵⁸ As an individual subject, he/she is self-determined and not merely other-determined. In fact the very word 'autonomy' manifests this dimension⁵⁹; Okolo is not exaggerating when he says, "To ignore or treat inadequately such values as personal initiative, responsibility, subjectivity and independence is to undermine the very roots of human freedom and autonomy."⁶⁰

Immanuel Kant's distinction between dignity and price comes into play here: "Everything has either price or dignity. If it has price, something else can be put in its place as an equivalent; if it is exalted above all price and so admit of no equivalence then it has dignity"⁶¹. One cannot tranquilize what Kant is saying in these words: anything that has dignity is more valuable than anything that one can tag with a price; and that which has dignity cannot even be compared in value to any other individual which also possesses dignity. Because the human person is essentially a being of dignity he or she is entirely irreplaceable. Dignity has

⁵⁷ C. Nze, *Aspects of African Communalism*, 23.

⁵⁸ S.E. STUMPF, *Socrates to Sartre*, 318.

⁵⁹ *Autos* – self; *nomos* – rule.

⁶⁰ B. OKOLO, "The Self as a Problem in African Philosophy," 483.

⁶¹ I. KANT, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 77.

infinite and irreplaceable value; hence it literally must be preserved *at any cost*.

2.8 Maathai's Synthesis of the Issue at Hand

In her book, *Aspects of African Communalism*, the female Kenyan 2004 Nobel Peace Laureate, environmental activist and writer Wangari Maathai, argues that, if Africa is to build for the future, she must first face her past. The book shows that Africa's colonial history was a disastrous period for the continent: many of the problems that people face today stem from that past.

The book goes on to tell of Africa's loss of identity under its colonial occupiers and the disintegration of societal hierarchies that had developed over centuries. The resulting crisis of leadership, the advent of corruption and the reluctance to relinquish power have stunted development. Puppet governments, the thoughtless exploitation of the continent's abundant natural resources and – before the fall of Marxism in the former Soviet Union – the use of African nations as a buffer against Eastern communism or Western capitalism have, according to Maathai, left Africa both physically and psychologically scarred.⁶²

The report concluded that, having painfully pondered the loss of identity, the distrust in national, regional and tribal authority, and the economic impoverishment, one must move to an even more painful underlying crisis: there exists a "lack of love in Africa" manifested in her "wars, genocide, ethnic conflicts." The report goes on to say, "Africans tend to remain in a victim role, which is easier than taking responsibility for their own sins and hatred."⁶³

The symptoms of the African identity crisis resulting both from the ineffably perverse intrusion of Europe-related imperialists – and more recently from Arab states and east Asian countries – into all spheres of social, cultural, religious and political life of the modern African; and from the cultural sins that Africans have inflicted upon themselves lead us to the urgent

⁶² W. MAATHAI, *The Challenge for Africa: A New Vision*, 5.

⁶³ P. BOS, "Europe – Africa; Berlin Congo I: Hist. Overview", <http://www.servingthenations.org/article.asp?ArticleID=15>.

realization that, unless Africa confronts this crisis with her own unique wisdom and courage, Africa will never recover from her trauma. The article now attempts a brief application of postmodernist insight to the crisis in order to clarify possible pathways to a culturally invigorating resolution.

CHAPTER THREE

The Application of Postmodernism as an Answer to the Lost African Identity

The present chapter intends to elucidate how postmodernism opens a pathway into the African soul in order to draw forth a new communal and personal awareness of an identity that is distinctly African, permanently stable, and so forthrightly positive that the global community will want to join their African brothers and sisters in bringing forth what is of value and dignity within the African heritage to the notice of everyone.

3.1 Postmodernism as an Eyeglass for Viewing African Civilization

Postmodernism proposes the following as a starting point for discussing African identity: What does it mean to be a civilized person? Who constitute the so-called primitive peoples or societies? Does the pejorative label "barbarian" reflect a kind of link between a person or a people and the particular kind of milieu in which they live? Do some forms of environment typically hinder a person from making inquiries, wondering, pondering, thinking, accumulating insights and hence acquiring knowledge?

Aristotle and Plato are commonly considered to be the initiators of the term 'wonder'. They correlate philosophy and wonder in such a way that the person who philosophizes is the person who wonders; if a person would cease to wonder, he or she would not be capable of continuing to philosophize.

These two Greek thinkers argue that the failure to wonder reduces the human being to the status of animals and trees. For indeed wonder is the basis for posing questions, seeking answers

and solving problems.⁶⁴ Now any child, be she African, European or of another continent, asks questions and seeks answers even of her grandparents. Looked at from this angle, there is no society which may be considered superior or inferior to another because the individuals who constitute that community are rational beings regardless of their skin colour and environment.

The postmodernist wishes to conclude, therefore, that any human person is a rational being who intends to solve problems or fulfill needs according to the milieu in which he or she lives.

A cursory glance at history shows that Europeans considered African societies to be primitive and uncivilized. Note the vocabulary usage of European historians: Europeans came to “civilize” Africans. Tragically coherent with this mindset, because Europeans considered Africans to be inferior people, these same Europeans reasoned improperly that Africans could not reason properly; hence the Europeans came to teach them “how to reason”.

When the Europeans came, they found Africans whom they judged rashly to be uncivilized to have already developed methodologies for problem solving, for example, that of house construction according to their environment. As an example, in a cold area like Kilimanjaro, the inhabitants of the region built *Nyumba za misonge* (huts), which had only a door to enter in without a window in order to keep them warm.

One takes note of how people outside of Africa – Russia and Korea, for example – who live in areas of cold and falling snow use other methodologies – wood fires, coal-burning stoves, gas and oil heating – in other words, they have their own particular ways to solve the same problem, that of keeping warm. In this way, an African as well as a non-African both aim at keeping themselves warm but what differs is the technology used to face the same problem.⁶⁵

Another measure for who is “civilized” is the level of medical know-how. In Africa many medicines come from varieties of vegetation like the Neem tree (*Mwarobaini*). There seem to have

⁶⁴ S.E. STUMPF, *Socrates to Sartre*, 47.

⁶⁵ Cf. M.N. NKEMNKIA, *African Vitalogy*, 66.

been Europeans who have called this "primitive". These societies use herbs as medicines; not every herb is usable but rather there are special herbs for specific diseases like malaria or snake bites.

Europeans who consider themselves to be civilized use certain medicines for special diseases like the herbal medicine 'artemisinin' for malaria and 'codeine' for coughing. Hence it is hard to say which medicine is highly civilized because they are all therapeutic; and indeed in the case of malaria, they are both herbal.

Who, then, is the civilized person? When a person goes to the hotel, he or she tries to use the available tools for eating in order to be looked upon as civilized even if it is hard for him or her to use them. Chopsticks are a very noticeable example. Do they make a person civilized?

The term primitive is an insult for Africans, because it seems to refer to 'people who haven't made a step forward.' It is a grave omission to forget that Africans have had their own technology and their own systems for trade, for example, through barter. It is no less grave to forget that people that European anthropologists have considered as primitive are no less capable than they to transcend nature – they too are metaphysicians – and they have their ways of approaching the Supreme Being (God), just as Europeans have done with their Christianity, which non-practicing Christians – Christians in name only – have considered to be superior to non-Christian religions.⁶⁶

Even before Jesus came to Egypt (he was there as a child refugee), Africans had in mind the fundamental questions about human existence, life, death and life after death. That is why they performed different rituals in the tombs of their ancestors believing that those ancestors are in another world and are listening to them, their descendants, on such issues as famine and drought.

In cases of natural calamities like floods, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, Africans believed that the gods were angry.

⁶⁶ Cf. D.A. MASOLO, *African Philosophy*, 104. The editor notes that a Christian who uses his religion to exercise superiority contradicts the very nature of authentic Christianity – see John 13.

They engaged in rituals, therefore, in order to bring harmony into nature and society – this offers a viable comparison to prayers of petition in Christianity.⁶⁷

The early African Christians, notably Tertullian and Augustine, borrowed the term “pagan” from Roman military terminology to designate any Gentile engaged in polytheistic idol worship. The word refers etymologically to a person from the countryside or rural areas, not belonging to the military, who would have been more resistant to the spread of Christianity, which through the efforts of St. Paul and others made inroads almost entirely in urban, non-rural settings. Those who did not really understand Augustine’s use of the term, perverted the meaning to indicate someone who lacked civilization.

In many textbooks, we hear that the first man either to see or to discover certain geographical features was a European. A good example is that the first man to discover and climb Mount Kilimanjaro is said to have been Rebmann, who was German. But when Rebmann came, were there not people already living in the vicinity that had already “discovered” the mountain when they were opening their eyes as new-born babies and looking at the mountain hovering over their house?

Obviously, Rebmann was not the first man to discover Mount Kilimanjaro or climb mountain Kilimanjaro; rather he is the first European to see and climb Mount Kilimanjaro. The Chagga people probably had climbed the mountain several times especially for certain rituals because the Chagga considered that God was residing at the peak of the mountain many centuries before Rebmann.

Prejudice over skin colour has also contributed much in making one race inferior to the other. In the United States of America, some but by no means all belonging to the “W.A.S.P.” category – White Anglo-Saxon Protestant – were often known to label Africans as “niggers”. This was happening sometimes in the public schools and in the workplaces among adults in the 19th

⁶⁷ Cf. M.N. NKEMNKIA, *African Vitalogy*, 69.

century and in the first decades of the 20th century.⁶⁸ Before the American Civil War, these socially elite W.A.S.P.s would separate themselves from their African labourers or supervise their African slave labour from afar. Economically influential W.A.S.P.s also exerted their influence in sports: skilled black athletes often could not compete with whites who in many ways were less skilled. All these and many other similar cases have provoked postmodern thinkers to cry for a change from the meta-narrative mentality.⁶⁹

3.2 Postmodernism – A Challenge to Globalization

In the modern world, there are a lot of theories and phenomena that have contributed to human degradation and depersonalization. All these have happened due to the pejorative attitudes that contemporary human beings have adopted towards other human beings. Let us think of the phenomenon of globalization.⁷⁰ This phenomenon apparently unifies peoples and nations into a single society called a *global village*.⁷¹

Of course, globalization has many benefits some of which have contributed very much to containing the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Unfortunately these benefits cannot be matched by the drawbacks of globalization especially as it is perceived by the

⁶⁸ It is for this reason that the United States was the only country in the world where the bishops openly discouraged Catholic school children from attending public schools. A Catholic school child that used a pejorative term such as "nigger" could be expelled immediately from the Catholic school. Wanting to maintain their position of superiority, some of the more politically powerful white Anglo-Saxon Protestants retaliated by doing their utmost to keep Catholics and African-Americans out of all high positions. Only in 1960 did this situation change with the very unusual election of a Catholic to the presidency. The Dr. Martin Luther King era coincides with this dramatic transformation in American politics. Editor's Note.

⁶⁹ Cf. T. SEREQUEBERHAN, *African Philosophy*, 47.

⁷⁰ Globalization is the phenomenon manifested by the increasing integration of nations and states through networks of interchange and collaboration that touch fundamental issues in the orders of economics, politics, technology and culture.

⁷¹ Global village: The whole world looked at as a single community that is interconnected by electronic communications systems.

eyes of postmodern thinkers. Postmodern ethical eyes suspect that globalization is disfiguring interpersonal relationship. Interpersonal relationships, on the other hand, are vital to post-modernist thought.

If we perceive globalization with postmodern ethical eyes, we will realize that the Other is denied of his/her otherness. This means that the Other is perceived not as a unique individual but in universal (generalized) terms: the phenomenon of globalization violates the uniqueness and the dignity of the Other.⁷²

In the current crises that are afflicting the international economy, the poor and the vulnerable remain at a disadvantage so grave that their very lives are at risk – daily. Globalization has not obviated that risk. The benefits of globalization fade into the darkness because only an exclusive group of people seem to benefit from its fruits. For the millions who are left poor, globalization means only pain, toil and anguish.

3.3 The Application of Levinas' Thoughts so as to Solve the Identity Crisis in Africa

First and foremost it is very important to admit that Levinas' ethics of responsibility-for-the-other is realistic and practical. In this his position harmonizes perfectly with the phenomenologist, John Paul II. Witnesses to the practicality of Levinas' position are the many people who have always concerned themselves thoughtfully and compassionately with the well-being of humanity. Consider those who sacrificed their entire lives for the sake of the Other: Mother Teresa of Calcutta, St. Francis of Assisi, Pope John Paul II, and the many others who have put into practice the preferential option of the love for the poor and destitute, for the isolated, the marginalized, the downtrodden; for all those who are prone to hunger and disease; and for the victims of war.

⁷² E. LEVINAS, *Totality and Infinity*, 300. Politics left to itself bears a tyranny within itself; it deforms the I and the Other who have given rise to it, for it judges them according to its own rules, which it establishes as universal, and thus as in absentia. In welcoming the Other, I welcome the on High to which my freedom is subordinated.

These are the people who bear witness to the timeliness of Levinas' ethics and to the conviction that responsibility-for-the-other can be both realistic and practical. This lifelong choice to exercise responsibility for the Other is realistic even in the bedlam that our contemporary world seems to suffer even on a large scale; and hence this choice can be the determinant for the welfare of all those who are struggling towards an authentic existence.⁷³

In this broken world of ours, the ethic of responsibility-for-the-other is to be considered as the criterion for determining the validity of all efforts for promoting peace and cultivating identity. We are aware of all sorts of activities which are a danger to humanity. What is at stake is a genuine interfacing of basic morality and the fundamental needs of humankind.

The suffering and the destruction of people's lives is the talk of the day, but does anybody care? Paradigms of conflict resolution have been put in place, but have they succeeded? Consider the Sudan, Afghanistan and the Middle East – Israel and Palestine, Iraq, Somalia, Nigeria, Congo and so many other places which are in a state of unrest, if not outright war.

Levinas's convictions focused upon responsibility-for-the-other may be just what are needed for axial shifts of consciousness in both the public and private forums of today's global society. They surely help to address the chaos and conflicts that Africa continues to suffer relentlessly.

As I am sure the reader has gathered, at the heart of Levinasian ethics is the postulate that when I accept responsibility for the Other – when the Other becomes for me a "brother" or a "sister" for whom I extend thoughtful, concrete care – the I discovers its authentic existence.⁷⁴

Thus his ethics can be used as a guiding principle toward the possibility of rediscovering the lost African Identity in all its forms, including the political, the social, the economic, and the cultural. Indeed, it is only by responsibility-for-the-other and recognizing the needs of this destitute poor 'Other,' that we can

⁷³ Cf. E. LEVINAS, *Totality and Infinity*, 262.

⁷⁴ Cf. R. BERNASCONI, "Emmanuel Levinas", 581.

create the world of peace and harmony. Inasmuch as an individual has to act in collaboration with others, all must reach a mutual understanding of what responsibility-for-the-other entails. Such collaboration and mutual understanding is necessary so that humanity can survive, and live happily and peacefully.

