

THE EMERGENT RELIGIOSITY OF POST-TRADITIONAL AFRICAN THOUGHT

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SUMMARY

There exists in the modern world a form of non-Christianised religious thought which develops the basic ideas of indigenous African religion beyond their beginnings, and is represented in authors such as Kamalu, Osabutey-Aguedze, etc. The spheres of interest in such authors may be analysed in terms of the following areas:

- Intervening ideological conditions bearing on African life (particularly theological and cosmological ideas);
- The historical background of African life;
- The roots of African life, as manifested in its traditions, and its ethical and cultural heritage;
- Means for the innovative development of African life, found in African concepts of knowledge, mysticism and magic;
- The perceived destiny of African life.

The thesis concludes with an indication of areas of agreement and debate in post-traditional African thought, of problems faced by such thought, and of other possible priorities for future study.

Key Terms

Religion; Science of Religion; African Religion; Post-Traditional African Religion; African Philosophy; Egyptology; Afrocentrism; Melanin Scholars; Post-Colonial African Politics; Hermetism.

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1 THE EXPLORATION OF POST-TRADITIONAL AFRICAN RELIGIOSITY

1.1 THE PROBLEM

Many contemporary accounts of African and African-derived religion seem to take for granted several unquestioned truisms about African religion. To begin with, it is assumed that 'African religion', in so far as it is not a version of Christianity or Islam, must inevitably take the form of 'traditional' religion, an ancient pre-Enlightenment set of perspectives that pretty much encapsulates the entire indigenous contribution of Africa to world religion. Moreover, it is assumed that 'African religion' not only originates in Africa but also is confined there, and does not grow or develop in distinctively African perspectives beyond the continent.

Those who are familiar with the distinction drawn by Elwood (1991: 128) between 'established' and 'emergent' religion would probably be tempted to place most of what is called African religion in the 'established' category, and admit 'emergent religion' only in Christianised or Islamic movements on the African continent. Religion with roots in non-Westernised Africa, in other words, would be simply assumed to be invariably the manifestation of some pre-modern or analphabetic perspective, or else to be merely a subdivision of some tradition of Semitic religion.

It is the contention of the present study that this assumption is biased. Casual observation of certain sources relating to African philosophy, such as the work of Masolo (1994) and Wright (1984), reveals trends in African thought that, by provoking reflection on such things as the Egyptian roots of African culture, are suggesting new ways of understanding the religion of Africa. Further exploration of these movements, and related sources, shows that these new ways of understanding African religion have developed virtually into a new sort of religion, apparently related to traditional African religion as Theosophy is related to orthodox Hinduism or Buddhism.

The boundaries of this religion are at the present time fluid and inexact, and it is difficult to draw a hard-and-fast distinction between 'believer' and 'unbeliever', since the trend under discussion is, as will be shown, related to many attempts to merely describe existing African religion, such as the philosophies of Tempels and Kagame, which almost by mistake and unintentionally created, so to speak, a whole new form of religion. Although many of the important literary sources relating to this new 'emergent' religion are over-elaborate systematisations of this sort, there are many sources where the attempt to improve on traditional African religion is explicit and deliberate: such are, for example, the work of Kamalu (1990) and Osabutey-Aguedze (1990).

In other words, we can speak in our day of an emergent post-traditional form of African religion: and it is the aim of this present study to summarise an exploration of various literary sources that either directly expound post-traditional African religion or put forward related viewpoints that may be deemed its precursors. On the basis of the findings it is hoped that the main spheres of religious interest in post-traditional African thought will be more clearly understood, and that the idea of a purely 'established' and uncreative African religious tradition will be questioned in the light of the presently available data on recent trends in African religious thought.

The study of a religious movement whose boundaries are not clearly defined, and which indeed is more a religion-in-becoming than a fixed body of belief or practice, is bound to encounter problems when previous fixed ideas are brought to bear on a phenomenon that does not fit into comfortable preconceived structures. For such a research problem, a method formulated for approaching processual phenomena in a relatively bias-free fashion seems particularly suited.

1.2 PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON METHODOLOGY

The present literary study was conducted within the qualitative research paradigm and employed a strategy modelled on the initial stages of the constant comparative method of analysis in the grounded theory approach of Glaser and Strauss (1987), employing principally certain forms of

open coding, together with the use, in the classification of basic categories of post-traditional African religious interest, of a variation of the paradigm model originally proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as an aid to axial coding. The result of this approach was the perception of previously unseen relationships and similarities between data sources and aspects of the ideas in data sources, and the provocation of various insights about the distinctive motivation and structure of post-traditional African thought, and the possible direction in which it was moving.

The exploration of post-traditional African thought was to pose some problems in the light of: firstly, the possible influence of initial presuppositions on the findings; secondly, the alterations to the paradigm model of Strauss and Corbin, which were performed in order to adapt the classification of the emergent categories of the present study to the scope and content of the actual literary data sources; and thirdly, the limitations of the study in so far as it concentrated on expressions of ideas in literature, and left necessarily unexplored several other aspects of post-traditional African religion, which could possibly be suggested as priorities for more detailed future research. These three points will be touched on in the discussion of theoretical framework and methodology, which follows below (1.3, 1.4).

1.3 PRESUPPOSITIONS

The study presupposed that there existed such a thing as 'post-traditional African religion', understanding by 'religion' any orientation towards that which was outside ordinary experience with the aim of introducing meaning and order into one's life. 'Religion' was therefore distinguished from non-religious viewpoints whose horizons were limited by 'ordinary experience'. This understanding of religion did not presuppose reducibility of religion to beliefs or ritual or any definite system, but did presuppose some sort of structure in the life and worldview of the 'religious' person. It especially did not understand by 'religion' a belief necessarily held by more than one person as part of a recognised extra-academic tradition, for many of the religious views held in the literature were personally devised by academic authors themselves, and even within a

particular movement such opinions might be widely discussed but did not appear to have the status of 'orthodoxy' or of a fixed creed or dogma.

1.3.1 THE CONCEPT OF 'AFRICAN' THOUGHT

By 'African thought' was meant in this study any thought inspired by the indigenous culture of sub-Saharan Africa, or by any perceived cultural unity relating to black-skinned peoples of African extraction. As such, the 'Africanity' assumed by this study was a broad concept, including not only perspectives articulated on the African continent, but also certain Afro-Caribbean forms of religion related to Yoruba tradition, and some religious perspectives of American provenance which professed an interest in the African roots of Afro-Americans. African thought within this broad spectrum was studied not only from within, but also from without, and thus this study included some writings by Western authors who reflected creatively on African and African-derived beliefs.

The study sought to avoid nationalistic bias. It focussed on common interest in the religion of Africanised races rather than shared geographical area or racial affiliation in individual authors. Documents by black or intra-continental African authors were not given preferential status as 'primary sources' for verification (1.4.2); the exploration aimed more at insight-provoking 'far-out' comparisons (Strauss and Corbin 1990:90) using varying contexts. More geographically concentrated description involving 'close-in' comparisons remains a priority for future research.