Mmbando observes, “Despite the fact that in our contemporary Africa, egoism is dominating, if Levinasian exhortation is well reflected upon, it can help us create a human world, a world where human dignity and respect counts first before personal achievement or glory.”⁷⁵

Looking at the nature of our politics today which seems to some to be replete with egocentric and unjust leaders, certainly the selfishness of some political leaders has contributed greatly to the many problems that we are facing: injustice of diverse forms, corruption, violence, starvation, and political instability.

Levinas would view our postmodern politics as a crime committed by an individual imperialism in its struggle to contain everything within its self-centred and closed interests. Why? Because the face of the Other is not visible among the priorities of the powerful, the wealthy and the popular; the Other is only a means to a certain end.⁷⁶ Levinasian ethics challenges the political leaders of today to subscribe to the ethic of the Last Judgment⁷⁷: to feed the Other, educate the Other, clothe the Other and above all to render her hospitality in their own home, sharing their daily existence with her.

Hence the one who is really confronting all those leaders in today’s world who seem to be promoting their own selfish interests and forget the needs of the Other – the one who is really confronting them is the poor person, the very one who is living in a situation of panic, without the basic necessities to give to her children: food, shelter, clothing, medicine, school fees...⁷⁸

The operative insight within such an ethical framework is the radical concern for the other, which concern, in turn, stimulates

⁷⁵ M. MMBANDO, *The Dialectic of Being in Levinas*, 210.

⁷⁶ Cf. E. LEVINAS, *Totality and Infinity*, 132.

⁷⁷ Matthew 25:31-46.

⁷⁸ Cf. E. LEVINAS, *Totality and Infinity*, 267-291.

mutual respect among individuals and communities in ever widening circles of inclusion until no corner of the planet is neglected or overlooked. The so-called weaker races, therefore, come to cherish their values and traditions without any sense of inferiority because the truth is: they are not inferior.

3.4 Postmodernism and a Future for Africa

At present, many Africans are feeling a great loss of their cultural heritage and identity due to ongoing influences from such developed regions as parts of Europe and East Asia, United States and Australia. These influences have corroded cherished values and traditions so much that what used to be the principal mainstay of their forefathers' life and survival is suffering an unhappy death. The respect that Africans have had for life is becoming a thing of the past, their esteem for the aged, for authority and for the sacred is fast evaporating into an atmosphere of disrespect; the sense and regard for community life continues to melt into individualism; the spirit of kindness, hospitality and concern for others has taken flight at the approach of the disintegration of traditional and social cultural values into an all-encompassing ethic of selfishness.⁷⁹

Postmodernism is a means that awakens self-awareness and hence helps individuals and whole societies to get back on the right track. There are no grounds for ignoring, scorning or rejecting an ethical pattern of thought such as that found in postmodernism simply because of the displaced fear that by so doing, Africa would regress into what has been termed primitive barbarianism or paganism.⁸⁰

Africans should not accept living in the world with the mindset of the general who has suffered a conclusive defeat. Meta-narratives have to perish so to give room to Africans to cherish their own lost values. Postmodernism has opened a door: if Africans choose to pass through this door there is the founded hope that Africans can recover what is dearest to them: their identity as a people and as a family.

⁷⁹ Cf. D. RWOMA, *Inculturation*, 6.

⁸⁰ Cf. L. MAGESA, *African Religion*, 64.

3.5 Postmodernism and the Effort to Resolve the African Identity Crisis

Postmodernism purports to be the defender of the subjugated masses and offers critical proposals so that Africans can defend their cause.⁸¹ Postmodernism proposes a so-called 'Moderate Afro-centrism' so that the identity crisis in Africa can reach its nadir. The stance of moderate Afro-centrism is a notion that recognizes the reality that Africans possess rationality and civilization and hence have their own advanced contributions to make that other countries and continents cannot.

The term moderate Afro-centrism intends to downplay the point that Africa is the place where philosophical inquiry began. Afro-centrism, rather, means re-establishing Africa and her descendants as centres of value, without humiliating other people and their historical contributions to world civilization. Adopting a moderate perspective means professing that every culture has its own particularity and uniqueness, its own lenses, by which it views reality and life experiences. Hence every culture has its contribution to offer concerning the universal themes of philosophy and life.

Afro-centrism as a counter-position to Euro-centrism should not go to the extent of isolating African people from the people of other continents in the name of preserving African identity and dignity. Although we live in diverse cultural environments, there is the common ground of shared experience as members of the same human family; especially questions related to our existence inherently imply that the mind is fundamentally human. We are all capable of using it.

The heart of the matter is this: there is an African wisdom, and its tenets are found in stories, oral traditions, rituals and social institutions.

3.6 My Personal Reflections

I have one slogan of my own, that, 'the mind is shaped by the one who owns it.' By 1900, beyond any doubt, the greater part of

⁸¹ Cf. D.A. MASOLO, *African Philosophy*, 47.

Africa required most urgently a renovation in terms of modern learning, science, the means of production and beneficial relationships. But it was not the colonial system that would provide this renovation. All the colonial powers could do was to accelerate the crisis of change and transformation that was already taking place in Africa before these colonials came upon the scene.

Let us not blame the historical episodes visited upon the African people to justify African underdevelopment. Just consider: there are some countries in Africa, for example, Ethiopia and Liberia, which were never colonized; and yet they are poorer than some which were. South Africa comes to mind.

I think it is high time for us Africans to use our resources as a means for learning as much as we can from those developed countries that show an interest in our resources. Let us be intelligent in planning and assimilating technologies for the progress of what is ours. It is never late; what is needed is enthusiasm... and a courageous, diligent spirit focused on putting African interests first and foremost.

Our efforts to build our Africa compel us to forget what history has tried to implant in our minds. This is a new age of science and technology. What is past is gone. If the past were to help us, it would be by way of a noble acceptance of what has happened. In any event, we are to recognize our current situation with a certain degree of thoughtfulness, with a view to a better future. African destiny relies on how much effort we apply here and now. This is an important stage in the process required to regain an identity that is truly African.

Politics continues to be a problematic here in Africa. The political system of many African societies seems weighed down by European norms of action. The current political system in Africa today has run the gamut of multiparty politics. Although on the surface this style of politics seems to offer options and so promote policy advancement in societies that are more individualistic in tone, this system has tended to be counterproductive in communalistic societies especially in the African context.

The challenge then is: how can societies, in which moving towards friendly agreement has been the preferred manner of political decision-making, institutionalize democracy in the modern world, especially if the democracy advocated is nothing other than confrontational politics? A creative answer to this kind of question can save contemporary Africa the headache otherwise caused when ideas are adopted without adequate consideration.

There is no denial that our new African nations/states today, as yesteryear, suffer deep political, economic and social pathologies such as a lack of trust, of democratic freedom, of rule of law, and of the accountability of the government to the governed. One contention is that African states stand, as it were, in the middle of two powerful forces. The first can be traced to traditional African ways of life and indigenous political cultures. Fluid as traditions and cultures in Africa are, some are carry-overs from the pre-colonial past and some came into existence or gained strength as a reaction to colonialism and postcolonial governments.

The second force comes from the legacy of oppressive colonial regimes and a foreign version of democracy.⁸² So it comes as no surprise that in most African states there is a myriad of indigenous systems of government with superimposed foreign structures.

General Conclusion

Postmodernism is a consciousness-raiser. It has greatly contributed to the realization that, generally speaking, Africans have been held in the grip of somebody else. To a considerable extent, our intellectual life has suffered an emptying of all content and form: and our past has suffered distortion, confusion and destruction. Among Africans, postmodernism evokes questions such as: Who are we? Where are we now, and where are we going? What is our future?

Perhaps the answers that people give to these questions leave them in a kind of traumatic immobility. They realize that what they have become is quite different from what they always had

⁸² Cf. K. WIREDU, ed., *A Companion to African Philosophy*, 509.

been before. To some extent Africans have been made to think and believe that they are a lower race in the sense that they have started to think that black is evil, while white or yellow is better and superior. This still continues to exist in the minds of some people, especially those in the countryside.

As if to confirm this, some ladies have continued to bleach their skin colour and hair; or they have been wearing wigs in order to look more like a European or an East Asian, rather than an African.

Some Africans may think that they are in free, up-to-date African states. Yet they still share the bitter effects of colonialism in the sense that, even though they are people with a history of sustained values and of challenges faced intelligently, they still seem not to be able to make independent decisions concerning their lives. In a word, the modern world has continued to influence their decisions concerning matters of importance in such a way that they are severely tempted to compromise their values as a people.

Take, as an example, the threats and sanctions that the governments of Uganda, Burundi, and now Senegal have faced because of their stance on homosexuality. We think that the best treasure one can ever rob from a person is one's freedom of thought and the decisions one takes concerning the fruit of one's thought – especially if the issue at hand is the integrity of the human body and the human soul. Colonialism has provoked self-alienation among us to an intolerable degree. The gap that exists between the educated and the less educated, the rich and the poor has become so great that at times they seem to have nothing in common – as if they were not belonging to the same African family.

As if the above were not bad enough, African constitutions which are supposed to be guiding principles at critical moments in national matters are still based on colonial models. It is obvious that the situation in the countries that formerly did the colonizing is far different from African situations. Constitutions based on foreign models have ended up frustrating the African during critical moments instead of helping them.

Can Africans retrieve what is most precious to them, their very identity as Africans, as an African human family? Does postmodernist thinking help us solve this dilemma? We believe we are entitled to say that, Yes, postmodernism opens a door which initiates a hope that will not go disappointed.

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Manipulating Language to Advance Political Goals in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania: Unraveling the Meanings, Use and Misuse of New Terms, Phrases and Idioms

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Abstract

The study focuses on the multilingual terms that have developed in East African post-electoral period. Some of the political terminologies, idioms, phrases and colour words are presented as deliberate word choices by political operators. Unravelling the meanings and semantic shifts inherent in the East African political operators' linguistic choices at the syntactic, lexical and semantic levels informs the basis of this study. The authors, linguistic experts in their own right, rely on their first-hand experience of political language in the three countries focused upon in the course of this investigation in order to reach some modest conclusions that are readily verifiable in the public forum by way of TV, radio, newspapers and the internet.

Key Words

East African political discourse, multilingual terms, semantic shifts, linguistic choices and the syntactic, lexical and semantic levels of language lie at the heart of this article.

Introduction

The Kenyan constitutional referendum of 2010, the Tanzanian General Elections of 2010 and the Ugandan General Elections of 2011 took East African political discourse to very high levels. The ability of an East African politician to invent, re-invent, shift, twist and manipulate multilingual terms amidst high-tempo political discourses has come to expressive exposure and has tended even to dominate the linguistic life of post-electoral period.

The use of multilingual terms highlighted the interconnectedness between language and politics in East African. Chilton (2004) observes that “politics is very largely the use of language.” Butt (2004) makes a similar albeit somewhat stronger claim when he writes that “the very use of language is ideological.” He argues that this is so because “the use of language necessitates choices between different modes of meaning.” It is precisely these choices that political actors make to attain political effect that seem simply unavoidable during political campaigns – for example, at meetings – and have to be made at all levels of language: at the semantic level, the level of syntax, that of the lexical and so on.

Competition in the political arena is often spiced by effective mobilization tools, central to which is language. Hasan (1996) states: “We not only use language to shape reality, but we use it also to defend that reality, against anyone who’s alternative values might threaten ours.” Such linguistic choices, which characterize all forms of political discourse, can be overt or covert in nature and are obtainable in East African.

East African countries endured a tough electioneering period inside the last two years (2010-2011). The region’s political actors, borrowing from their rich multilingual repertoire, displayed a rare gift of the garb. In Kenya, the post-referendum period saw the coming to birth of multilingual terms such as: the water melon, prayer meetings, O’Campo 6, KKK (Kikuyu, kamba and kalenjin), G7, Kapenguria 6, and Red card. Uganda has its fair share of the M7, walking races, pakalast, Temangalo, Bicupa, Mahogany, sprays, whereas Tanzania has Kujivua gamba (skin

shading), dark market, chakachu (adulterate 'fuel'), kijani (green), loliondo, and kikombe cha babu (grandfather's cup).

Such political discourse has undergone some semantic shifts. Unravelling the meanings and semantic shifts inherent in the East African political operators' linguistic choices at the syntactic, lexical and semantic levels provides the context for this study.

1. Political Discourse Theory

Political discourse analysis studies political text and talk, i.e. communicative acts which have "a direct functional role as a form of political action in the political process" (van Dijk 1997) and which are performed by political actors, mostly but not only "professional politicians such as presidents and prime ministers and other members of government, parliament or political parties" (van Dijk 1997). One of the principal goals of political discourse analysis, according to Wilson (2001), is to identify the many ways in which language can be used or manipulated by political actors to produce specific effects in the political realm.

The second objective establishes a link with political science. In that case such a study would adopt what van Dijk (1997) called an 'integrated approach'. It goes beyond a purely language-based analysis of the speeches in so far as it also examines the functionality of the observed discursive practices in their wider political context. I consider these ideas while analysing the East African politicians' linguistic choices at the syntactic, lexical and semantic levels in this study.

2. Language Manipulation Strategy

Linguistic choices on the syntactic level of language can be covert operations, i.e., operations that might go unnoticed by the listener or reader because they "lie beneath the threshold of consciousness" (Butt 2004:270). Choices on the lexical level of language, on the other hand, tend to be more or less overt operations, in the sense that they rarely go fully unnoticed by the listener or reader since they lie above the threshold of consciousness. Both overt and covert operations, however, can be

used to political effect, and exert the desired influence on public opinion. Below we present strategies that have been employed:

2.1 Antonymous Lexical Choices

Words with positive connotations will be used to describe the in-group and its qualities whereas words with negative connotations will be used to evoke the out-group and its supposed shortcomings and faults. These antonymous lexical sets are often made up of “moral value vocabulary” (Chilton 2004), words that help to establish a dichotomy between a moral *we* versus an immoral *them*. Antonyms are therefore used where one group expresses itself as at the extreme end or opposite of the other. Indeed, language and the quasi infinite number of linguistic choices it offers political actors among the rules and components of its diverse levels of expression permits the expression of differing and even opposing worldviews and values. In East African political discourse it is common to have two parties arguing at extreme ends. Examples:

- *Wapinzani* – Swahili for “opposition” – vs. *Mpinzani* – Swahili for a “fellow competitor”.
- *Siasa* – Swahili for “politics” – vs. *si hasa* – Swahili for “not true”.
- *Wanamapinduzi* – Swahili for “revolutionists” – vs. *Mashabiki* – Swahili for “fans”.
- *Wanaharakati* or *wanamageuzi* – Swahili for “pro-change activists” – vs. *Wakereketwa* – Swahili for “political party die-hards”.
- *Wazalendo* – Swahili for “patriots” vs. *Waheshimiwa* – Swahili for “elites”.
- *Wenyeinchi* – Swahili for “country owners” – vs. *Wanainchi* – Swahili for “citizens”.
- *Kazi bora* – Swahili for “a job well done” – vs. *bora kazi* – Swahili for “poor workmanship”.

2.2 Habituation

The frequency with which linguistic choices and patterns linked to a particular worldview are instantiated in a

communicative act or series of acts may lead to their habituation. They become part the "general public's collective meaning potential". In other words, the repeated linguistic choices and discursive patterns influence the general public's perception. They lay a role in establishing a common view of the world and lead to shared views of social, economic and global phenomena. Examples:

- **Kapenguria 6** – Six prominent Kenyans, including founding President Jomo Kenyatta were jailed in 1952 at a notorious North Rift prison called Kapenguria because they agitated for independence. They were considered innocent national heroes. The O'Campo 6 sought to gain mileage by comparing themselves with the Kapenguria 6.
- **G7** – Ordinarily a term referring to a group of seven (7) industrialised countries, it has been adopted by seven (7) Kenyan regional leaders out to derail Mr. Odinga's presidential ambitions come 2012. The G7 loaded message is that they are stronger, united in ideology and more capable of racking up numbers than the lone ranger, Odinga. A historical fact is that the industrialized G7 was considered responsible for the downfall of the Soviet Union. In this manner, a worldview became domesticated.
- **Pentagon** – The term refers to the ODM top decision-making organ which comprises a team of five regional leaders with Odinga as captain. In the international community, however, the Pentagon refers to the USA Defence headquarters. Unsuspecting voters are wont to perceive ODM's Pentagon just like the invincible USA Army with the requisite technology, the desired unity, and with firepower. Hence the ODM decision-makers can present themselves as a superpower, robust, equipped, tried and tested.
- **Hague** – a Netherlands based International Criminal Court (ICC) for genocide and crimes against humanity. Hague is generally used in Kenya to refer to any prison or a place for justice and cripple impunity.

2.3 Use of Legitimizing and Delegitimizing Language

Political actors, therefore, have to be doubly strategic in their language use. The use of legitimizing language is usually accompanied by the use of its counterpart, ‘delegitimizing language’, i.e. language which negatively depicts the opposing worldview or approach as well as those who hold these contrasting opinions and values.

- **Fisadi** is a Swahili word for *the corrupt*. Sad as it may, Tanzanian opposition activists have generalized it to refer to mainly CCM leaders thanks to the many corrupt activities associated with their leadership.
- **Water melon** is a term that gained prominence during Kenya’s constitution referendum campaigns. Voters were expected to choose between RED (for No) and GREEN (for Yes). Politicians who played it safe (neutrals) or were ambivalent during the campaigns were coded water melons. The logic is simple in that a water melon has a green colour on the outer cover and red colour in the inside.

2.4 Bipolar Representations

Political actors use bipolar representations often while on a campaign trail. The repeated instantiation of these binary conceptualizations tends to lead to similar bipolar representations in the collective consciousness of the general public. In the end the political operators assign meanings and definition to words not only to belittle their opponents but also to manipulate voters.

Examples:

- Vuvuzela (Plastic horns) vs. Democrats
- Wapinzani (oppositionists) vs. Shadow government
- ODM rebels vs. ODM reformists
- Movement vs. Pro change agents

3. Other Common Syntactic Strategies

We delineate them as follows:

3.1 Deictic Pronouns – such as ‘Us’ and ‘Them’

- **Wale wale** – this refers to a Kiswahili compound for ‘those those’. It is a code used by the opposition to refer to the activists of Tanzania’s anti-change CCM ruling party.
- **Wenzetu** – This is a Kiswahili possessive pronoun or adjective that stands for ‘ours’. As a political code, it is used by political actors to refer to a member of a different political party.

3.2 Syllable, Word Order Substitutions and Slogan Distortions

- **CCM** – *Chukua Chako Mapema* instead of *Chama Cha Mapindunzi*
- **The Kazi Kwa Vijana** – “Jobs for the Youth” – slogan has been given a rider *Pesa Kwa Wazee* – “Money to the Elderly”. It implies that whereas the youth may work, it is the elderly who corruptly earn the wages.
- **RAILA** has its syllables distorted to read ALIAR when read from right to left.
- *Siasa* – “politics” is corrupted to say *Si Hasa* – “not true”.

3.3 Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions

Idioms laced with political undertones have also found their way into the public forum:

- **Kujivua gamba** is Kiswahili for skin shading. This is a term advanced by CCM to rid itself of corrupt leadership from its rank and file. Skin shading is commonly used by reptiles to shade off old skin/ scales. *Kujivua gamba* is commonly used to refer to any person who needs desirable change or transformation.
- **Ballot stuffing** was common during the election period. It acquired a new meaning later. For example, if a married woman is caught cheating in Uganda, people might say it was because the husband could not stuff her ballot box well.

- **Movement** is a term that refers to NRM. When two friends meet and one asks the other, “Are you in Movement?” he is simply asking if he is an NRM supporter.
- **Temangalo** is a name that is commonly used to describe current Ugandan Prime minister Amama Mbabazi who owned a land at Temangalo. “Temangalo land” is a wetland that Mr. Amama Mbabazi in cohorts with former Ugandan NSSF boss Chandi Jamwa wanted to sell illegally to NSSF at an allegedly inflated price of 11 billion Uganda shillings. Temangalo has since become a term for any mega financial scandal.
- **Dark market** is a term first used on the floor of the Tanzanian parliament by youthful opposition MP Ezekiel Wenje in reference to secret (informal) meetings held by the CCM ruling party committee chairpersons to cut deals on pertinent matters.
- The **Nyamagana** (CHADEMA) was forced to withdraw the term and replace it with ‘white market’ for wrongly accusing House speaker Ann Makinda of endorsing wrong decisions arrived at outside the established parliamentary mechanisms. Dark market is now generalized to refer to any meetings held in secret.
- **Pita Kati** is a Kiswahili term for ‘pass in the middle’ and is associated with current Kenyan vice president, Kalonzo Musyoka. He claimed prophetically that after the hotly contested Kenyan 2007 presidential election, he would take up occupancy “in the middle” between President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga. True to his word, after the signing of the National Peace and Reconciliation Accord, which constituted the aftermath of an inconclusive election, he was made a vice president thereby standing in between them.
- **Chakachu** is a Swahili word initially used as a reference to fuel adulteration whereby unscrupulous traders would mix kerosene and petrol so as to make a kill. This word refers to any social evil such as exam cheating, statistical

manipulations, professional misconduct, “cooked records”, poor quality services, and contraband goods.

- **Walking races** started as walk to work protests by Ugandan opposition guru Kyiza Bisigye against the high costs of fuel and other basic commodities. The government used maximum force and brutality to crush the protests. Mechanisms used included pepper spraying of leaders – including Mr.Kyiza.

4. Coinage

Coinage of political terms springs from words and numbers, code-mixing, acronyms, pet names – i.e., nicknames – and place names. These word formation processes have generally brought to birth new words. They are discussed in details:

4.1 Joining Words and Numbers

Sita (Kiswahili for six) – *Sita*, simply written as 6 on social media, is Tanzanian minister for East African Affairs and a former highly regarded speaker of the national assembly in 2006-2012. He was forced out by CCM due to his independent views on issues. Whenever the current speaker, Ann Makinda, misjudges the public mood, tweets such as ‘we need 6’ resurface.

O’ocampo 6 – This is a group of six prominent Kenyans namely: the Deputy Prime Minister Uhuru Kenyatta, Former Minister William Ruto, Radio Journalist Joshua Sang, Minister Henry Kosgey, Former Police Commissioner General Hussein Ali and the Head of civil service and the Secretary to the Cabinet, Ambassador Francis Muthaura. The six (6) have been indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) as persons bearing the greatest responsibility for post-election violence that occurred in Kenya in 2008. Whenever people use the term O’ocampo 6, or simply ‘the 6’, Kenyans easily decipher the suspects.

G7 – Ordinarily a group of seven (7) industrialized countries but adopted by seven (7) Kenyan regional leaders out to derail Mr. Odinga’s presidential ambitions come 2012.

M7 – The name of the current Ugandan president is Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. Now Museveni is pronounced as */museveni/*

hence M7 (M for *mu* and 7 for *seven*): take note of the similarity in pronunciation.

Kapenguria 6 – Six prominent Kenyans, who included founding President Jomo Kenyatta, were jailed in 1952 at a notorious North Rift prison called Kapenguria for agitating for independence. They were considered innocent national heroes.

4.2 Code-Mixing and Lexical Borrowing

Pakalast – This word is a blend from both Kiswahili and English language derivatives. *Paka* is a Swahili term for ‘until/ awaiting/ pending/ in anticipation of’ whereas *last* is English for ‘final/ very last/ after everything/ end’... The purpose of the *pakalast* propaganda was to inform their competitors and gullible electorates that M7 would be there until the end. This Museveni campaign slogan was initially used by WARID telecoms in Uganda as a measure for product strength and reliability.

Maombi meetings – Nationwide “maombi” meetings were held countrywide to proclaim solidarity with the O’O campo 6. “Maombi” is the Swahili word for prayer. The irony is that these “prayer” meetings – which should ordinarily show decorum – turned in to Odinga and O’O campo bashing. They took the format of real egoistic political meetings. Nowadays patrons are wont to christen similar like-minded fellowship meetings as prayer meetings instead of political, social or business gatherings. This brings to birth the closeness of state and politics in Kenya.¹

4.3 Acronyms and Word Order Substitutions

- **KKK** – Kikuyu, Kamba and Kalenjin coalition. A political tag given to a group of like-minded political leaders from the Kikuyu, Kamba and Kalenjin. They were depicted as a bunch of tribalists and anti-K (read Kenya).
- **EPA** – External Payment Account: a financial scandal in Tanzania. The term has been generalized to stand for any mega-corrupt activity.

¹ One gathers from all this that prayer and religion were not high on the agenda of these gatherings (editor’s note).

- **CCM** – Chukua chako mapema – “take yours early”. While the literal meaning is to steal/grab/ be corrupt, the coined expression is in actuality a corruption of Chama Cha Mapinduzi. CCM is the largest still ruling political party in Tanzania which has been accused of grand corruption activities within its rank and file.
- **ODM** – Corrupted to read *Odinga* Democratic Movement, which is a corruption of Orange Democratic Movement. ODM is the largest party by parliamentary representation in Kenya (2008-2012). This distortion and word order substitution was advanced by rebel ODM MP’s who found themselves in dire conflict with their party leader, Hon. Raila Odinga.

5. Pet Names, Nicknames and Titles

Dokta/ Doctor – The East African political leadership has developed an obsession with elitism. In Tanzania, we saw supporters of the two largest parties fighting over the real and unreal Doctor.

Mahogany is a pet name given to Gilbert Bukenya, former Vice President, because he was thought to be tough politically and a hard nut to crack. But as fate would have it, he has since lost his post as Vice President in a recent cabinet reshuffle and is currently facing corruption charges over his handling of Commonwealth heads of state and government meeting (CHOGM) funds a few years ago.

Bicupa, pronounced vichupa, this name is used to describe former Kampala Mayor Nasser Ndege Seggabala. The name is derived from the Lugganda name “Bicuppuli” pronounced vichupuli which refers to *fake things*. Those who refer to him as Bicupa believe that he is *a fake*, because he is not educated, with a poor command of English language and has never kept a promise.

Mama Mabira pronounced Mavira is a name given to a female Ugandan parliamentarian called Beatrice Anywa. She fought hard and successfully in opposing a government’s plan to give out the expansive and indigenous Mabira forest to investors

who wanted to cut trees and plant a sugar cane plantation. She literally saved the forest; hence Mama Mabira.

Kiwani pronounced as *chiwaani* is a common name now used to describe 'fake' or non-original/non-branded items sold on the Ugandan local market. This term may also refer to activities undertaken that are generally considered to be fake or untrue. It derives its origin from a song by a famous Ugandan musician Bobi Wine, in his song *Kiwani*.

6. Place Names

Nenda Loliondo unywe kikombe cha babu, loosely translated, means, "Go to Loliondo, and take a sip from the grandfather's cup". Loliondo is a place in northern Tanzania that was made famous by a traditional healer. Sick people from home and abroad thronged the village to 'drink a cup of his miraculous drug'. The name Loliondo has been assimilated into political discourse to imply 'a saviour'. Parties often tease opponents to go to loliondo for inspiration.

Hague – the explanation given elsewhere applies.

Mpererwe is a Kampala suburb and home to opposition leader Kizya Besyige. The small town became the centre at which the walk to work protests were launched. The brutal force exercised by the military and the police led to many injuries. To many, Mpererwe has become synonymous with 'walk to work protests.'

7. Sexually Loaded Vocabulary

The linking of political terminology to sexually loaded terms is widespread. Since taboos and innuendos culturally govern discussion on sex, many have given sexual connotations to political terms.

Kilimo kwanza is a Tanzanian slogan that, translated, means 'Agriculture first.' This is a clarion call to citizens to enhance farming as a sure way to wealth creation. The local populace has distorted it to mean more sexual activity to get many children (voters).

Chakachu, which initially referred to 'fuel adulteration,' has gained notoriety as referring to 'sexual intercourse' or any lady who has lost the traditionally cherished virginity.

Temangalo is a wetland that the current prime minister Amama Mbabazi and former NSSF boss Chandi Jamwa wanted to sell illegally. Nowadays it has been sexualised by Uganda's tabloid Red Pepper. When Mr. A is accused of raping Ms.Z, Red Pepper will say Mr.A has been caught raiding Ms. Z's Temangalo.

Consultations and Coalition – The Kenyan coalition government's decisions are arrived at after proper consultations between the prime minister and the president. Time and again members of either coalition – whether it is ODM or PNU – have leveled accusations at each other as having acted in bad faith without proper consultation. In Kenyan street discourse, *marriages or relationships* are Coalitions whereas *dates or even sexual activities* are Consultations.

8. Colour

One may manipulate Colour as a tool for mass mobilization and party identity.

KIJANI is Swahili for green. The CCM rank and file use green uniforms. The CCM code is simply kijani.

A red card was associated with the NO referendum campaigns in Kenya. The YES campaign touted them as cheats who had already red carded and so should be out of the "game": here read contest. Red was associated with violence/ bloodshed and pain whereas green represented life and continuity. To a great extent a number of voters were easily swayed to one side or the other by such words.

Conclusion

- The authors suggest that an analysis of texts readily available in the public forum manifests a choice of a lexically loaded vocabulary on the part of political actors that is deliberate. A significant number of terms are derived from the Kiswahili vocabulary since Kiswahili is generally accepted as the language of politics in Kenya and Tanzania.

- The choice of lexically loaded vocabulary at times borders on hate speech: this phenomenon necessitates legislation to moderate and enhance healthy political debates and competition. The temptation for a political actor is normally to use lexically loaded terms – insults, word order distortions and substitutions – to tarnish a competitor’s name.
- Most of the political vocabulary has undergone semantic shifts.
- New political terms have come to birth as a result of morphological processes such as blending – code mixing – and borrowing.
- Some of the political terms are crafted for short-term political expediency – this occasions the code mixing and the use of generalizations. Kiswahili language purists should help address such anomalies.
- Colour which is a semantic universal is an important mass mobilizing tool in East African Discourse.
- Local idioms and the names of places and persons have been immortalized in local political discourse.