THE PROBLEM OF WESTERNISATION OF AFRICAN THOUGHT

It was not a straightforward matter in any case to find any example of purely un-Westernised 'Africanity' in viewpoints struggling to interact with African culture through the written word: some form of assimilation with non-African culture tended to creep in naturally with the very fact of alphabetisation, and the taking into account of global culture. There seemed no point in excluding viewpoints from the definition of 'African' simply because they were broadening the horizons of

'Africa' and opening themselves up to useful exotic viewpoints, whether Western or Eastern: for, apart from an a priori biased concept of black inferiority, there seemed no good reason to say that only the undeveloping or parochially restricted viewpoints of Africa, that totally excluded all sources of external contribution to African continental culture, should be held to constitute the 'real Africa of the present era.

THE STATUS OF WEST AFRICA IN THE "AFRICAN DIASPORA"

This broad field of 'Africanity' was not nevertheless plumbed exhaustively, and there were several reasons for this. To begin with, the basic inspiration of this research was an interest in an emergent religiosity that was neither Islamic nor Christian, and this tended to exclude such things as black theology and related movements. Moreover, the fact of including Afro-Caribbean and extra-continental movements in the study meant that much attention was necessarily concentrated on 'missing links' related to the perspectives of Western Africa, for it was basically here that one found the more important points of contact between indigenous Africanised thought and the Africanised thought of the Western Hemisphere. Kamalu (1990) for example was an important example of an integration of Afro-American trends of religious thought with the philosophy of Kwame Nkrumah, evidence that these trends were not unrelated. The Yoruba-originated religion preceding and following the 'African Diaspora' (cf. Beard & Cerf 1992: 12) tended to dominate the investigation both because of the abundance of material available, and because of the importance of this area as a 'convergence zone' where both continental and extracontinental perspectives most visibly interacted, for historical and other reasons. It was here that Africa really seemed to begin confronting the world at large.

WEST AFRICA'S HISTORICAL ROLE IN DIALOGUE WITH WESTERN THOUGHT

In the process of selecting sources for the present research, special interest was shown in perspectives, which developed mystical ideas and evolved philosophical systems of some

complexity. These, again, tended to be in West Africa or in American perspectives related to the West African religion, although there was no absolute monopoly: Kamalu (1990) and Gyekye (1987) were prime examples of fully worked-out philosophies in the context of Africa. The role of West Africa as a place where African and non-African cultures had, according to the claims of some, historically interacted as equals (since the time of Timbuktu, and so forth), it was suspected, possibly accounted for a certain peculiar taste for philosophy still present in the Western Africans of our day, who were trying to return to an ancient and civilised aspect of their heritage: certainly Keita (1984: 68) acknowledged this as an element in his cultural past.

CONCENTRATION ON NON-CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES

On account of the study's particular interest in an emergent religion which was neither Islamic nor Christian nor purely traditional, the literary sources consulted, as has been mentioned, did not include to a great degree Christian responses to traditional African religion, or detailed descriptions of traditional religion from an anthropological point of view. Exceptions were only made in the case of some people, like Griaule (1965), whose scholarly descriptions were influential in the viewpoints of more modern trends in African philosophy or religion and/or involved some creative insight or philosophication about African thought that went beyond the limitations of an indigenous perspective. Tangential material of this sort was not studied exhaustively, however, given the greater interest in more explicitly post-traditional viewpoints. The work of Mbiti (1989 etc.) was treated sparingly in this study owing to controversy concerning possible Westernising distortions in his work, especially as indicated by P'Bitek (Hood 1990: 127-128). Some of Mbiti's contributions to Africanised thought, however, were mentioned (cf. 2.6.3).

RASTAFARIANISM

An apparent exception to the non-consultation of Christian sources in this study was the inclusion in the research of some sources relating to Rastafarianism. Comparison of Rastafarian teachings

with the philosophy of Kamalu and Osabutey-Aguedze, and other Egyptological authors, revealed that under the superficial appearance of Christianity the Rastafarian worldview appeared to have more in common with the New Age and with emergent African-Egyptological religion than with mainline Christianity; and the same applied to the heavily Egyptologised theology of Barashango (1991). As a result these sources were treated as post-traditional African or Africanised religious material despite the fact that they disagreed with each other on some points: for each had in common the appeal to indigenous African roots, the attempt to improve on the alphabetic perspective generally associated with traditional cultures, and the incompatibility of basic teachings (esp. pantheism and reincarnation) with traditional Christianity. By these criteria, practically any New Age appropriation of African thought, even by an outside New Age sympathiser making use of African sources, was deemed worthy of inclusion as a post-traditional African source. A more orderly description of the eventual make-up of literary sources dealt with in the study will be found in 1.6.

BLACK VS. WHITE AUTHORS

No purpose seemed to be served by presupposing that only blacks could develop and insightfully reflect on the ideas of African religion. After all, it was not only white Christians that had something worthwhile to tell us about Christianity, and not only Asian Buddhist monks that had something to tell us about Buddhism, and the same lack of insider-oriented bias seemed to be a suitable frame of mind to approach a movement where the division between insider and outsider was not absolutely rigid anyhow. Thus the study included perspectives like that of Gonzalez-Wippler (1973), who was influenced *inter alia* by the Celtic-inspired occultism of Dion Fortune, and offered an outsider-interpretation of the mystical dimensions of Yoruba-derived 'Santeria' and the significance of the 'orisha' (Yoruba deities) from a Western occultist perspective, in such a way as to confirm several insights about post-traditional African religion found elsewhere in the data.

1.3.2 'POST-TRADITIONAL' RELIGION

QUALITIES OF POST-TRADITIONAL AFRICAN THOUGHT

The term 'post-traditional African thought' was understood to refer to viewpoints that either intentionally, or in the opinion of others, developed the traditional pre-colonial religion of Africa beyond its initial indigenous form. Thus 'post-traditional' religion included not only explicit religious viewpoints based on a New Age interpretation of Africa and so forth, but also comprised what Odera-Orika (1990: 7) called 'philosophication' or the creation of an African philosophy where, at least in the view of certain people, none had previously existed. Such philosophications were frequently influential in more recognisably developed perspectives; for example, the views of Mbiti (1989: 15ff) on the African idea of time resurfaced in the esoteric philosophy of Frye (1988: 91, 121). Post-traditional documentary sources consulted in the study tended to concentrate on perspectives linking African religion with occultism, and sources which, though not directly related to Egyptology or occultism, were influential in the later articulation of such perspectives. This included some material on witchcraft as a form of innovative religion in Africa, such as the work of Geschiere (1987).

THE HISTORICAL LOCATION OF POST-TRADITIONAL AFRICAN THOUGHT

The sources of the study concentrated mainly on post-colonial perspectives articulated in the second half of the twentieth century. An exception to the rule was made for the work of Vusamazulu Credo Mutwa (1960, 1966 etc.) which, though written prior to the independence of South Africa from white rule, bore significant resemblances to later forms of 'black occultism'. Also in a class of its own was the work of Jahn (1961) which was however related the post-traditional religious viewpoint of Senghor (1964). The work of James (1954), written when most of Africa was still under white rule, was nevertheless influential in several post-traditional viewpoints found in the data.