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The Role of Language in Maintaining and Contesting Power Relations

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Abstract

Power is created by a means of language through manipulation. The speaker controls other people against their best interests through manipulative use of language. The speaker aims at controlling the recipients' contribution to the comprehension and interpretation of the message. This paper analyses President Mugabe's speech, looking at the way it manifests power by focusing on three linguistic levels: that of the Syntactic, the Pragmatic and the Semantic. This article also discusses the effect this speech has on the recipients' mental models.

The control of language goes hand in hand with the use of linguistic tools to manipulate and persuade the recipients to side with the speakers' ideology. Foucault (2001) says power is exercised generally through a "net-like organization" and that individuals "circulate between its threads". According to Foucault, the society is controlled by those who are able to fabricate the meaning of the words.

The control of this sort can take the form of legitimate persuasion or that of illegitimate manipulation (Van Dijk, 2006). In our study the operative definition of the notion "manipulation" shall be that offered by Van Dijk: it is "a communicative and interactional practice, in which a manipulator exercises control over other people usually against their will or against their best interests".

Our analysis hinges on the communicative character of manipulation where one exercises the abuse of ideological power.

Fairclough (2001) classified power relations according to three aspects: the economic, the state and the ideological.

Economic power deals with the relationships among social classes in the process of economic production. State power, on the other hand, is exercised by the police, government, army, and other social institutions.

Based on his view of language and discourse and social practice, Fairclough (2001) differentiates three stages of critical discourse analysis when one is applying such an analysis to the abuse of ideological power in the linguistic domain: explanation, description and interpretation. These three dimensions give us room to analyze the relationship between the text as it is produced and the process by which this text is interpreted, as well as the social conditions in which production and interpretation occur.

This paper aims at complementing this theory and applying its elaborated version to an analysis of the text of President Mugabe's speech. Our interest in this paper is to analyze the power and influence exercised by this fragment of the Zimbabwean President's speech on two countries that represent two continents, the United States (North America) and the United Kingdom (Europe).

Critical Discourse Analysis: Semantics

“The interpretation of a discourse is the assignment of meaning(s) to the expressions of a discourse” (Van Dijk. 1985).

The vocabulary that Mugabe employed in the text under analysis abounds with terms that refer to “enemies”, terms that reveal negative expressive value. This is typical of *persuasive* language.

The “enemy” is referred to as a *neo-colonialist, killer, suppressor, oppressor, hypocrite, sinister, racist*. The enemies are also portrayed as *challengers of the lawful authority in Zimbabwe, mischievous outsiders*. The traits associated here to the speaker's enemies introduce an inclination in the mind of the people of Zimbabwe and of Africa at large that would insinuate that Mr. Bush, Mr. Blair, Mr. Brown, the USA and the UK in

general have the intention to harm them or even hate them ("them" means the people of Zimbabwe and of Africa in general). This "common sense" assumption seems imposed as a matter of course.

A statement in paragraph 4: *We are averse to a body in which the economically and militarily powerful behave like bullies, trampling on the rights of weak and smaller states as sadly happened in Iraq.* Here the speech produces a similarly negative effect on the listener/reader. The agent, economically and militarily powerful, refers to the US army which is compared to *bullies*. This therefore suggests to the reader /listener's mind that the US President is mistreating the people of Iraq on account of his economic and military strength. The speaker thus is exercising his power to sway the listener's mindset to his point of view and therefore side with what he thinks to be true.

The declarative statements on paragraph 10: *He still kills. He kills in Iraq and he kills in Afghanistan.* The speaker then follows this up with a question. *And this is supposed to be our master on human rights?* This, then, can be viewed as another attempt to impose 'implicit assumptions' on the listener/reader by means of making him/her believe that "he" – Mr. Bush – does not deserve to be a signed member of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights since he violates the terms of those rights by the unlawful killing and imprisoning of the people of Iraq and Afghanistan.

By presenting himself in an ideologically positive light, the speaker expresses a contrast in paragraph 9:

Ian Smith is responsible for the death of well over 50 000 of my people. I bear scars of his tyranny which Britain and America condoned. I meet his victims every day. Yet he walks free. He farms free. He talks freely, associates freely under a black Government. We taught him democracy. We gave him back his humanity.

This appeal to the listener's ideology is a depiction of President Mugabe as a well-mannered president and as one who acts humanely in a pre-eminent degree. In his paper, *Structures of Discourse and Structures of Power*, Van Dijk introduced the concept of 'symbolic elites' and 'symbolic capital' by saying that *the production mode of articulation is controlled by what may be called the 'symbolic elites', such as journalists, writers, artists,*

directors, academics, and other groups that exercise power on the basis of “symbolic capital”.

Since President Mugabe is a political leader, he places himself as the representative of Zimbabwe: this puts him on the safe side. He makes use of “symbolic capital” to exercise his power in a manner that is thoroughly ideological.

Critical Discourse Analysis: Syntax and Lexicon

Language forms play an important role in determining the speaker’s intention. They manifest the speaker’s ideology and attitude concerning the subject matter. In this speech, for example, the most predominant syntactic feature employed by the addresser is what Fairclough called the ‘inclusive we’.

Paragraph 11 for example:

We do not deserve sanctions. **We** are Zimbabweans and **we** know how to deal with our problems. **We** have done so in the past, well before Bush and Brown were known politically. **We** have our own regional and continental organizations and communities.

In the above text, ‘we’ refers not only to the speaker but also to the listeners; actually all the citizens of Zimbabwe. At a certain point, the speaker employed ‘we’ not only to mean the citizens of Zimbabwe but also Africa as a whole.

Once again **we** reiterate our position that the Security Council as presently constituted is not democratic. ... justice demands that any Security Council reform redresses the fact that **Africa** is the only continent without a permanent seat and veto power in the Security Council. (Paragraph 5).

In this text, the speaker introduces ‘we’ and explains the feelings and injustices that ‘we’ experience and in the summarizing sentence of the paragraph he mentions the referent ‘we’ as inclusive of all *Africa*. In this case therefore the ‘inclusive we’ suggests to the listeners’ minds that it is not only Zimbabwe which experiences torture from “the West” but also all the countries in Africa.

The use of ‘they’ also can be looked at in the text as a group in ongoing conflict with the ‘we’.

The British and the Americans have gone on a relentless campaign of destabilizing and vilifying my country. **They** have sponsored surrogate forces to challenge lawful authority in my country. **They** seek regime change...

In this text, 'they' as opposed to 'we' refers to the enemies of Zimbabwe. These also have been clearly named in the speech as "the British and the Americans".

In some cases, the speaker himself used the first pronoun 'I' to mean himself, explaining his courageous action on behalf of his country, Zimbabwe.

I lost eleven precious years of my life in the jail of a white man whose freedom and well-being **I** have assured from the first day of Zimbabwe's Independence. **I** lost a further fifteen years fighting white injustice in my country.

On the other hand the speaker uses the third person pronoun 'he' to refer to President Bush. The 'he' as opposed to 'I' accentuates associations with and inhuman practices against Zimbabwe.

He has much to atone for and very little to lecture us on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

He still kills.

He kills in Iraq. **He** kills in Afghanistan.

He imprisons and tortures at Guantanamo.

He imprisoned and tortured at Abu Ghraib. **He** has secret torture chambers in Europe..., **he** imprisons even here in the United States...

The speaker in this text employs what is called 'implicit assumption' to instill in his listeners' minds that by killing, torturing, and mistreating innocent people in Iraq, Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib, Mr. Bush is exercising his supremacy. The 'I' and 'he' are placed in polarizing opposition.

Another 'implicit assumption' that the listeners draw from the speaker's speech is the effective use of a contrast between 'we' and 'they', a contrast that shows what 'we' actually have done so far, accomplishments able to be universally accepted as good and admirable.

We taught him democracy; **We** gave him back his humanity (Paragraph 9).

This remark implants in the listeners' minds the conviction that, since the citizens of Zimbabwe transformed *him* – Ian Smith who is from the UK – from being undemocratic and inhuman to being democratic and humane, *they*, the citizens of Zimbabwe, are thereby democratic.

The listener assumes, then, that *we* – in other words, the citizens of Zimbabwe – are democratic, but *he* – Ian Smith from the UK – is not democratic. Hence, this linguistic device lends itself readily to generalization and offers a second suggestion to the listeners' mental models, namely, that all the UK citizens are undemocratic because one from among them, Ian Smith, is not democratic. This is an example of how the speaker's mental model exercises the capacity to manipulate the listener to unwittingly accept the speaker's mental model, technically what Hurley (1997) called the "fallacy of hasty generalization" whereby either the selected sample is too small or is not representative of the group. When the sample is only one individual, Ian Smith, the generalization is only too obvious.

Critical Discourse Analysis: Pragmatics

Having allowed our gaze to alight on two linguistic levels of Critical Discourse Analysis, let us now look at a third one, which is a function of the language and the expressions used by the speaker. The grammatical, lexicon and semantic analysis studied so far has, in fact, included the elements of pragmatics. Lakoff (1990) offers the comment that "while Syntax connects words to other words and Semantics words to things, Pragmatics connects words to their speakers and the context from within which they are speaking".

The aspect of 'Speech Acts' is one of the pragmatic components our analysis will dwell upon in this paper. Austin's classification of speech acts as orders, suggestions and requests is our central concern for the analysis of this text.

We say No to him and [We] encourage him to get out of Iraq (Paragraph 10).

The above sentence is compound, consisting of two sentences sharing the same subject, 'We'. The analysis considers the clause

(1), "We say No to him," and the clause (2), "We encourage him to get out of Iraq." The latter clause, "We encourage him to get out of Iraq," is the request that must commit the addressee to a certain future action, that of getting out of Iraq. The puzzle here is this: Does the text really compel this kind of commitment?

The use of rhetorical questions is a very effective technique in conveying 'assertive information' (see Gvozdanović, 1997). Gvozdanović comments that rhetorical questions "do not serve to communicate but rather to elicit assertive information". "Rhetorical questions act as indirect speech acts". What follows is an example of a rhetorical question from the text of the speech:

He kills in Iraq. He kills in Afghanistan. **And this is supposed to be our master on human rights?**

The question asked does not require an answer from the listeners or readers of the speech, the answer – "No" – is already implied from the context from which the speaker is drawing his question. Interestingly enough, before the rhetorical question, the speaker proclaims a list of the evils done by 'him' (President Bush): 'He **kills**, He **tortures**, He **imprisons**'. With these evils as the context, it is clear that everyone is going to feel in their mind and heart a resounding "No" to the rhetorical question, Is Mr. Bush supposed to be our human rights teacher?

The contrast that sets the tone for the rhetorical question is that of a comparison between the actions of *killing, torturing and imprisonment* with that of giving leadership on the 'Human Rights' issue. This appeals to the addressees' mental models that since President Bush has been and is still killing, torturing and imprisoning innocent people, then he does not deserve to be an integral member of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Manipulation and its effect on the addressee

By various and diverse means, the addresser has employed expressions, given references and taken note of events, which – each according to its own linguistic function – has induced diverse effects in the attitudes, general beliefs and ideological persuasions of the addressee. This can be termed, "cognitive technique of manipulation".

He imprisons and tortures at Guantanamo. He imprisoned and tortured at Abu Ghraib. He has secret torture chambers in Europe. Yes, he imprisons even here in the United States, with his jails carrying more blacks than his universities can ever enroll.

The wording of the text just cited suggests to the addressees' mental models that President Bush is exploitative and unjust. He is misusing his power in order to exploit the innocent blacks in the United States, and the people from Iraq, Abu Ghraib and Afghanistan.

This same text shows how the speaker has manipulated his audience by using language that he knew would harmonize with the social beliefs, ideologies and attitudes – in a word the personal paradigms – that his listeners already shared with each other and with him (for the definition and purpose of shared social representations of any given group, see Van Dijk, 2006). Given this context, the speaker has reinforced the mindsets of the lawful and innocent people of Zimbabwe and in the process presented ever more convincingly a Mr. Bush who is their ardent enemy.

Conclusion

Critical Discourse Analysis is by and large an application of language analysis to a political domain. In most cases, one employs effective linguistic techniques in order to maintain a status quo, to effect a positive change, or to provoke and disturb in a negative manner already existing relationships and networks that have been configured according to the distribution of political power. We have been analyzing this phenomenon by means of a speech that, in its content, makes references to political power networks that are international in scope.

What is actually happening in the hearts of the audience during such a speech, in other words, what is happening to their mindsets – depends on the skill and effectiveness with which he, the speaker, is using the linguistic techniques that he has decided to employ.

We have taken the pragmatic approach: as a form of “social practice”, one may employ important discursive and manipulative

strategies whether he or she is working with a written text or with a spoken text. We have suggested that one best analyzes these strategies at the three levels of Semantics, Syntax/ Lexicon and Pragmatics (see Fairclough, 2001, for a discussion of "social practice").

We have provided the paradigm: other experts may advance such analyses by looking at other domains. Would such engaging issues as advertising, race relations and gender relations not be deserving of such analyses?

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Appendix: Text of President Mugabe's speech at the 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly¹

Below is the text of President Mugabe's speech at the 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly delivered in New York on September 26th, 2007.

**Your Excellency, President of the 62nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly,
Mr. Sirgjan Kerim,
Your Majesties,
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,
Your Excellency, the Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Mr. Ban Ki-Moon,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen:**

1. Mr. President,

Allow me to congratulate you on your election to preside over this august assembly. We are confident that through your stewardship, issues on this 62nd Session agenda be dealt with in a balanced manner and to the satisfaction of all.

Let me also pay tribute to your predecessor, Madame Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, who steered the work of the 61st Session in a very competent and impartial manner.

Her ability to identify the crucial issues facing the world today will be remembered as the hallmark of her presidency.

2. Mr. President,

We extend our hearty welcome to the new Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, who has taken up this challenging job requiring dynamism in confronting the global challenges of the 21st Century. Balancing global interests and steering the United Nations in a direction that gives hope to the multitudes of the poor, the sick, the hungry and the marginalized, is indeed a mammoth task. We would like to assure him that Zimbabwe will continue to support an open, transparent and all-inclusive multilateral approach in dealing with these global challenges.

¹ <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/un34.16973.html>, Accessed on 10 Sep 2009.

3. Mr. President,

Climate change is one of the most pressing global issues of our time. Its negative impact is greatest in developing countries, particularly those on the African continent. We believe that if the international community is going to seriously address the challenges of climate change, then we need to get our priorities right. In Zimbabwe, the effects of climate change have become more evident in the past decade as we have witnessed increased and recurrent droughts as well as occasional floods, leading to enormous humanitarian challenges.

4. Mr. President,

We are for a United Nations that recognizes the equality of sovereign nations and peoples whether big or small. We are averse to a body in which the economically and militarily powerful behave like bullies, trampling on the rights of weak and smaller states as sadly happened in Iraq. In the light of these inauspicious developments, this Organization must surely examine the essence of its authority and the extent of its power when challenged in this manner.