BROADER AND NARROWER UNDERSTANDINGS OF POST-TRADITIONAL THOUGHT

In a broad sense, it could be argued that ANY viewpoint that drew out Africanised religious thought beyond its beginnings was in some sense a post-traditional African religious viewpoint. But as was indicated earlier, this study tended to concentrate on non-Christianised and non-Islamic thought, and to devote attention to Western African and Afro-Caribbean perspectives which had a special historical role to play in the dialogue of Africa and the West. In other words, attention was focussed on viewpoints that did not conform readily to conventional Western or conventional indigenous African moulds. The viewpoints that tended to predominate in this study tended to tread along a sort of edge or horizon, between Africa and the West but not readily subsumable by either.

Of course such viewpoints were not necessarily confined to Western Africa, as witnessed by the example of Mutwa (s.a., etc.) in South Africa, nor did the study altogether exclude viewpoints like those of Mbiti and Uka, that seemed to lie comfortably on the Christian or African side of the 'edge' yet offered insights relevant to less conventional and more Egyptological or mystical trends of Africanised thought. Nevertheless non-Christianised viewpoints, and viewpoints that integrated Western and African material without adhering rigidly to either Western or traditional African moulds of thought tended to predominate in this study. Thus the post-traditional African thought conceived in this study consisted of thought that developed, or was significantly relevant to the development of, religious ideas that drew out the indigenous religion of Africa beyond its beginnings and beyond both conventional Western AND conventional or familiar indigenous African moulds of religion.

'Development' here is a value-neutral term signifying passage from the 'implicit systematisation' of commonly held beliefs and practices (cf. 2) towards more explicit systematisation thereof (especially through philosophy, science, technological reflection or esotericism). The term also refers to innovative or socially challenging articulation of thought. Among the authors studied, the

explicit systematisation of religious thought had a pluriform character, there being no uniform or 'one true' explicit religious systematisation similar to the 'creed' and 'dogma' of Western religion.

1.4 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study was an exploratory analysis of literary sources relating to post-traditional African religion by means of an approach modelled on the initial stages of the constant comparative method of analysis in the grounded theory approach of Glaser and Strauss (1987). The approach made use of a modified form of the paradigm model of Strauss and Corbin (1990: 99) as a means for arranging the principal categories of the study, and so arranging into some sort of order the various central spheres of interest to be found among post-traditional African thinkers.

The approach of literary analysis, as a way of obtaining material for this study, while leaving untouched many areas of post-traditional African religiosity, was at the same time the most direct and obvious way of making first contact with the thought of these thinkers. They came from all corners of the globe, and existed in both hemispheres. For the direct investigation of a movement spanning at least three continents (Africa, North America and South America) the written word was the most inexpensive, accessible and straightforward choice for the object of an exploratory study, a key goal of which was to make the movement more widely known, and point the audience of this report in a direction where they could most easily lay their hands on confirmatory evidence, namely their very own academic libraries - a source of material for comparative analysis that Glaser and Strauss (1987: 179 cf. 178ff) had already suggested could be made more of by theorists than had traditionally been the case. Thus, this study was undertaken as an analysis of the information afforded by various literary sources consulted: an approach whose disadvantages of leaving certain avenues of religious life unexplored (cf. 1.4.2), especially where relevant extant sources were not readily obtainable, seemed possibly remediable by future study aimed at filling in the relevant gaps. Literary research seemed perhaps an inadvisable point at

which to finish or discontinue totally the investigation of post-traditional Africanised religiosity; but this did not contraindicate its advantages in the preliminary stages of research on this subject, to which context the present exploratory study of this report appeared to belong.

'Post-traditional thought' was a researcher-originated concept (cf. Strauss and Corbin 1990: 68) formulated as a way of capturing the idea of emergent Africanised religion. In contrast to 'traditional' religious thought preserving pre-colonial African orientations minimally influenced by favourable or adverse reactions to the West, 'post-traditional' African thinkers were those in whom innovative articulation of African religion predominated in some way over presuppositions derived from ordinary pre-colonial religion. This did not prevent 'post-traditional' interlocution of traditional religion - the usual form wherein post-traditional and traditional thought interacted - and occasional modern dialogue with more traditional views (cf. Griaule 1965; Odera-Orika 1991). The work of Wanjohi (1997: 54, 90) indicates the difficulty of uncovering 'pure' traditional thought.

1.4.1 RESEARCH GOALS

EXPLORATION

The study was an exploratory study, made for the purpose of examining a religious movement which seemed to display too much idiosyncrasy and variation to be generalised by means of a descriptive study, and which moreover had not yet crystallised into a definite tradition with a definite creed or party line. The goal of the research involved not so much the description of a common religious system as the tracking of a sort of ongoing dialogue or debate on religious issues between people on and off the continent of Africa, which focussed on several common areas of interest (e.g. the concept of God in Africa, the significance of Egypt in African history, African forms of mysticism etc.) without having any fixed area of consensus, other than a strong interest in Africa and an enthusiasm for developing the African heritage and cultural resources, whatever these were conceived to be.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF PRELIMINARY CATEGORIES

The eventual end result of this study was a series of common causes or shared trends of thought, which suggested possible ranges of opinion and interest which could be found in post-traditional African thought about religion, but which were not exhaustive or comprehensive. Rather than describing universally instantiated attributes of post-traditional African religion, which might have given a misleading impression of unanimity in the sources, the study explored the discussions and controversies which gave rise to principal variations of opinion, and ended up with a series of preliminary categories, which could be used as a guide to the main areas of interest for the benefit of future studies of post-traditional African ideas about religion.

1.4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The analysis of the data was based on concepts, ideas and controversies which recurred in the literary sources on post-traditional African religion that were studied. The data analysis procedure consisted mainly of open coding with some use of axial coding.

OPEN CODING

Any idea that occurred as a common sphere of interest in a significant number of data sources (e.g. the defects of Western culture, in comparison with the African way of life) was noted, and any item accumulating many multiple references in this way was subjected to questioning in order to isolate its areas of variation and its relationship with other ideas uncovered by the study (e.g. criticism of Western science, religion, racism, lack of emotional peace etc.). This joint employment of comparison and questioning constituted what Strauss and Corbin (1990: 62) called 'open coding' of data. By means of such methods a series of categories and sub-categories was created, for the purpose of sorting the data of the study into some kind of orderly

arrangement, whose order was dictated more by the structure of the data themselves than the prejudices of the researcher.

AXIAL CODING

The process of axial coding, as described by Strauss and Corbin (1990: 96, 99) involved the putting of data back together in new ways after open coding. It made use of a paradigm model which sorted the data bearing on any human action in accordance with the following categories:

- The phenomenon itself
- The qualities of the immediate context of the phenomenon (including qualities of the phenomenon itself which affect strategies for human reaction to it)
- Causal conditions bearing on the phenomenon
- Intervening conditions, or qualities of the broader context influencing the phenomenon, and thus 'intervening' between the beginning and end of the process
- Strategies used for the purpose of reaction to or management of the phenomenon
- Consequences of strategies

By placing data in such categories it became possible to gain an understanding of the process studied by explicitly adverting to the factors which influenced and were influenced by the process, and by variations of the same. The question arose however of whether this paradigm model was in any way an imposition on the data of preconceived categories. In the context of the present study, several considerations seemed to argue for a change in or adaptation of the model.

THE PARADIGM MODEL OF THE INSIDER

The emergence of broader central categories of data under the influence of open coding revealed that the central categories of interest among the authors of the study corresponded in some way

to the divisions of the paradigm model although not in all respects. Thus in relation to the general 'phenomenon' of the religious life of the African, post-traditional sources tended to debate and comment on the following areas:

- The traditional roots of the African, and the resources for moral goodness, harmony and so on present in the African background regardless of urban or rural habitation. This furnished, in ideological terms, the immediate context for a good religious life as conceived by the African.
- The historical conditions, both in colonial times and in more ancient 'Egyptian' times, which were regarded as shaping the modern consciousness of the African, and were believed to be causes of his/her present state of mind.
- The general 'African' pattern of cosmology, handed down in myths and elsewhere, which indicated the presence of various abiding influences and spirits, and formed in ideological terms a broader context or set of intervening conditions in the midst of which religious life was held to take place.
- Various strategies, whether educational or scientific or (very often) esoteric or mystical, by means of which the full potential of African life and religion could be in post-traditional terms enhanced and developed.
- Expected consequences or goals of the African life, such as an ideal African humanity, or a vision of happiness in this world or the next, which were part of the *raison d'être* of post-traditional developments in African religion.

These categories corresponded to the divisions of Strauss and Corbin's paradigm model, and indicated that the basic spheres of interest in the data in effect constituted a paradigm model of sorts that was emergent from the data rather than superimposed on it. In view of a concern not to impose on the data a systematic framework foreign to it, it was decided that this emergent 'insider' paradigm model, rather than the unadorned paradigm model of Strauss and Corbin as it stood, would be the main influence in arranging for analysis the ideas and controversies present

in the data, as being more representative of the true interests of the literary sources and the true issues of the movement provoking discussion by insider and outsider alike.

THE PROBLEM OF OUTSIDER PERSPECTIVES

A key challenge was to study the post-traditional movement in terms of the spheres of interest represented by the insider paradigm, but without an insider-oriented bias. The present study tried to achieve this end by including not only post-traditional African religious viewpoints articulated in terms of this insider paradigm, but also some sceptical or detached responses to viewpoints so generated. In effect, the post-traditional religious African raised the basic issues for this study, but both he/she and his/her opponent were allowed to have their voice heard on these issues, and to be included in the data. Thus, the study accepted African occultism as a sphere of interest to the 'insiders', but included among the data an article of Bodunrin (1995) criticising African belief in witchcraft, and two articles by De Montellano (1991, 1992) criticising the esotericism of the African-American Baseline Essays.

UNDERSTANDING VS. VERIFICATION

A comparison of the 'insider' paradigm model with the version of Strauss and Corbin revealed an important difference between the two: that whereas the outsider model was interested in real historical conditions acting on the phenomenon, in tangible causes, conditions, goals and so on, the insider paradigm had a more intangible and ideological import: it related to perceived goals, perceived causes and perceived history, and positive or negative reactions to such perceptions by various authors. There were in effect two different spheres of study possible concerning post-traditional African religion: firstly, the understanding of the basic issues which were of interest to its thinkers, and how people within and outside this or that religious orientation of the movement reacted to them; and secondly, the verification of the claims made in so far as this was historically possible.

The first possible form of study, for example, would note that many post-traditional Africans believed Egypt to be the origin of civilisation. The second form would investigate whether or not Egypt was in fact the origin of civilisation. The first form would note that some post-traditional Africans claimed to have gained occult powers through initiation in traditional ceremonies; while the second form might investigate whether or not these occult claims actually worked in the real world, or whether it could be proved that the initiation ceremony was actually held at all.

The present study dealt principally with the first form of investigation (namely the understanding of the religious orientation of the post-traditional African, and the reactions it provoked from outsiders in the ideological sphere), both because of the impossibility of carrying out the research necessary for even an overview of the second approach in the course of a single literary study, and because it appeared premature to subject a belief or orientation to historical-critical study without having first tried to at least understand it and familiarise oneself to some degree with the present state of the question. Thus, the present study concentrated on understanding post-traditional thought and dialogue at an ideological level, by means of the insider paradigm outlined above, and the ways in which people reacted, positively or adversely, to thought articulated in its terms.

1.5 THE IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The result of this study's literary analysis was a series of categories of religious interest, arranged in accordance with the modified paradigm model proposed above and explored for variations of opinion. The broad structure of these categories corresponded to the basic features one would expect in a Western theological system. There was the theology and cosmology of Africa, the sacred history of the black race, the moral teachings of Africa, the African way to 'salvation' or, more exactly, development of oneself and society, and the destiny of the African in this life and hereafter. A danger definitely existed that such an arrangement would give the impression that more uniformity existed in post-traditional Africa than was actually the case. It should therefore be

stated clearly at this stage that the study did not in fact uncover a single 'one true' form of post-traditional African religion (cf. 1.3.2), and the unification of post-traditional Africa into a single core tradition was something to be looked for, not in the present, but at most in the future. The unity linking and relating the disparate trends of the movement was of a slightly different nature.

INCLUSIVENESS

Although the post-traditional authors were not united by means of a shared system, they were united in the sense of adopting a generally inclusive worldview which encouraged the tolerance of variant viewpoints and the use of the insights of other Africans whether or not one accepted their individual systems. The outlook of Barashango (1991: xii), who sought to convert people to Afrocentrism rather than to any definite religion, corresponded to the picture of 'modernised' African religion manifested in the data. This attitude of tolerance was not always consistently manifested, especially when Western culture and religion were subjected to criticism; but the interdisciplinary attitude to science, religion and so forth demonstrated by many authors meant that ideas were freely borrowed from all available sources, and that mutually incompatible trends in the movement could nevertheless be related by reason of certain shared ideas (e.g. in the realm of pantheism, reincarnation, vitalism and so forth).

THE PROBLEM OF CLASSIFICATION

The adoption of an interdisciplinary viewpoint introduced an additional complication into the use of the paradigm model as described in 1.4.2, since it meant that, although most of the data fitted straightforwardly into one of the categories of the model, there were a few central themes that belonged to more than one category, and the discussion of which had to be split up for the purpose of the study. The most prominent example was the theme of Myth, which could be viewed as an instrument of cosmology (an intervening condition), or an aspect of the African cultural heritage (an aspect of the immediate context) or in some cases a symbol embodying

occult power secrets (a strategy for personal transformation). Also problematic were the themes of Man and the Ancestors: were these beings aspects of the African universe (intervening conditions), or guiding principles of everyday life in Africa (the immediate context) or embodiments of the African ideal of true humanity in this life and the next (goals or expected consequences of action)? The subdivisions of the paradigm could not be rigidly separated: since many of the authors adopted a view of African life as a sort of seamless web including all aspects of religion and human activity, it could not be expected that the subject-matter of the categories could be hermetically separated. It appeared that the arrangement of material adopted in this study could not be regarded as the sole valid way to put together the material provided by the literary sources studied.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF TRADITIONAL AND POST-TRADITIONAL AFRICAN RELIGION

A further issue requiring comment was the fact that the priorities of post-traditional religion as uncovered by this study, despite the insistent claims of some authors (cf. Kamalu 1990: 2, 3) that the 'ancient' African or Egyptian sources they drew on were compatible with traditional religion, diverged markedly from the traditional religion of Africa as known to Western scholarship. Since the criterion for inclusion in the present study was the innovative development of African tradition beyond its beginnings, it was to be expected that the more fit an author was for inclusion in this study, the less reliable his views would be as a representation of traditional African religion.