Such challenges to the authority of the UN and its Charter underpin our repeated call for the revitalization of the United Nations General Assembly, itself the most representative organ of the UN. The General Assembly should be more active in all areas including those of peace and security. The encroachment of some U.N. organs upon the work of the General Assembly is of great concern to us. Thus any process of revitalizing or strengthening of the General Assembly should necessarily avoid eroding the principle of the accountability of all principal and subsidiary organs to the General Assembly.

5. Mr. President,

Once again we reiterate our position that the Security Council as presently constituted is not democratic. In its present configuration, the Council has shown that it is not in a position to protect the weaker states who find themselves at loggerheads with a marauding super-power. Most importantly, justice demands that any Security Council reform redress the fact that Africa is the only continent without a permanent seat and veto power in the Security Council. Africa's demands are known and enunciated in the Ezulwini consensus.

6. Mr. President,

We further call for the U.N. system to refrain from interfering in matters that are clearly the domain of member states and are not a threat to international peace and security. Development at the country level should continue to be country-led, and not subject to the whims of powerful donor states.

7. Mr. President,

Zimbabwe won its independence on 18th April, 1980, after a protracted war against British colonial imperialism which denied us human rights and democracy. That colonial system which suppressed and oppressed us enjoyed the support of many countries of the West who were signatories to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Even after 1945, it would appear that the Berlin Conference of 1884, through which Africa was parceled to colonial European powers, remained stronger than the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is therefore clear that for the West, vested economic interests and racial and ethnocentric considerations proved stronger than their adherence to principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The West still negates our sovereignties by way of control of our resources, in the process making us mere chattels in our own lands, mere minders of its trans-national interests. In my own country and other sister states in Southern Africa, the most visible form of this control has been over land despoiled from us at the onset of British colonialism.

That control largely persists, although it stands firmly challenged in Zimbabwe, thereby triggering the current stand-off between us and Britain, supported by her cousin states, most notably the United States and Australia. Mr. Bush, Mr. Blair and now Mr. Brown's sense of human rights precludes our people's right to their God-given resources, which in their view must be controlled by their kith and kin. I am termed dictator because I have rejected this supremacist view and frustrated the neo-colonialists.

8. Mr. President,

Clearly the history of the struggle for our own national and people's rights is unknown to the president of the United States of America. He thinks the Declaration of Human Rights starts with his last term in office! He thinks she can introduce to us, who bore the brunt of fighting for the freedoms of our peoples, the virtues of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. What rank hypocrisy!

9. Mr. President,

I lost eleven precious years of my life in the jail of a white man whose freedom and well-being I have assured from the first day of Zimbabwe's Independence. I lost a further fifteen years fighting white injustice in my country.

Ian Smith is responsible for the death of well over 50 000 of my people. I bear scars of his tyranny which Britain and America condoned. I meet his victims every day. Yet he walks free. He farms free. He talks

freely, associates freely under a black Government. We taught him democracy. We gave him back his humanity.

He would have faced a different fate here and in Europe if the 50 000 he killed were Europeans. Africa has not called for a Nuremberg trial against the white world which committed heinous crimes against its own humanity. It has not hunted perpetrators of this genocide, many of whom live to this day, nor has it got reparations from those who offended against it. Instead it is Africa which is in the dock, facing trial from the same world that persecuted it for centuries.

Let Mr. Bush read history correctly. Let him realize that both personally and in his representative capacity as the current President of the United States, he stands for this "civilization" which occupied, which colonized, which incarcerated, which killed. He has much to atone for and very little to lecture us on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. His hands drip with innocent blood of many nationalities.

He still kills.

He kills in Iraq. He kills in Afghanistan. And this is supposed to be our master on human rights?

He imprisons.

He imprisons and tortures at Guantanamo. He imprisoned and tortured at Abu Ghraib. He has secret torture chambers in Europe. Yes, he imprisons even here in the United States, with his jails carrying more blacks than his universities can ever enroll. He even suspends the provisions of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Take Guantanamo for example; at that concentration camp international law does not apply. The national laws of the people there do not apply. Laws of the United States of America do not apply. Only Bush's law applies. Can the international community accept being lectured by this man on the provisions of the universal declaration of human rights? Definitely not!

10. Mr. President,

We are alarmed that under his leadership, basic rights of his own people and those of the rest of the world have summarily been rolled back. America is primarily responsible for rewriting core tenets of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We seem all guilty for 9/11. Mr. Bush thinks he stands above all structures of governance, whether national or international.

At home, he apparently does not need the Congress. Abroad, he does not need the UN, international law and opinion. This forum did not sanction Blair and Bush's misadventures in Iraq. The two rode

roughshod over the UN and international opinion. Almighty Bush is now coming back to the UN for a rescue package because his nose is bloodied! Yet he dares lecture us on tyranny. Indeed, he wants us to pray him! We say No to him and encourage him to get out of Iraq. Indeed he should mend his ways before he clammers up the pulpit to deliver pieties of democracy.

11. Mr. President,

The British and the Americans have gone on a relentless campaign of destabilizing and vilifying my country. They have sponsored surrogate forces to challenge lawful authority in my country. They seek regime change, placing themselves in the role of the Zimbabwean people in whose collective will democracy places the right to define and change regimes.

Let these sinister governments be told here and now that Zimbabwe will not allow a regime change authored by outsiders. We do not interfere with their own systems in America and Britain. Mr. Bush and Mr. Brown have no role to play in our national affairs. They are outsiders and mischievous outsiders and should therefore keep out! The colonial sun set a long time ago; in 1980 in the case of Zimbabwe, and hence Zimbabwe will never be a colony again. Never!

We do not deserve sanctions. We are Zimbabweans and we know how to deal with our problems. We have done so in the past, well before Bush and Brown were known politically. We have our own regional and continental organizations and communities.

In that vein, I wish to express my country's gratitude to President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa who, on behalf of SADC, successfully facilitated the dialogue between the Ruling Party and the Opposition Parties, which yielded the agreement that has now resulted in the constitutional provisions being finally adopted. Consequently, we will be holding multiple democratic elections in March 2008. Indeed we have always had timeous general and presidential elections since our independence.

12. Mr. President,

In conclusion, let me stress once more that the strength of the United Nations lies in its universality and impartiality as it implements its mandate to promote peace and security, economic and social development, human rights and international law as outlined in the Charter. Zimbabwe stands ready to play its part in all efforts and programs aimed at achieving these noble goals.

I thank you.

THEOLOGY & CULTURE

An “A to Z” Sketch of a New Theological Paradigm for Responding to the HIV/AIDS Crisis in Africa: An SAUT Case Study – Tanzania

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Introduction

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has been one of the greatest calamities ever facing humanity, in particular, the Third World in Africa. In a manner that is at once societal, religious, technological, environmental and ethical, its devastating impact, especially on *Homo Africanus*, is insurmountable. In spite of a plethora of ethical, medical and even theological efforts to locally and globally address this pandemic, HIV/AIDS is decimating Africa’s resourceful population, her academicians, her personnel, her economists, her professionals, her think tanks, her gurus, indeed many of her elite.

Amidst the perennial theological efforts and enterprises, this paper tries to develop succinctly and in depth, a multidisciplinary theological model. One dubs this new paradigm, “*A Rainbow A to Z*” *Theological Paradigm*. It is centrally based at St. Augustine’s

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University of Tanzania (SAUT); and it has been applied both on the practical and theoretical (educational) levels.

In Biblical parlance, a Rainbow is a symbol of hope, life, vitality and healing. It signifies an end to chaos, crisis and disaster (cf. Gen. 9:13-16). Accordingly, the crux and the scope of this paper is to identify the strength of our new *Rainbow "A to Z" Theological model*.

It is hoped that this paradigm gives rise to a new context, a new avenue in order to respond to the HIV/AIDS pandemic especially within the ambience one finds at SAUT – within our *Sitz im Leben* – with fidelity to a manner of reflecting that is creative and theological.

Having identified, discovered and vivified various strengths of this new theological paradigm, this paper attempts in its second section to pave the way towards a brief theological integration of the basic theological-ethical contours and elements as a whole. Truly, this is an ongoing collaborative endeavour and process which requires, *inter alia*, character modeling and deep change especially in the modification of behavioural patterns among youth.

The need is for the rediscovery of life-protecting and life-promoting values, traditions, and norms that effect behavioural change especially in Africa. We Third World theologians are daily confronted with this challenge. We need to move from "Talk-shops" to "Workshops," from theological gymnastics to real life contexts, from ivory towers to the Bottom of the Pyramid (BOP) realities, from talking the talk, to walking the walk.

In short, the new contextual Rainbow A to Z Theological Paradigm envisages giving more viable and credible response to the HIV/AIDS crisis. As the old Jewish saying goes, "When good people do nothing, evil increases. It goes without saying that, when good theologians do nothing, the HIV/AIDS crisis increases!!!

This new paradigm and the reflection that accompanies it cover a broad spectrum and intends to be a sort of all-inclusive toolkit towards an HIV/AIDS-free world with a special concern for Tanzania. Nonetheless, this paper does not claim to be

exhaustive. It inspires and motivates a new theological method and approach that intends to be comprehensive.

1. Rethinking the “Rainbow” Model at SAUT: Its Strengths

The following tries to identify some relevant, broad-spectrum solutions to the HIV/AIDS pandemic as a characteristically SAUT response and model. For convenience sake, we adopt an “A, B, C, D, E...” theological-ethical model, with a view to ordering the model in order to expound its strengths. Based on her vision and mission, St. Augustine University of Tanzania aims at the holistic development and formation of the person imbued with respect for human dignity.

1.1 The “A” – Abstinence – Life View in Its Theological and Ethical Dimensions and the Strength of Such a View

First: Despite being perhaps the humanly most difficult solution to the HIV/AIDS crisis, abstinence remains the best solution ever. Its strength cannot be exaggerated. As a Senior Lecturer, formator-theologian and head of the department of philosophy and ethics at SAUT, Mtwara Centre, I have been spearheading different curricular and extra-curricular endeavours to inculcate the value of abstinence among all youths.

This includes emphasis on social ethics as a compulsory course for all students. This is a *super-imposed ethic* that aims at equipping our students and graduates with ethical values and virtues (Lat., *virtus*) in a way that gives priority to moral integrity and not only in their professional life but in all of life’s dimensions.

Indeed, according to Aristotle and later St. Thomas, the human person is both a rational and social animal. Hence, he/she can reason about good behaviour and aim at the highest good: the *summum bonum*. In this regard, the formation, the ensuing transformation and the ongoing training of youth in the virtues (“habitus”) of temperance, moderation, chastity, and purity are

extremely necessary in order to be able to empower youth to behave with courage and conviction. This is the role of ethics – including social ethics – in the education offered at SAUT.

Prof. Janne Martlay recently commented²: “In economics, we maximize profit and nothing else; in politics we maximize power and nothing more; but in ethics we need to maximize values and virtues only.”³ In short, the power of values and virtues especially for a chaste life remains the best solution and compass for the “A” (Abstinence) model and life view.

Second, on a more formative and practical level, the Department of Philosophy and Ethics at SAUT has launched the following extra-curricular activities for her students as a means to interiorize and provide an ethos for life-promoting values. This ensemble has been in vogue now for several years.

1.1.1 The Launching of Inter-Faculty Sports Competitions

At the Mwanza Main Campus there takes place what is known as FAWASCO (Father Walter Sports Competitions). This name intends to honour Rev. Prof. Ted Walter’s long service at SAUT. More than 7,000 students participate by playing, cheering or just enjoying the spectacle of various sports – football, basketball, and netball games – every weekend from October to February every year. The atmosphere of the games breeds good habits that fortify the youth against immoral behaviour especially during the typically vulnerable time of the weekends.

In Mtwara Campus, the games are called BIG SCORE Competitions: Bishop Gabriel Sports Competition for Recreation and Ethics.

We all know that “an idle mind is the workshop of Satan.” Not to mention that today football is “the new language of the world.”!!! Hence, while acknowledging the real moral formation that can take place through sports, the need remains to rethink and

² It was a conference that took place in Italy in February of 2011. I, too, was present.

³ J. MATLARY, “Investing in People – About the Will and the Way”.

rediscover the ethics and spirituality of sports, particularly of football.

1.1.2 The Launching of the Inter-College Sports Competition at SAUT Campuses

Intercollegiate sports bring together all neighbouring colleges and institutions of higher learning. The assembly grounds are located both at the Nyegezi Mwanza and the Mtwara campuses.

1.1.3 The Launching of the SAUT Pro-life Movement

The vision of this association is based on the theological truth that life is a gift from God. Consequently, life needs to be protected and respected at all costs. The organization is comprised of several student members. It aims at inculcating Gospel and fundamental human values and a pro-life culture especially as a response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. These values include temperance, dignity, trust, good friendship, solidarity, forgiveness, peace, preservation of life, partnership, responsibility, accountability, fairness, prudence, justice, fortitude and true love.

1.1.4 The Launching of SAUT’s Decent Dressing and Discipline Competition (DDDDCs)

Indeed, this endeavour tries to motivate the youth to adopt a decent dressing code and to cultivate other indispensable elements of an ethically fortified culture among both students and lecturers. It provides a timely response to the present-day fashions in dressing that today have become almost normative because of the popularized habits of super stars, beauty contesters, dress models, singers, and actors/ actresses which either blatantly or subtly promote nudism and concomitantly sexual laxity and promiscuity.

As the adage goes, “the business of business is business.” It remains imperative, therefore, that when others are globalizing nudism, we globalize its opposite: that is to say, decency,

modesty, discipline, chastity – in a word, purity in all its forms.⁴ Formation and character building, an enterprise that for youth is both interdisciplinary and holistic, requires persistent evaluation according to values that are traditional and Christian so that all necessary ethical formation and transformation may actually occur.⁵ To be brief, a Christian ethic based on purity serves as the driving force and energy of the comprehensive morality package that in turn fosters the value and virtue of abstinence among SAUT students.

1.2 The “B”, Biblical-Centred, Model and Its Impact within the Global Vision

The Bible remains the most valuable theological and spiritual resource for moulding human character. If one were to consider Pauline texts, one would see St. Paul offering advice to Timothy in classically ethical style, significantly focusing on the management of sexual emotions and sexual desires in the hearts and souls of the young (2 Tim 2–3). He emphasizes the virtues of moderation and prudence; and he cautions Timothy against all sensual desires (2 Tim 2:22). Paul exhorts this young bishop to embrace justice, faith, love, chastity and peace.

To correspond to the “B” of our paradigm, the New Testament biblical narratives portray Jesus Christ as the “Bringer of life,” our Saviour. He is the destroyer of death (1 Cor 3:8,10; 2 Cor 3:13; Gal 5:11; Eph 2:15; John 10:10; 11:11; 1 Cor 15:54-46; 7:9-60; 1 Thess 4:15; Phil 3:21). As one biblical scholar puts it, Jesus, our Truth “offers great comfort in these days when we are tragically losing so many of those we love to violence or to diseases like HIV/AIDS.”⁶

⁴ A.G. MSAFIRI, *Globalization of Concern*, 26-72.

⁵ A.G. MSAFIRI, *Rediscovering Christian and Traditional Values*, 1-10.

⁶ S.M. NGEWA, ed., *Africa Bible Commentary*, 192-194.