The most significant differences were to be found in the area of strategies and consequences of action: to the extent that the authors of the study interacted with an alphabeticised culture, they seemed to develop a concern with human destiny and personal and intellectual development whose overall tendency was to turn traditional religion into something more complicated. The degree of remoteness in the viewpoints of the authors from African traditional religion as commonly understood tended to vary from author to author, and the description of the literature in 1.6 may give some idea of the grades of this variation.

1.6 THE LITERARY SOURCES OF THE STUDY

The sources consulted for the purpose of this study could be classified broadly as sympathetic or hostile to the emergent religion of post-traditional Africa. Whether positive or negative, most literary sources could be arranged in a series of classes based on the degree of innovativeness present in the form of African thought under discussion. Three basic classes (called for the sake of convenience classes A, B and C) could be isolated.

Class A comprised what might be called the emancipatory restatement of traditional religion. Such a class included the attempt by Chavunduka (1994) to raise the themes of traditional medicine and witchcraft as issues worthy of serious consideration by the people of the twentieth century. It also included inadvertent 'philosophications' of African thought resulting in the creation of new systems, as described earlier (see 1.1). Such sources often purported to be representations of traditional African religion, but added features, such as the model of African theology of revelation proposed by Uka (1991b: 153-165), which betrayed them as improvements on the original tradition.

Class B comprised creative thought about African and Afro-Caribbean religion, and as such was not the exclusive monopoly of the black or white race. The work of Jahn (1961) and Gonzalez-Wippler (1973) fell in this category, and some sceptical literature relating to African viewpoints was also included.

Class C comprised explicit post-traditional African religious viewpoints. Many of the sources in this category subscribed to an Egyptological perspective which treated the religion and occultism of ancient Egypt as part of the African cultural heritage. In addition to this perspective, and the Rastafarian worldview already alluded to in 1.3.1, three other important strands of thought were worthy of mention:

- The American trends inspired by Yoruba religion offered some interesting material. One of the literary sources in this category (Neimark 1993) came from a white American who practised the Yoruba religion: and some material relating to the Yoruba-inspired spiritualism of the Umbandistas of Brazil was included in the study (McGregor 1966; Ortiz 1989).
- Two of the sources, namely Mutwa (1960 etc.) and Somé (1994) contained what purported to be accounts of traditional initiation and introduction to a sort of African secret teaching or occultism. These two sources were included for purpose of comparing their views with others in the study: but no attempt to verify their claims was made.
- The religion of the Négritude Movement was represented in this study in the work of Senghor (1964). This religion formed a sort of 'special case' in the data in so far as it was integrable with orthodox Christianity (Senghor himself was a Catholic [Taylor 1967: 371]) yet was influential in other less explicitly Christian viewpoints, such as that of Jahn (1961), and contained an undercurrent of interest in the 'magical' aspects of life that related Senghor's thought to other trends in African mysticism (Senghor 1964: 267-268, 280).

The literary study tended to concentrate on Class C as the more central area of interest, including material from Classes A and B which were related to debates, opinions and discussions referred to in the C sources. This led to an underemphasis or exclusion of several authors from the data whose work was more in the line of scholarly exposition of African traditional religion than actual development of post-traditional Africanised religion - perhaps another priority for future comparative studies.

1.7 TREATMENT OF THEOLOGICAL AND RELIGIOUS TRUTH-CLAIMS

A note is in order to prevent, at this point, a possible but inaccurate conclusion from the content of the present report. From the discussion of research findings in subsequent chapters the reader might be tempted to infer that I personally agree with, or even that I am sympathetic to, non-traditional Christology, mystical ideas or theology in post-traditional African thought. This would

be a mistaken impression. My personal religious beliefs are, in many areas, in direct and irreconcilable opposition to the perspectives explored in the present study, and their exposition and defence would be a totally different task from the scientific exploration attempted in these chapters. For example, the subject matter of the section on post-traditional African responses to Christianity (3.5.2) is concerned with what post-traditional African authors have written about Jesus, not with my personal Christology. Although my discussion of the ideas of Barashango and others about Christianity is not uninfluenced by my beliefs, I have tried to limit the intrusion of my personal views to a bare minimum, making no faith-oriented theological truth-claims, but only such statements about the logical implications, significant omissions and comparative characteristics of religious positions as could be conceivably verified by the scientific examination of texts pertaining both to the sources explored in the present study and to my own religious tradition (conservative Catholicism). A full theological treatment of the literary sources explored in this chapter is beyond the scope of the present research.

1.8 THE BASIC INTENTION OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study involves exploration of the potential of post-traditional African religion, as instanced by some of those thinkers and religious believers whose writings are related to it. It is not a descriptive task; it does not go so far as to prescribe a single universal form of post-traditional African religiosity. The study aims at furnishing some provisionally constructed categories that may give some indication of what one can expect to find when studying post-traditional African religious authors; it seeks to provide a sort of preliminary orientation which will of course be open to correction and modification when general knowledge about post-traditional African thought becomes more exact in future.

The research discussed in Chapters 2-7 of the present report hopes to offer and to some extent explore ideas on the following areas: what can the post-traditional community of thinkers agree on? What themes of religious belief are likely to become popular causes? On the other hand,

what differences of opinion may arise? What are thinkers going to argue about? What are the sensitive areas? Where is the potential to say or propose something new in the religious sphere?

The present study is exploratory, not descriptive, and any generalisation in this study about the actual state of things is necessarily limited to the scope of the data: whenever the reader finds a reference in this work saying "Post-traditional religion tends to..." do this or that, the meaning is, of course, post-traditional religion as manifested in the sources chosen for this study, which are deemed indicative of possibilities present in post-traditional and/or African Renaissance-related religious thought as a whole. Of course, such exploration as that of the present report cannot be a substitute for further descriptive study. But it can draw attention to features that may well deserve attention in future investigations of this sort.

1.9 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

The research findings relating to the above literary sources, and summarised below, will be arranged according to the subdivisions of the 'insider' paradigm model mentioned in 1.4.2, which correspond to the core categories of post-traditional African religious interest. The findings will be discussed in relation to post-traditional religious life as the central phenomenon of the study, affected by various ideological contextual elements and developed by means of various strategies. (References to 'African' life, time destiny' etc. signify life, time etc. as interpreted by Africanised religion, and lack racially discriminatory meaning here).

Chapter 2 will deal with the Origin of African Life. This will contain an exploration of the theology and cosmology of post-traditional African religion, and the belief in spirits and powers of various sorts that forms part of post-traditional African mysticism.

Chapter 3 will deal with the Historical Background of African Life. This will contain an account of attempts by Africans to plumb the riches of their cultural past (In Egypt or elsewhere) and to react

to Western and colonial culture in the present. The issue of black-white racial conflict in relation to religion will be touched on here.

Chapter 4 will deal with the Roots of African Life. This will deal with the attitude of post-traditional Africans to their traditional heritage, and with the abiding features such as morality and artistic expression forming part of the cultural values and heritage of Africa which must be upheld and preserved from age to age.

Chapter 5 will deal with the Development of African Life. Beginning with a consideration of the potential sources of innovation and understanding present in traditional African religion (such as witchcraft and traditional medicine) the chapter will go on to deal with the development of Africa in the intellectual, educational and mystical sphere, and will discuss the epistemology of post-traditional African religion in this context. There will also be a discussion of post-traditional African ideas concerning magical power.

Chapter 6 will deal with the Destiny of African Life, in the form of material happiness in this life or in the next incarnation, and in the form of the gnostic or mystical pattern of God-realisation or ideal humanity present in certain forms of post-traditional African mysticism.

The study will finish off with a series of conclusions about the direction in which post-traditional African religion appears to be moving, and about the aspects of contemporary post-traditional debates on African religious cosmology, history, roots, destiny and so forth which are prevalent enough to require further study. The goal of demonstrating that there is an emergent religiosity developing African tradition beyond the pre-colonial level should hopefully be substantiated by the indications of debate on African religious issues that will be documented by appropriate references to the analysed literature in the discussions of Chapters 2-6. All the literary data sources employed in the study will be found in the Bibliography at the end of this report.

2 THE ORIGIN OF AFRICAN LIFE

The religious life of post-traditional Africa uncovered by this study, in spite of the extensive innovation it introduced into the framework of more traditional religion, showed certain features common to all the religions of the world. One of these was the tendency indicated by Krüger (1995: 151) to conceive or experience the human world as a meaningful Gestalt, that is, to construct some sort of unity into which all features of life could be fitted. Two closely related themes in the literature studied were relevant to this tendency, namely the theme of God, or theology, and the theme of the Universe, or cosmology.

2.1 THEOLOGY AND COSMOLOGY

The themes of divinity and the universe were difficult to separate, and were frequently discussed in the same breath. In fact the theme of world-creation or world-upholding was in some sources treated as the virtually the sole office of God (cf. Kamalu 1990: 73) to the exclusion of more mundane tasks such as worrying about human affairs. Yet at the same time most authors discussed the universe in sacred and spiritual terms rather than profane or materialistic terms. If God could not escape from the sphere of cosmology, with equal reality the universe could not escape the sphere of theology. In fact, God and the universe tended to be integrated as two levels of a single scheme, if not two facets of an identical reality. Any consideration of the universe thus was usually underpinned by the presupposition of God as its fundamental reality.

2.2 BASIC IDEAS OF GOD

2.2.1 MONOTHEISM

Belief in the existence of one God was taken for granted by most of the authors: in fact, some of the authors claimed to be monotheists. Exponents of traditional religion in the data could be found

to proclaim to the world that African religion was indeed familiar with the idea of monotheism (cf. Senghor 1964: 25). The attribution of monotheism to Africa by Mbiti (1970: 2ff) is worthy of mention; and Uka (1991a: 39ff) vigorously defended against Western scholars the existence of a proper monotheistic deity in traditional religion. In fact, Africa was even upheld as the source of monotheism by Neimark (1993: 2), who identified the Yoruba system of Ifa as the world's oldest monotheistic religion. Cheikh Anta Diop (Moore 1986: 233-234) claimed the Pharaoh Akhen-Aten as the world's first prophet, thereby making Africa a pioneer of monotheism, in so far as belief in a universal deity of some sort qualified as 'monotheistic' (cf. Diop 1990: 159).

All of the forms of monotheism mentioned above could be treated as religious or philosophical forms of monotheism. But there was some indication of what one might call 'civic monotheism', namely a God whose principal function was guarantor of a sacred and privileged social order. The presence of such a God could function as a sign that, in accordance with the stance of Uka already mentioned, African culture had indeed 'arrived' in this respect, it possessed a monotheism of its own like any respectable culture. On the other hand, a civic 'God' also sacralised, and to some degree immunised from questioning, the social order which it guaranteed. Such a God was the God of Kenneth Kaunda's *Zambian Humanism* (cf. Wright 1971: 23):

"Taken seriously "humanism" contained the seeds of ultimate tyranny. It represents, according to the President, the only viable social response of Christianity, or indeed of any religion. It is God's declaration of the social form. In this way the doctrine of humanism becomes the supreme philosophy and the head of the Executive its supreme (and only) interpreter."

The idea of God as guarantor of the white colonial social order was criticised by Kamalu (1990: 142), who mentioned how God could be used as a de-emancipatory tool to prevent all revolutionising of the existing social order: if God upheld the law, what right had humanity to criticise it? Neither he, however, nor any other author in the study, seemed to recognise that even

black African leaders could exploit, and had in fact exploited, the stabilising import of monotheism in this way.

That, then, was one extreme among the problems that the postulation of monotheism in Africa could face. The other extreme was that the alternative solution of a purely non-axiomatic God-symbol was open to manipulation as well. Barashango (1991: 22, 24, 83), for example, viewed all God-symbols as essentially malleable, but this by no means implied that he was willing to tolerate, for example, a 'white Jesus' (or even a non-African Buddha). Rather, if symbols were malleable, then they could be, and thus had to be, pressed into the service of the African struggle, no matter what. This was an issue hinted at also by Kamalu's description of faith (Kamalu 1990: 72): the predominance of a faith-symbol depended on how human effort pragmatically validated it. In such a context, it seemed to be implied, the party that fought the hardest could acquire the right to proclaim their transformative God authoritatively, on quasi-pragmatic grounds. If Kaunda ruled the country and successfully overthrew colonialism, his socialised 'God' was therefore valid, regardless of its effects on democracy or anything else: for it was representative of a real and predominant social power or activity. It was uncertain to what extent Kamalu realised this implication, although his unconditional admiration of Nkrumah afforded no grounds to assume that he would wholly object to such an implication.

The problem of a non-objective God, in Africa or elsewhere, therefore, was that it was, by virtue of its flexibility and malleability, subject to the control of the most powerful influences in the society, whether or not such forces made any contribution to human happiness, intelligence or freedom. In an objectivised theism, the fundamental values embodied in the God are non-negotiable, and the God, so long as the theology remains unchanged, cannot be subsumed in a struggle to overthrow these objectivised values. Thus, an agreed-on objective theism not generated by the ruling power renders a dictatorship in theory accountable to some external and non-manipulable standard of human betterment: a sort of sacralised rule-of-law. There were some indications of a

concept of this sort, related to African traditional religion, in the theistic democracy of Senghor (1964: 271) and the philosophication of African traditional religion by Uka (1991d: 184).

2.2.2 THE INCLUSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF MONOTHEISM

The philosophy and religion of monotheism in the West is generally articulated in opposition to polytheism and pantheism, and this in the present research raised the question of whether the monotheism of post-traditional Africa excluded or moved beyond polytheistic or pantheistic beliefs in indigenous African religion. It seemed from the actual exploration of sources in the present study that post-traditional Africanised 'monotheism' was, unlike conventional Western monotheism, not necessarily to be understood as implying, in all instances, belief in a single transcendent and unitary God distinct from the world. This was plain in the case of Neimark (1993: 7) whose worldview admitted both pantheistic and polytheistic articulations of the one true divinity. Neimark's viewpoint was echoed elsewhere in the data by authors who, professing monotheism, appended nevertheless a discussion of how this monotheism could be reconciled with the traditional African belief in many divinities. Thus, views were put forward as 'monotheism' which were more exactly describable as henotheistic or monistic.