1.3 The “C” – Christ-Centred – Life View and Its Concomitant Strength

A credible life-promoting, life-sustaining and life-protecting theology of HIV/AIDS is not to be condom-centred. Theology necessarily needs to be Christocentric. This is the “Principium” in an era, our own, where the condom approach, the condom world view, shows itself to be not the “best” and long-term solution to HIV/AIDS. In order to attain a Christ-centred standard Christian sexual education, teachers constantly remind their students at SAUT to avoid the condom and a lifestyle that gives a place to the condom.

Hence, to avoid the dangers of the condomizing of the mind, of the heart and of all human sexual behaviour, a Christ-centred theology is a *sine qua non*.

As I indicated in 2008, I consider condomization of human sexuality as an unethical means since it obstructs the path to a dignified sexual act with dignified results.⁷ By their very inner nature, “condoms are disposable commodities like disposable razors, Coca-Cola, Fanta, Sprite cans.....”⁸

A Theology of Life offers 100% security and results. Condoms, on the other hand, cannot give that. Psychologically, and even emotionally, the disposability of a used condom after the sexual act is tantamount to disposing or throwing away love, commitment, trust, friendship – precisely that which makes the human heart human.

Most students at SAUT agree that, if they found themselves in the situation where, before doing sex, one of them, whether it be the boy or the girl, were to declare to be HIV positive, then most if not all would run away. There is a kind of “arrogance” that comes from simply not knowing or not telling the truth!

The present-day culture of condoning condom use by students comes to the foreground in a manner that is both ludicrous and tragic in such places as Australia where it is said that governments are willing to establish condom vending machines

⁷ A.G. MSAFIRI, *Globalization of Concern*, 37.

⁸ *Ibid.*

as standard equipment in the high schools. Is this not tantamount to suggesting that each high school accept it as “standard” or “normal” to prepare a comfortable set of bedrooms in the school so as to accommodate “sexually active” teenagers – a kind of brothel where the students can put to use the condoms that their coins are giving them while they sip the Coke supplied by the same set of vending machines that gave them the condoms?

Admittedly, introducing such a thing at SAUT or any other University in Tanzania or any other part of Africa would simply mean losing the battle against the HIV/AIDS crisis. After all, ethical problems need ethical solutions; scientific problems need scientific solutions, and not vice versa. To put it briefly, Christ-likeness necessarily means and implies making and opting for Christ-like commitments. Hence the dire need for a Christ-like ethical stance and toolkit.

1.4 The “D” – Dignity-Centred – Life View and Its Worth for the Human Person

The fact that the human person is created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26) is the theological and anthropological foundation of Christian learning and character transformation. The “Imago Dei” paradigm is not static but dynamic.

It is a perennial challenge and calling to *Homo Africanus* in the quest to realize his/her unique worth valued under no other “currency” but God himself. The Anglo-Saxon word “dignity” comes from the Latin noun “decus” which means ornament, distinction, honour, glory.⁹ Dignity implies, then, the standing of one who is entitled to respect, i.e., he or she has status. Dignity refers to that which induces or ought to induce such respect: dignity accentuates the excellence and the incomparability of values.¹⁰

In the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic especially from a SAUT perspective, emphasis is made to highlight not only the

⁹ Elisabeth Nyanawut Mayen-Kuol Deng, “Dignity of the Human Person”, *The Bulletin of Ovulation Methods Research Center of Australia* 37/2 (July 2010) 9.

¹⁰ Cf. “Dignity”, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_dignity.

theocentric and anthropocentric foundations of the human person, but also the practical day-to-day implications of these foundations. The human person is a rational and social being capable of a personal relationship with God and a persevering inclination to approach God with ever-deepening intimacy. Who he or she is as a human being, therefore, underpins his/her dignity according to the image of God paradigm.

This necessarily entails not only the right to be God-like but also the duties to be fulfilled in order to maintain the right. For youth, this means *eine Pflegepflicht* – a caring responsibility – not only for their spirit, but for their biological and reproductive health. Hence, against the HIV/AIDS monster!

Youth in general and SAUT students in particular, need to constantly be aware that they differ from other animals. Humans are *Homo rationalis* – rational animals – not brutes. This intrinsic difference empowers the human person with an array of spiritual, intellectual and personal skills to communicate with his/her Creator! That means God himself.

In brief, the human person mirrors God. Human dignity simply connotes and makes manifest God’s invitation to the human person to be in interrelationship and communion with Him. This is the dignity, “D”, toolkit of our Rainbow Theology of HIV/AIDS.

1.5 The “E” – Ecumenical – Life View and Its Impact

A truly ecumenical approach and response to the HIV/AIDS crisis both in public as well as in private realms and universities like SAUT is likely to get greater positive and longer lasting results. More than ever before, there is an urgent and great need today to think and act outside our “own boxes” of Catholicism, Lutheranism, Methodism, Anglicanism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, or another of the world’s religions. Long-term and viable solutions to this crisis necessarily require a profoundly interfaith, interdenominational, intercultural and multidisciplinary approach.

Indeed, this ecclesiological–ecumenical centred life view and approach constitutes a critical toolkit in responding to the HIV/AIDS problem today. As Africans we need to rediscover particularly the unique value encapsulated in such African sayings and proverbs like:

“I am because we are” (J.S. Mbiti)

“Unity is strength”

“One finger does not kill a louse”

Admittedly, the African communitarian life view expressed in all these sayings, needs to be integrated into Gospel values.

An ecumenical approach would definitely do away with the current “Economically” motivated (perverted “E”) view that tries to make a profit out of the HIV/AIDS crisis. In the Iringa region and Makete District in Southern Tanzania, for example, there are more than 300 registered Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO’s) which are making available financial and educational aid particularly to the most hard hit families and villages where there are to be found thousands of HIV/AIDS orphans and hence many orphanages. Sadly enough, despite the mushrooming of so many NGO’s and massive sums of money donated to these organizations, the situation worsens still. This is because in this region and district, HIV/AIDS has been commercialized, made into a commodity.

There is a Chinese saying that goes, “For every misfortune, there is fortune.” This seems to be true, especially today. And in the parlance of business, “The business of business is business.” In short, the current reality reduces the meaning of these NGO’s to the perverse expression: “Nothing is Going On”!!! It is my conviction that ecumenical NGO’s could bring better results than economically motivated NGO’s. Let us dare to venture this.

1.6 The “F” – Future-Oriented – Life View and the Energy Thereby Unleashed

Hitherto, most of the socio-economic, medical, technological, and cultural responses or solutions to this crisis have been short-term and without any orientation towards the future. They lack

the teleological trajectory and foresight. As a consequence of this, some people – and sometimes some theologians – consider this as a “Fate” (perverse “F”) for humanity. This rather pessimistic stance or life view deprives humans both of the hope and of the motivation to live. It is a source of the desperation and of the hopelessness syndrome which is characteristic of so many Africans, especially youth, whose parents, formators, or guardians have died of HIV/AIDS. A quick situation analysis at SAUT indicated that more than 47% of our students among our total of 10,000 are either direct or indirect sufferers of this syndrome.

As I commented in 2008, today “some theologians , church leaders and Christian churches have identified the HIV/AIDS pandemic with divine punishment...Truly a God who forgives will not necessarily by his very nature be concerned to punish. There are neither Biblical accounts of creation nor metaphysical understanding of God attributing him the desires for punishment.”¹¹

1.7 The “G” – The Golden Rule – as a Life View and Source of Strength

It is a deep theological truth that the Great Commandment of Love (Matt 22:37-39) constitutes the core of all Christian relationships. The New Commandment of love – “Love one another as I [Jesus] have loved you” – is a gift that Jesus offers as an agape love. It is a love that is non-egoistic and non-sensual. It is marked by the infinite measure of God’s own divinity, his will and motivation.¹² It embraces a broad-spectrum, communitarian obligation, one that is horizontally extended without limit.

True Christian charity or agape necessarily moves us to live in solidarity with the poor and the vulnerable. Christian love gives those who are victims or prone to be victims of the HIV/AIDS the place of privilege. It therefore entails preventive, pro-active, protective, and curative obligations.

¹¹ A.G. MSAFIRI, *Globalization of Concern*, 43.

¹² A.G. MSAFIRI, *Towards a Credible Environmental Ethics*, 124-125.

1.8 The “H” – Holistic Life View – and Its Dynamism

The human person is a microcosm. Hence, the entire process of formation, learning, education and transformation necessarily needs to address the physical, psycho-spiritual, cognitive, social, intellectual and affective dimensions of the entire human person. This process should extend right from early childhood to adolescence and adulthood.

Love means training for integrity especially through the personalization and internalization of the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. Obviously this means that one has to go beyond mere emotionalism, functionalism, and sensuality.

Holistic formation for true love is opposed to sensual love. The kind of “L.O.V.E.” – “Legs Open Very Easily” – that victimizes the human heart, soul and body challenges the growing human person to be in earnest about the vigilance and perseverance necessary in order to cultivate the mindset of Jesus Christ Himself.

Truly, this is not automatic. It requires a conscientious “fight, yes, flight, no” attitude against personal vices particularly greed, lust, envy, laziness, selfishness, mediocrity, anger, pride, and the unrelenting search for false consolations.

It means fighting against all types of weakness. As George Lobo aptly puts it, “the core of the ethical teaching of Jesus...One has to express one’s love for the all-holy God by the simple path of brotherly love...Christian love is not a mere emotional reaction,, but an attitude of the will... God loves us not because we’re attractive.... He makes us lovable by loving us...”¹³

1.9 The “I” – Innovative – Life Style and World View and Its Propensity to Be Resourceful

The HIV/AIDS pandemic brings out into the open the fact that we live in a particularly stormy time – one might say, the present

¹³ G. Lobo, *Christian Living*, 58.

moment is a critical one in human history. In such moments Christian “periti”, think tanks, theologians, gurus – whatever you might wish to call them – need to be innovative. This means moving from the “traditional” phases of ignorance and illusion to innovation.

Those who show the propensity to be innovative need to venture into collaborative, interdisciplinary research in order to design new and more credible pathways, roadmaps and alternatives. They need the courage to bring about a radical paradigm shift so that they may do theology for life in its actuality, the *hic et nunc*. As one scholar comments, however, “The problem is not in new ideas, but escaping the old ones.” This is absolutely true. The moment has come for us theologians to leave our ivory towers and go to serve people with real solutions in these times that are so dominantly typified by the suffering provoked by HIV/AIDS.

Besides being innovative, a Rainbow A to Z Theology of Life needs to be enfolded with the very person of Christ who is Way, Truth, and Life. This theology needs to be permeated in its methodology, in its content and in its teleology with Jesus Christ. As a new pattern for theological discourse, it will acquire the capacity to reignite and refortify hope, indeed life itself, against HIV/AIDS. In short, such a theological paradigm will broadly and radically redefine the entire purpose of Christian life, drawing into focus suffering and destiny in an inter-relationship that is ever more profound.

1.10 The Indispensable Need to Uphold “J” – Jesus – as a Role Model, a Source of Strength, and the Path to New Life

Jesus’ early childhood in Nazareth, particularly as encapsulated in the Gospel by St. Luke (Luke 2:51-52), is exceptionally inspirational. Jesus grew up as a virtuous, highly disciplined and chaste child. He was, he is and he always needs to be a role model of virtue for children and youth locally and globally. This is especially urgent today when the four major pillars of children’s ethical formation, family, school, religion and

society, are sorely rent asunder by the whim and caprice of cultural and technological globalization.

Amidst the present day culture of hero and superstar “worship” and “mania” among children and youth, Jesus remains the best and the only reliable and lasting ethical superstar and hero worthy of being imitated and personalized. More than ever before there is a need to rediscover and refocus the role and image of Jesus as a youth who wishes to meet from all angles the lives and emotions of youth today locally and worldwide. We might call this “Jesus-ology” and the experience of youth!

1.11 The “K” – Kairo-Logical – View of Life and Its Resourcefulness

The HIV/AIDS crisis occasions a God-sent opportunity for deep reflection and action. Biblically, it provides a “Kairos” – a moment of fullness where God and the human person encounter each other in total docility and trust in a way so complete that not even the slightest impurity is allowed to enter the relationship. The rationale and justification for this kind of “kairo-logical” thinking is marvelously exemplified in Jesus’ meeting with the Leper in Mathew 8:1-4.

When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. Suddenly a leper came forward and did him homage, saying to him. “Sir, if you will to do so, you can cure me.” Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him and said, “I do will it. Be cured.” Immediately the man’s leprosy disappeared...

In a similar way, HIV/AIDS occasions the proper moment for healing the wounds of suffering, loss and death. Having seen the leper, Jesus stretched his hand. He can do the same today in curing HIV/AIDS. In brief, it involves the triad of *Seeing-Judging-Touching* (Doing).

Having considered these eleven foundational elements of our “Rainbow A to Z” Theological Model for the HIV/AIDS world of today, let us briefly pave the way forward towards theological and ethical integration with seven theses. Admittedly, these “toolkits” are not exhaustive. They are symbolically representative of the key facets to our new theological paradigm.

2. Theological and Ethical Integration: Seven Theses

Borrowing from a manner of speaking that is both biblical and theological, the following seven theses seem to resonate with uttermost purity and totality the kind of spirit needed to offset the disfigurement of the human heart that HIV/AIDS occasions. Our Rainbow theological paradigm is imbued with a spiritual infrastructure that is at once multidisciplinary and all-inclusive. These seven theses analogically represent the seven beautiful colours of a rainbow.

2.1 Thesis One

Today there is an urgent need for a new and integral formation of conscience in order to eradicate those approaches that instrumentalize life and condomize the mind, the heart and the entire character of youth.

2.2 Thesis Two

The theological and anthropocentric truth that affirms the human person to be the Image of God (Gen. 1:26ff) endows the human person with a unique vocation and responsibility especially in order to live a chaste and ethically well-integrated life. Solutions to the HIV/AIDS crisis need to harmonize fully with the dignity and God-centred destiny of the human person to avoid fully and definitively a caricature of human nature that is condom-centred, that is to say, ego-centric.

2.3 Thesis Three

Today there is a need to rediscover and live with integrity Christian and traditional values and virtues; these values and virtues must always be at the heart of every educational and formation program in primary schools, secondary schools, universities... in a word, in every possible setting where youth are to be found.

2.4 Thesis Four

As a theological “think tank” for Africa and the Third World, EATWOT needs to be a courageous beacon of creativity formation and innovation, foresight, research, and the competence required to achieve her goals within the ethos of the Gospel. Within this ethos, role modeling, an ecumenism in spirit and in practice, and the core virtue of solidarity enhance the quality in the quest and development of long-term practical theologies to subdue the disaster that has come in the wake of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

A practical application of what we have been saying is that EATWOT needs to re-question vigorously the Western monopoly on patent rights especially where HIV/AIDS preventive and curative therapies are concerned.

2.5 Thesis Five

It remains necessary today to insist not only on behavioural change – that is to say, a behavioural change that is incremental and therefore gradual – as a solution to the HIV/AIDS crisis, but more importantly for an intensive, transformative change that bears the character of immediacy and so corresponds to the urgency of the crisis. The later totally differs from incremental change. It entails and demands new ways of thinking, judging, and behaving that manifest a complete turnabout now, without delay.