The theisms put forward by the study tended not to be exclusive of any form of divine concept in any religious tradition, with the exception of the Christian concept of a transcendent God which was frequently attacked both in its pre-incarnate theological and incarnate Christological forms (cf. Somé 1994: 2, 103, 107; Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 75, 77), although not all authors shared this hostility to the same degree. Senghor (1964: 27, 38) deplored the Hellenic God of Reason but gave a positive assessment of Christian devotion to Jesus, this difference being explicable in terms of his emotion-centered understanding of worship and devotion in religious life. It was notable that the desire for a Christ-motif or Messianic motif, as will be clarified later (8.3.2), was not wholly absent from post-traditional Africanised thought. It was mainly the generally accepted Western or whitenised idea of the Messiah that was objected to.

2.2.3 THE TRANSCENDENCE OF GOD

Despite the hostility to traditional transcendental theism manifested in the data, certain authors were found to admit a transcendent dimension to life, in the sense of a sacred and mysterious level of reality in which we could participate. It could indeed be argued that nothing in which humans could *not* participate constituted a really interesting or meaningful issue in the thought of traditional or post-traditional Africa, hence the predominance of immanentist ideas even of transcendence itself.

THE NON-RATIONALITY OF ULTIMATE REALITY

Neimark (1993: 13) defined transcendence as 'that simple but exquisite act of feeling unencumbered by any linear thought' and contrasted the teaching of transcendence in formalised religion with the actual achievement of transcendence in his own Yoruba ritual. His definition of transcendence tied in with Senghor's non-rational picture of religious reality referred to earlier, and highlighted a recurring attitude in the data, namely an orientation which sought to leave in the universe some room for the non-rational or mystical side of life.

THE NEGATIVE THEOLOGY OF KAMALU

In the God-concept of Kamalu (1990: 35, 36, 52) there was admitted, outside the empirical world, or world of Becoming, a Noumenal Reality, or world of Being. This Being Kamalu viewed as a paradoxical reality which could not be comprehended exactly in positive terminology, but had to be described negatively via the negation of finitude, discontinuity and individual entity. By describing the Noumenal Being as a non-entity, Kamalu did not deprive it wholly of all existence or of power to act on the phenomenal world, since he insisted that the timeless interaction of Noumenal and phenomenal on each other was the source of the world as we knew it. But he denied that the Noumenal was an individual, or that it acted as an individual or literal person. It

was simply a ground of Being that upheld the world - a God, but not a personal divinity. Although Kamalu was the only black African author in the data to explicitly propound a negative theology, his denial of God's reducibility to our mindset was found reflected in the contemptuous description of human symbols of God by Mutwa (s.a.: 132-133) and was a further contribution to the picture of God as beyond the full comprehension of human reason.

GOD: INTELLIGIBLE OR COMPREHENSIBLE?

None of the authors, in denying our full comprehension of God, made it explicitly clear whether they were denying that God could be explored by the reason at all (in Western scholastic terminology, denying that God was 'intelligible') or denying that he could be fully and exhaustively explored by the reason (in scholastic terminology, denying that God was 'comprehensible'). Several authors who denied that our reason could adequately understand God nevertheless by no means gave up all avenues of thought and speech about him: for example, Mutwa (s.a.: 1ff, 133) described God's creation of the world mythically, and inferred various beliefs about God from his transcendent attributes (e.g. that, given his greatness and transcendence of good and evil etc., he would not be interested in passing judgement on human souls in the afterlife and so forth), and Kamalu indulged in extensive philosophical discourse about the Noumenal, reaching similar conclusions to Mutwa.

It appeared therefore that while God could be viewed as beyond our full comprehension in certain trends of post-traditional African thought, this did not nevertheless make him absolutely unintelligible, and in this regard, as in other areas (Kamalu 1990: 6, 45) Kamalu was following Aristotelian and Thomistic ideas about God, though not obviously drawing the same conclusions as Thomas Aquinas did as far as divine personality was concerned.

THE RATIONAL DISPUTABILITY OF GOD

Indeed, owing to the fact that other African authors did not view God's transcendence of symbols as making him unintelligible, one occasionally found perspectives that drew different conclusions from the impersonalism of Kamalu. For example, Barashango (1991: 167), instead of denying divine punishment in all respects, quoted with approval the Bible's phraseology 'As a man sows, so shall he reap' (Galatians 8: 7) and applied it to the law of Karma as manifested in the attributes of the Egyptian god Ptah, who was himself non-different from the One God of Egyptian-African religion (Barashango 1991: xi). Although Barashango and Kamalu here both manifested the trait of ascribing personality to the God in the context of divine immanence rather than transcendence. Barashango did not, like Kamalu (1990: 142), reduce the immanent attribute of 'God judging' to a mere symbolic metaphor of the divine, but viewed the law of Karma as exactly expressing the divine justice. Thus side-by-side with post-traditional African opinions of God as mysterious and beyond conception, there existed post-traditional conceptions of God as investigable by human thought; and it was this that allowed for the emergence of perspectives that dissented from the 'divine impersonality and indifference' school of thought. Once God became namable and thinkable and speakable, he seemed to become arguable and discussable as well: and thus reasoning about God was to pave the way naturally in the data to a plurality of ideas about God.

This created opportunities, and also complications: for while the embodiment of definite values in God could thwart the co-optation of the God-concept as an indescribable value-neutral idea offering no challenge to present social structures (as in Brahminical India), it also meant that complications, and perhaps superfluities, were introduced, that detracted from the unitive potential of the idea. Which values exactly were to be embodied in God?

2.2.4 THE IMMANENCE OF GOD

In the post-traditional Africanised thought of this study, the theme of closeness to humanity, or the linkage of humanity and nature, recurred in various ways, notably in the form of an immanent God-idea. An important and recurrent character of the theism of post-traditional Africa was the inclination to conceive God and the world in a pantheistic or vitalist fashion, in such a way as to make God immanent in the visible universe rather than transcendent; or rather, to make God transcendent in such a way that the divine immanence or identity with the universe was not thereby denied. Often the very same people who insisted that God transcended our limited concepts of divinity could nevertheless be found to hold views that identified the divinity with the nature closest to us.

This created the problem of how God could be near and far at the same time, a problem which did not, in a viewpoint opposed to Western transcendental theology (2.2.2), admit of the Western solutions of a Godhead distinguished in being from the creation, yet 'present' nevertheless, by reflection in non-rejectible ideas, or observable hierophanous or kratophanous power/action (cf. Eliade 1959: 11ff), rather than spatially or by direct continuity of being. Immanentist theologies could not reduce God's presence in this world simply to reflections, mirrorings, and the effects of divine action; it was rather the reality of the Godhead, not just the acts thereof, that was in immanentist theologies identified, at least partially, with the empirical relativity of our world and universe.