2.6 Thesis Six

Families, schools, religious creeds, and the entre society, both locally and globally, need to rediscover not only their role in shaping human behaviour and destiny, but also their indispensability as shapers and molders of ethical standards, moral character and, above all, of the human heart (*Herzensbildung*).

2.7 Thesis Seven

As long as there is no solution to the HIV/AIDS disaster, the Rainbow A to Z theological paradigm needs not only to play today an informative role, but even more a formative and transformative role. This means moving from mere knowledge to action, from information to formation, and from seeing to doing in the daily contexts of concrete life.

Some Concluding Remarks

The quest for a more credible and comprehensive theological paradigm in order to respond to the HIV/AIDS pandemic remains an existential necessity. It is not an academic luxury or a gymnastic exercise among intellectuals without any anchor hold on reality. The following, therefore, deserve special attention:

First, the Rainbow A to Z theological paradigm provides a motivational dynamic that is both timely and applicable to the African/ Third World context. The paradigm provides basic contours in this long and tedious journey. Admittedly, it is not a one-day matter. It takes not of the long journey ahead towards a "Fiesta de la Vida", a celebration of life, not death.

Second, a theological paradigm for HIV/AIDS of the kind that has been presented here needs not only collaborative efforts from within the ecumenical, academic, political, and religious realms but it necessarily needs special divine, supernatural intervention, assistance and empowerment. God needs to be its beginning and end, its Alfa and its Omega.

Third, because we are, so to speak, the EATWOT think tanks and gurus, we need to start the ball rolling by our fidelity to prayer; and by our sharing of theological experiences and insights, paradigms, values, virtues, strengths, hopes and vision of the future. All for the greater glory of God and for the salvation of the HIV/AIDS victims and sufferers locally, ecclesially, nationally, regionally and globally.

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True Christian Discipleship: A Challenging Call for Today's Society

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Introduction

Many people view life as a school. This carries the implication that life involves a teacher and a student, a leader and a follower, a master and a disciple. Discipleship becomes a concept that penetrates a bewildering diversity of life's domains.

This concept has become a matter of prime importance in many religions of the world especially in the Christian religion in which it has eternal ramifications for the ultimate fulfilment of all Christian living – that stage of human existence that one calls the beatific vision.

The struggle to accomplish the task of discipleship characterizes the *exitus et reditus* relationship of God to the human being and the human being to God, who is the Beginning and the End of all.

The question, then, is: What does discipleship mean? Who is a disciple? What does a paradigm of true Christian discipleship entail? What are the challenges that either prove or disprove the relevance of Christian discipleship for our society today? These will be the foci of this short article.

Background of Christian Discipleship

Christian discipleship finds its roots in the Old Testament. The Hebrew Scriptures bring to light the concept of discipleship by means of the word *talmid*, “learner” or “adherent” or “student”. The term *limmud* was used to express those engaged in learning from the prophets (cf. Isa 8:16) and from the Lord (Isa 54:13).

This is why Guinan asserts: “Thus in the Old Testament, Israel is portrayed as a disciple, a learner of God. Frequently the Godhead who instructs Israel is personified as wisdom.”¹

This same term came to be used in Greek settings as the act of learning; more technically it referred to the act of adhering to a particular master (*διδασκαλος*), that is, to a teacher. Hence the disciples were to be imitators (*μιμηται*) of their master. They were to follow him closely and adhere to his teaching.

In the New Testament, in order for a Christian to fully attain the saving and eschatological purpose of the Church in the future world, the process of discipleship here and now became a condition sine qua non. This is what Jesus himself affirmed by his requirement: “If anyone wants to become my disciple, let them deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me” (Matt 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23). So I repeat: what then is discipleship and who is a disciple?

Establishing the Terminology of Discipleship

The word “discipleship” is obviously related to the term “disciple”, coming from the Latin *discipulus*. It is a correlative of the Greek *μαθητης* (*mathetes*), which means “a learner or apprentice”. It is related to such verbs as *μανθανω* (*manthano*), to learn, to direct one’s mind to something; *καταμανθανω* (*katamanthano*), to examine closely; *μαθητεω* (*matheteno*), to make a disciple or to become a disciple. The Hebrew equivalent is the word already discussed, *talmid*, “a learner”. Shuler observes: “A disciple is a pupil attached to a teacher or to a movement, one whose allegiance is to the body of instruction, one whose commitment is to a specific teacher or movement.”²

In a sense, then, a disciple is one who follows the instruction of another who is accepted as teacher or leader. Hence discipleship is a system or a way of life in which one is attached to a teacher or movement from whom one learns. It is a process of learning in which one directs one’s mind to a way of life or to a

¹ M.D. GUINAN, “Disciple/ Discipleship”, 219.

² P.L. SHULER, “Disciple”, 222.

system and hence examines closely what that life or system entails. It is also a manner of thinking and acting which is sustained by events of grace. It is a process of learning about the teaching of another, internalizing them and then acting upon them.

A disciple is then more than a follower. A follower is somewhat like a student who learns by listening to the teaching of a professor, whether it is by a group lecture style or under the private tutelage and individual instruction of the teacher. A disciple not only listens to, but observes closely the style of the master, following him so closely that eventually he will come to be identified with the master.

The disciple learns by listening, and by living close to the master in order to learn by observation. A disciple carefully observes his master's manner of relating to other people, of confronting every situation, and of handling challenges in everyday life. He tries to capture the mentality, the attitudes, the feelings, and the heart of the master in order to become like him. A disciple, therefore, is one who is a follower of a master, a spiritual leader, a religious leader or a guru; the disciple lives by the teachings and lifestyle of this master because he intends to abide by the standard and the ideal to which his master bears witness. In a word, the disciple wants to be like his master.

The ability to learn and practice what one has learnt is the essence of Christian discipleship. It involves the act of following Jesus, of listening to his teaching, of learning more about him and about the way of life he has proclaimed. Thus it involves also focusing on what he has taught and is still teaching through the ministers of the Church. The call to Christian discipleship entails observing Jesus' actions and attitudes in order to be imbued with his mind and heart. As a result, there can be different types of discipleship. Among them are the following:

Types of Discipleship

Spiritual Discipleship

This type of discipleship focuses on spiritual development by one's training and nurturing in spiritual matters. This involves engagement in a formal process that will help one in one's Christian lifestyle. Accordingly, one chooses an academic curriculum that will support one's Christian point of view.

Discipleship as a Way of Life

This involves the act of interaction and development of relationships with others, especially in the family. This is what parents often recognize to be their primary work. The parents teach their children to stay together as Jesus did with his disciples. This may take different approaches; labels usually applied to these approaches are the traditional, the literary, the classical or the natural, depending on the learning style adopted.

It is clear that whatever must be done well has to follow a procedure. Thus the following steps are involved in discipleship:

Steps to Discipleship

The inter-relationship that is forming between the master and the disciple involves: the call and the ensuing decision; conditioning and conversion; and long-term commitment.

The Call and the Decision

The call to discipleship comes from the Lord. That is why Jesus explained, "You did not choose me, but I chose you" (John 15:16). Thus in many passages in the Gospel, Jesus actually issues a verbal call to his disciples (Matt 4:18-22; 9:9-13).

The call of Jesus to discipleship is a universal call to all of us to become his disciples. In the Gospel according to John, he says, "If anyone serves me, he must follow me" (John 12:26). We are all called to live as committed Christians regardless of our condition in life. "The Lord calls each one of us to a special

ministry that will naturally lead us along different avenues on our journey to a deeper, more personal union with him."³

The response to this call requires prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit so as to discern it and determine its authenticity. The reason is that sometimes there may be a call that may lead one away from the Lord rather than to Him. Our personal desires and internal problems may sometimes silence the inner voice of the Lord – the inner voice of divine Truth – or in some cases prevent one from hearing the voice of the Lord calling. Thus it is the decision to follow Jesus Christ that marks the beginning of Christian discipleship. This is a fundamental step.

Conditioning and Conversion

When God calls or when anyone wishes to correspond to that call by fulfilling a precise role in his plans, a conditioning process and conversion are always necessary because of our human limitations and sinfulness. This occasions the need for time, patience, endurance, perseverance and faithfulness.

Conversion in many cases may mean the turning away from a life of sin and being reconciled to God. In the context of discipleship, conversion includes a deeper, more complete turning to God by keeping oneself mindful of his abiding presence with us and within us. This awareness will make one better disposed to recognize God's will in all the happenings of life, help one to curb his or her judgmental attitudes, and enable one to reflect on the gentleness and kindness of God. "The call of Peter (Luke 5:1-11) exemplifies the response required of a disciple. Peter's first response is to confess his sinfulness; and leaving everything, he followed Jesus."⁴

Commitment

This is a third stage at which one arrives after being called, conditioned and converted. One becomes a fully- fledged disciple by one's personal commitment to the Lord and Master.

³ D.E. ROSAGE, *Mary Star*, 126.

⁴ P. PERKINS, *New Testament Introduction*, 301.

Commitment here means the willingness to work hard and give energy, time and talent – all of oneself – for God and his projects.

There are, of course, different levels of commitment. It may be a long-term commitment or a short-term commitment. A short-term commitment is one by which a person resolves to accept and fulfill God's will and follow his ways for a time and in a given condition and situation. By its very nature, this may be called conditional commitment.

As disciples of God, however, our commitment is a long-term commitment by which “we resolve to accept and fulfill the will of God by keeping our minds and wills in tune with the Lord, come what may.”⁵ Our life as Christians and disciples requires a hundred percent commitment so that even when our saying “yes” to the Lord may be difficult to the point of tears, our commitment is not thereby invalidated by such conflicting emotions.

Our commitment, rather, consists in a true discipleship. One contemplates the Blessed Virgin Mary: “True discipleship is characterized by hearing and keeping the word of God, as Jesus' mother Mary is pictured as the first disciple for hearing the word of God and keeping it (Luke 8:19-21).”⁶ Therefore a truly committed disciple of Christ joined in mission with him forms a kind of relationship with the master that accepts and even rejoices in the hardship which may enter the ministry.

The Cost of Discipleship

Jesus' call to discipleship is not an ecliptic or obfuscated call. Jesus unequivocally spells out that it is not easy. It may be difficult at times, but yet it is not impossible. In fact, to those who wish to become Jesus' disciples, he says, “Let them deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me” (Matt 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23).

Hence, it is a life of ordeal (Sir 2). This calls for liberty from earthly attachments in order to be open and pliable to the will of God. This is because the cross is not only and always painful but

⁵ D.E. ROSAGE, *Mary Star*, 129.

⁶ P. PERKINS, *New Testament Introduction*, 302.

also involves a sacrificial love and dedication demanded by our daily duties. Thus Jesus gives some insights into the requirements for discipleship: "The Son of man has no place to lay his head... and no one who puts his hand on the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:57-62). Here Jesus is giving a call for daily detachment from unnecessary things and for a constant close commitment to God.

He also calls for radical ability to endure hardship as a *conditio sine qua non* for discipleship. Hence Jesus told the rich young man, "Go and sell what you have and give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and then, come, follow me" (Mark 10:21).⁷ He reminded everyone that "unless a grain of wheat falls and dies, it remains only a single grain, but if it dies it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). Therefore a disciple must die to himself, his selfish attitudes, ignorance, and timidity in order to put on the new life of the master – wisdom, knowledge and the other supernatural virtues flowing forth from the Holy Spirit.

At this point it is evident that the cost of discipleship is a call to service as the Master Jesus himself did and teaches us to do (Mark 10:45).⁸ This means that the disciple should expect in this life neither honours, nor recognition, nor luxurious living in his or her following of Christ, no fulfillment of worldly ambitions; rather the essence of discipleship that Jesus announces is service and indeed a service that is humble. This he manifested in the washing of the feet of his disciples.

This service must be rooted in love, for Jesus made it clear that genuine love has to be the motivating factor in making both an initial and ongoing decision to follow in his footsteps. Love must be the foundation (*terminus a quo*) of our commitment to a life of service to the Lord and to neighbour. In this way one can exhibit the characteristic qualities of true Christian discipleship.

⁷ JOHN Paul II, *Encyclical Letter "Veritatis Splendor"*, 16.

⁸ Cf., VATICAN II, *Lumen Gentium*, 36.

The Characteristic Qualities of True Christian Discipleship

A true disciple of Christ must renounce all the things that are incompatible with his or her vocation as a Christian and follow Jesus wherever he leads him or her (Luke 9:57-62; 14:25-33; 18:22, 28-30). Thus a true disciple is characterized especially by humility, the right use of material possessions, prayer, holiness, faithfulness, suffering, love and closeness to the Master.

Humility

The call to discipleship has humility as one of its fundamental characteristics. This virtue refers to the act of recognizing the power of God Almighty and one's dependence on his divine Providence in everything, both in terms of capability – what he or she can do – and in terms of limitation, what he or she must leave to others or to God himself. This form of humility is necessary for the task of discipleship.

Jesus himself emphasizes this, when he says, “Those who humble themselves will be exalted and those who exalt themselves will be humbled” (Luke 14:7-11). Again, the greatest must become the servant of others (Luke 9:46-48; 22:24-27), and only those who humble themselves as children can enter the kingdom of God (Luke 18:15-17).⁹ The act of humbling oneself and so bringing to life the virtue of humility is highly necessary for a disciple.

The Right Use of Possessions (Detachment)

This is another important characteristic of true Christian discipleship. One sees it in the early Church at Jerusalem. There members of the community sell their possessions and use the proceeds to help those in need (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-5:11). This attitude calls for detachment and moderation in the use of possessions, and the continuing effort to share with others,

⁹ D.E. ROSAGE, *Mary Star*, 202.

especially those in need, so as to have treasure in heaven (Luke 3:10; 12:32-34).

We see this when Zacchaeus becomes a follower of Christ: he gives half of his possessions to the poor. He starts there and then to detach himself from his possessions and then to make right use of them (Luke 19:1-10). The poor widow does the same; she gives all she has to live on (Luke 21:1-4); Jesus himself observes that she has made right use of her possessions.

The attitude of which we are speaking calls forth the right use of the master's wealth when one acts as a steward to win friends for the master and for himself in heaven (Luke 16:1-12). This attitude serves as a warning against trust in material wealth at the expense of spiritual goods, love of material wealth more than God and his kingdom (Luke 12:13-21; 18:18-30).

One must be wise and prudent in the use of wealth (Ps 49:12; 1Tim 6:10; Luke 16:14-15). Wisdom and prudence in regard to material possessions entail self-denial, the crucifying of our sinful desires, and the abandoning of ourselves totally to the will of God, thereby making his will our priority in life (Gal. 6:24; Luke 14:26).

Prayer

True discipleship is only possible with prayer. A disciple must be able to communicate with God. One must be able to ask God for what one needs and to thank him in return. One must have the ability to persist in prayer (Luke 11:5-8; 18:1-8). The true disciple must be able to commit to God all the important turning points in life as Jesus the Master and Model did (Luke 3:21; 6:12; 9:13, 28-29; 22:39-44).¹⁰

Prayer as the means by which we communicate with God remains a powerful instrument for a true, committed disciple. Jesus calls his disciples within a prayer event. It is as if they were begotten in prayer, in Jesus' intimacy with the Father. The choice emerges from the Son's dialogue with the Father and is anchored there. This gives meaning to Jesus' words, "Pray therefore to the

¹⁰ D.E. ROSAGE, *Mary Star*, 203.

Lord of the harvest to send more labourers into his harvest” (Matt 9:38).¹¹ The disciples must first be with Jesus in order to be sent to preach (cf. Mark 3:14). “They must be with him to get to know him and to attain that intimate acquaintance with him that could not be given to the people afar (Matt 16:13).”¹² This intimacy is the fruit of constant prayer.

Suffering

Suffering within the experience of a disciple always manifests the genuineness of the disciple. A disciple cheerfully accepts disappointments, misunderstandings, criticisms and rejections as a divinely-willed dimension of Christian life. This conviction helps one to grow as a disciple, that is, to mature spiritually and to influence others by a mentality that is peaceful and joyful.

The Christian mentality that accepts suffering as a mystery to be embraced and lived has conditioned many disciples for important ministries. Fidelity to the mystery of suffering purifies one on the path to holiness. “Thus the disciples have to expect to suffer the same fate as their master. They are not to think in terms of human greatness and power; but rather in those of humility, service and suffering (Mark 8:34-35; 9:33-39; 10:35-45).”¹³ Those who are disciples must face hardship, external persecution and opposition from all sides – everything that comes with the ministry and life’s twisting and turning. Interiorly, disciples must endure feelings and movements of conflict and contradiction as they centre their hearts on the Master.

Holiness and Faithfulness

To be an authentic disciple, one must be faithful; one must be holy. A disciple is called always to be holy as the Master is holy (Lev 19:2; 11:44-45; Matt 5:48). This is what Christ, the incarnation of holiness and perfection, preached.¹⁴ One progresses

¹¹ BENEDICT XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 170.

¹² BENEDICT XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 172.

¹³ P. PERKINS, *New Testament Introduction*, 268.

¹⁴ Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 40.

towards ever greater holiness by a daily renewal in his or her commitment and resolution to be more humble, more fervent and more obedient to the commandments and teaching of the Master without wavering (John 8:31; 15:7-8; Gal 5:22). What brings this about is known as *summathetes*.

Summathetes and Love for the Master

Summathetes is a Greek word which means “closeness”. It refers to the closeness of the disciple with Jesus, and the disciple’s fellowship with others (cf. John 11:16; 1:35ff). This, then, involves not only the vertical relationship between the disciple and God, but also the horizontal dimension to the commitment of discipleship. In fact this is a practical aspect of the new commandment of Christ: *Mandatum novum do vobis ut diligatis invicem, sicut dilexi vos* (John 13:34; 1John 4:7).¹⁵

Fortified by this commandment to love as He loves, a disciple embraces the invitation to walk more closely with the Lord so that his or her mind and heart may be transformed and be one with the mind and heart of Jesus Christ (Phil 2:5ff). This calls for a constant *manete*, an active *manete*, that is to say, a “staying and remaining with Christ”. It involves accompanying the Master and collaborating with Him (*esse et agere, esse et agens*). This abiding in Christ leads to an ever more personal encounter with Him – a dialogue with Him that serves as a key to the deepening knowledge of his mysteries.

True Christian Discipleship in the Present Society: A Necessity for All

All are called to discipleship. The Lord has invited each one of us to become not only a follower but indeed a closely dedicated disciple. It has been known that the key to radical discipleship is the eagerness to give oneself totally without reservation, the willingness to deny oneself without grumbling, to take up one’s cross daily without despairing, to die to oneself like a grain of

¹⁵ I give you a new commandment; love one another as I have loved you.

wheat without fear. This unconditional willingness to persevere occasions an effective response to Jesus' call to discipleship and ministry.

This is important at the present moment in our society, a society that is plagued by different movements and mindsets such as materialism, consumerism, ego-centrism, a false show of religiosity, the unbridled quest for economic satisfaction, unhealthy political ambition, an indifferent world exacerbating the gap between the rich and the poor and a world of nonchalant attitudes. Thus Pope John Paul II observes that:

People today need to turn to Christ once again in order to receive from him the answer to their questions about what is good and what is evil. Christ is the Teacher, the Risen One who has life in himself and who is always present in his Church and in the world. It is he who opens up to the faithful the book of the Scriptures and, by fully revealing the Father's will, teaches the truth about moral action.¹⁶

The one who follows Christ in spirit and in truth in this critical situation is the one concerned with the salvation of all and so is ready to open souls to the grace of Christ and to an ever more genuine faith in him.¹⁷ Such discipleship comes to flower in various ministries and professions (cf. John 4:23).

A teacher must form students and lead them out of ignorance by his or her fidelity to Christ as a disciple. A doctor, a nurse or a healthcare worker must bear witness to their discipleship in their profession by saving life and not eliminating it. A politician is called to discipleship to pilot the affairs of the state and to render loving service to the citizenry so that through his efforts, in imitation of the Master, food may be made available to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothing to the naked, shelter to the homeless, healing to the sick – and so that by their exemplary self-sacrifice and generosity as political leaders, every citizen may exercise this same compassion towards his brother and towards his sister (Matt 25:31-46).

A lawyer must be a disciple in making and enacting just laws that are centred on love and respect for human life and dignity;

¹⁶ JOHN Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 8.

¹⁷ Cf. VATICAN II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 6.

the economist and the business man are called to manifest their identity as Christ's disciples by ensuring fair transactions in the exchange of commodities, and by putting into consideration the requirements of justice for the various social and economic strata of contemporary society.

A student must be a disciple of Christ bearing in mind that the virtues of hard work, humility, thoughtfulness and self-discipline are necessary in order to follow Christ. "In this lies the true disciple as one who has discovered that success may or often does entail union with the littleness and lowliness of Christ who lowered himself even unto death on the cross. He follows Christ in ministry knowing the truth and welcoming it."¹⁸

The Relevance of Discipleship in Today's Society

One can never exaggerate the relevance of discipleship in today's society. "Hence it is required and needed that the Church profess and teach the faith, through strict adherence to the divine truth."¹⁹ This translates into a concrete disposition of obedience in harmony with reason. "In the way the Christians both individually and collectively appear as the subject of responsibility for divine truth in the vocation to discipleship."²⁰

It is a call to live and serve as a leaven, to be a kind of soul for human society, for its renewal in Christ and transformation into God's family.²¹ One actualizes this call according to his or her role through an evangelization aimed at guiding and directing the life of people towards God.

The Christian exercises a prophetic role in his or her ministry by condemning injustice and evil. But this entails more an evangelical proclamation through words and deeds rather than verbal or behavioural efforts to condemn. Proclamation of the

¹⁸ E.P. LIPTAK, *Discipleship and Ministry*, 11.

¹⁹ VATICAN II, *Dei Verbum*, 5, 10, 21.

²⁰ JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 19.

²¹ VATICAN II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 40.

Gospel gives discipleship more authenticity.²² In the ministry of discipleship the Church, indeed each and every person, examines and shares the various requirements of justice that the life of the individual and of society demands.²³ Thus discipleship involves a call and invites everyone to foster progress both morally and spiritually, both on the national and international levels. The progress that we wish to emphasize is that which brings individuals, societies, nations, the entire world to faith in Christ.²⁴

Conclusion

The call to Christian discipleship is for each and every one of us. We have been called to follow in the footsteps of the Master by living his lifestyle. In our present situation this could very well be a case of swimming against the current because of the anti-Christian lifestyle trends people are choosing for themselves.

Hence we are all challenged. We need the grace of God in order to cultivate the qualities mentioned above, qualities which lie at the basis of any formation to discipleship.²⁵ As disciples called to follow Christ, therefore, our aim should be to know our Lord and Master and make him known to others, to love him and to make him loved, to serve him and to cause others to serve him. This means, above all, to follow him wholeheartedly, radically as the sole Lord and Master in whom the totality of creation lives, moves and has its being.

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²² Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 41.

²³ JOHN PAUL II, *Dives in Misericordia*, 12.

²⁴ Cf. PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter "*Populorum Progressio*" on the *Development of Peoples*, (26 March 1967), 12.

²⁵ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "*Ecclesia in Africa*" on the *Church in Africa*, (14 Sept 1995), 53.

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Postscript



I Thirst

Blessed Mother M. Teresa, M.C., of Calcutta and the Thirst of God for Souls

Distributed by the Missionaries of Charity Fathers

The Divine Words, *I thirst*, first spoken on Calvary, echo even today throughout every time and place. God still speaks them in the hidden space, the dark and solitary corner in the soul of every human being.

Jesus is thirsting for us right now... Do we listen to Him saying, *I thirst for your love?* ... Do we really hear Him? ...

Behold, I stand at the door and knock (Rev. 3:20). I stand at the door of your heart, day and night. Even when you are not listening, even when you doubt it could be me, I am there. I await even the smallest sign of your response, even the least whispered invitation that will allow me to enter.

And I want you to know that whenever you invite me, I do come – always, without fail. Silent and unseen, I come, but with infinite power and love, and bringing the many gifts of my Spirit. I come with my mercy, with my desire to forgive and heal you,

and with a love for you beyond your comprehension – a love every bit as great as the love I have received from the Father. *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you...* (Jn. 15:10).

I come, longing to console you and give you strength, to lift you up and bind all your wounds. I bring you my light, to dispel your darkness and all your doubts. I come with my power, that I might carry you and all your burdens; with my grace, to touch your heart and transform your life; and I give you my peace to still your soul.

I know you through and through. I know everything about you. The very hairs of your head I have numbered. Nothing in your life is unimportant to me. I have followed you through the years, and I have always loved you – even in your wanderings. I know every one of your problems. I know your needs, your fears and your worries. I hear your every whispered prayer, always. Even when it seems I am silent, I am ever at work in your life to bless you and protect you.

Every movement of your heart I follow; your every thought lies open to my tender, merciful, loving gaze. I know all your pain, your struggles and trials, your failures and heartaches. And yes, I know all your sins. But I tell you again that I love you – not for what you have or haven’t done – I love you for you, for the beauty and dignity my Father gave you by creating you in his image.

It is a dignity you have often forgotten, a beauty you have tarnished by ego and sin. But I love you as you are, infinitely, completely, without reserve; and I have shed my blood to win you back. If you only ask me with faith, my grace will touch all that needs changing in your life, and I will give you the strength to free yourself from all that takes you away from me, from sin and all its destructive power.

I know what is in your heart. I know your loneliness and all your hurts: the rejections, the judgments, the humiliations. I carried it all before you. And I carried it all *for* you, so that you might share my strength and my victory. I know especially your need for love, how you thirst to be accepted and appreciated, loved and cherished. But how often have you thirsted in vain, by seeking that love selfishly, seeking that love outside of me, the

Source of all love, and so striving to fill the emptiness inside you with passing pleasures – with the even greater emptiness of sin?

Do you thirst for love? *If anyone thirsts, let him come to me...* (Jn. 7: 37). I will satisfy your desire for love beyond your dreams. Do you thirst to be appreciated and cherished? I cherish you more than you can imagine, to the point of placing heaven aside for you, and of dying on a cross to make you one with me.

Don't you realize that your thirst for love is a thirst for me, I who *am* Love? I am myself the answer to your deepest desires. *I THIRST FOR YOU...* Yes, that is the only way to describe my love for you: I thirst to love you and to be loved by you. That is how precious you are to me.

Come to me, and I will fill your heart and heal your wounds. I will make you a new creation, and give you peace in all your trials.

You must never doubt my mercy, my acceptance of you, my desire to forgive, my longing to bless you and live my life in you.

If you feel unimportant in the eyes of the world, that matters not at all. For me, there is no one more important than you.

Open to me, come to me, thirst for me, give me your life – and I will prove to you how important you are to my heart.

Don't you realize that my Father already has a perfect plan to transform your life, beginning from this moment? Trust in me. Ask me every day to enter and take charge of your life – and I will. I promise you before my Father in heaven that I will work miracles in your life. Why would I do this? ... because I thirst for you. All I ask is that you entrust yourself to me completely. I will do all the rest.

Even now I behold the place my Father has prepared for you in my kingdom. Remember that you are a pilgrim in this life, on a journey home. The things of this world can never satisfy you, nor bring the peace you seek. All that you have sought outside of me has only left you more empty, so do not cling to the things of this world.

Above all, do not run from me when you fall. Come to me without delay. When you give me your sins, you give me the joy of being your Savior. There is nothing I cannot forgive and heal. So come now, and unburden your soul.

No matter how far you may wander, no matter how often you forget me, no matter how many crosses you may bear in this life, there is one thing I want you to always remember, one thing that will never change: ***I thirst for you*** – just as you are. You don't need to change to believe in my love, for it will be your belief in my love that will change you. You forget me, and yet I am seeking you every moment of the day, standing at the door of your heart and knocking.

Do you find this hard to believe? Then look at the cross, look at my heart that was pierced for you. Have you not understood my cross? Then listen again to the words I spoke there – for they tell you clearly why I endured all this for you: ***I thirst...*** (Jn. 19: 28). Yes, I thirst for you – as the rest of the psalm-verse I was praying says of me: *I looked for love, and I found none...* (Ps. 69: 20). All your life I have been looking for your love – I have never stopped seeking to love you and be loved by you.

You have tried many other things in your search for happiness. Why not try opening your heart to me, right now, more than you ever have before?

Whenever you do open the door of your heart, whenever you come close enough, you will hear me say to you again and again, not in mere human words but in spirit: No matter what you have done, I love you for your own sake.

Come to me with your misery and your sins, with your troubles and needs, and with all your longing to be loved. I stand at the door of your heart and knock. Open to me, for I thirst for you.

Today Jesus had His arms extended to embrace you. Today Jesus' Heart was opened to receive you. Were you there?

God still loves the world and He sends you and me to be His love and His compassion to the poor.

Who, then, is Mother Teresa of Calcutta? In her words: "By blood, I am Albanian. By citizenship, an Indian. By faith, I am a Catholic nun. As to my calling, I belong to the world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to the Heart of Jesus."

Sitting at lunch with us, there was one occasion where we were talking with each other about recent events among such

peoples as the Mexicans, the Indians, the South Africans, the Liberians, the Koreans, the Chinese and the Filipinos. After twenty minutes or so, Mother Teresa said, "I am very confused by this conversation."

We asked her, "Mother Teresa, why are you confused?"

Her response: "Because I never think about Mexicans or Filipinos or Chinese or Nigerians. I only think, My Brother, My Sister."

Small of stature, rocklike in faith, Mother Teresa of Calcutta was entrusted with the mission of proclaiming God's thirsting love for humanity, especially for the poorest of the poor. She was a soul filled with the light of Christ, on fire with love for Him and burning with one desire: "... to quench His thirst for love and for souls." Within this light and fire of love, we discover who we really are: brothers and sisters to each other, living in the same Family of God, both in time and in eternity.

The Editor