VARIOUS FACTORS OF BELIEF IN DIVINE IMMANENCE

Osabutey-Aguedze (1980: 8, 77), while insisting that God was so ungraspable as to be beyond the reach of any one religion, nevertheless argued that God was identical with earthly reality: as he put it "the Mother is visible". Similarly, Mutwa (s.a.: 132, 248) argued that the rural Bantu, being closer to nature, was closer to God than the white person: and this was related presumably

to his pantheist views which were articulated in direct opposition to Christian transcendentalism. Thus, belief in divine mystery and belief in the identity of God with the visible and comprehensible universe did not necessarily exclude one another in a post-traditional African worldview.

PANENTHEISM

A possibility arose that perhaps these views indicated the presence not of rigid pantheism in the style of the West so much as panentheism, a viewpoint which could be described, in the words of Krüger (1995: 185) as implying that "God is the given, total universe, plus the openness...permeating and surrounding (transcending) it..." Among panentheistic perspectives would be included the theory of the World-Soul, according to which God was not reducible to the world in which he dwelt, but at the same time was not separate in identity from that world (cf. Steyn 1994: 174, 176). Evidence for panentheism among post-traditional African thinkers could be appealed to in the form of adoption by African authors of the Hermetic cosmology based on *Being and Becoming*, in such a way as to identify the cosmos in a special way with *Becoming* as distinct from *Being*.

THE HERMETIC THEOLOGICAL COSMOGONY

In the mysticism of the Egyptian worldview, which in post-traditional Africa was widely regarded as part of the African heritage, there could be discerned a distinction of the world of 'being' and 'becoming' the immutable and the mutable aspects of reality as manifested to human intelligence (Bernal 1987: 117-118). This was taken over into Kamalu's philosophical scheme of *Being and becoming*, both of which were identified as constituents of the Ultimate Reality called *Life or God* (cf. Kamalu 1980: 24-25, 36, 41). Thus in an Africanised form of Hermetic Philosophy there could be room both for a transcendent element of 'Being' in God and an immanent element of 'Becoming.' Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 132-133), like Kamalu, accepted 'monotheism' and

'pantheism' as being compatible, while rejecting both acosmism (denial of the physical universe) and pancosmism (the reducibility of everything to the physical universe).

PANPSYCHISM AND VITALISM

Certain Hermetic interpretations of pantheism in the data seemed, contrary to Osabutey-Aguedze's indication, to be acosmist, on account of accepting Mind or Thought as the basic category of reality (cf. Barashango 1991: 205). But on further exploration it was discovered that mind and matter could be interpreted consubstantially in certain views, so that mentalist cosmologies did not appear to necessitate the denial of matter: for example, Barashango (1991: 187, 206) appeared to view human evolution in terms of the 'production' of mind from an animal nature that converted itself progressively, so to speak, into spirit, and identified atomic reality with spiritual reality: nor were viewpoints viewing spirit and matter as mutually convertible lacking elsewhere in the data, such as the view of Onyewuanyi that one's flesh becomes 'less fleshy' as one approaches old age and the divine realm, hence the authoritative status of Elders in African belief (cf. B'Nasseem 1992:21).

A further factor to be considered was the presence of vitalism or belief in the consciousness of matter, and in a 'living universe' (Kamalu 1990: 86-87; De Montellano 1991: 47). If all matter was somehow endowed with a life-force or consciousness of its own, this made the identification of visible reality with 'mind' or 'spirit', in theory, not necessarily exclusive of the belief in the identification of the same reality with 'matter.' Kamalu (1990: 44-45) indeed seemed to confirm this idea in his discussion of Nkrumah's philosophy of Consciencism.

THE IDENTITY OF SELF AND GOD

Did the 'immanent God' have to be a purely ecological and naturalistic non-human entity? On the contrary, many adherents of an immanent concept of divinity in post-traditional African thought

stressed not only the unity of God and the world, but also the unity of God and the human being. Among the Rastafarians, (Legesse 1994: 332, 338) knowledge of oneself as identical to the divinity was an integral part of religious experience. Legesse (1994: 331, 332) referred to the belief of Rastafarians that "Every Rastaman is also Ras Tafari", and quoted a Rastafarian as saying:

"We get our spiritual communication daily from our Imperial Majesty, the Emperor Haile Selassie. We don't have to read the Bible to know that he is God...We know he is God through inborn conception."

This theme of identification with God was also found in forms of thought based on Egyptian mysticism. Barashango (1991: 166ff) made much of the 'Ptah principle' within oneself whereby one could get in touch directly with divine power through the medium of thought or mind. James (1954: 87, 88) conceived perfection and salvation in terms of, inter alia, a self-awareness which would increase the god-like qualities within oneself, and viewed the interconnectedness of the Hermetic universe as part of the key that would unlock those powers (James 1954: 103).

Some authors, less egocentrically, simply hinted at the unity of God and humanity: Senghor (1964: 24-25) talked of all of nature in African thought being animated by a human presence. Here again vitalism seemed to play a role in facilitating the identification of mind and spirit with matter. It should be noted that the realisation of God in oneself was not, as in certain New Age forms of thought, conceived as a withdrawal from the world and from social issues: James (1954: 182) in fact urged missionaries to replace their otherworldly preaching with a 'Gospel of Happiness' taking account of earthly affairs and economic welfare, and Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 218) argued for a salvation from within that expressed itself in natural human effort rather than removal from this world.

THE ISSUE OF THE 'DEUS OTIOSUS'

From the above indications of belief in the nearness of God it could be suspected that the idea of the 'Deus Otiosus' attributed to Western scholarship by African religion, whereby the traditional African God was deemed to be uninvolved with the world, would not be accepted uncritically by all authors in the study: indeed, how could God be uninvolved with the world if in some sense he was the world? Even someone not explicitly pantheistic, such as Uka (1991a: 44) could say:

"The African believes in God's providence... Africans also believe that God not only provides, he also protects, guards, controls and saves his people. In short, Africans see God as King, Ruler, Lord and Master of the World. They see him also as their judge, their conqueror, who delivers his people from their enemies..."

Yet at the same time Uka admitted that despite such beliefs, "usually more attention is paid to the lesser divinities and spirits". This highlighted a feature which could be found also in Mutwa (s.a.: 132-133) and Kamalu (1990: 142), namely the coexistence of ideas of divine nearness with a simultaneous admission of a certain impersonality in God. God was indeed involved with the world, but in a more universalised than a particularised sense.

Nevertheless, certain authors found the universalised idea of divine nearness, impersonal as it was, more appealing than the Western idea of a far-away transcendent God. Mutwa (s.a.: 247) viewed the African as closer to God owing to his/her closeness to Nature (which was God). Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 8, 77), while regarding God as beyond human categories of comprehension, spoke warmly of God's immanent aspect as a visible Mother in nature.

THE PROBLEM OF THE RELATIVISED ULTIMATE, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KRÜGER'S GOD-CONCEPT

The values inherent in an immanentist God, that of closeness to nature and humanity, seemed to override, in most of the authors of the study, considerations such as whether or not it was a contradictory 'absolutisation of the relative' to make God continuous with the universe. The claim could be made that the 'God', at least the 'personal God' of conventional religion, was not an absolute or objective entity at all, but was rather inside the mind (cf. Kamalu 1990: 73). This did not wholly address the question - since after all the non-ultimate subjective realm was, as such, not per se immune from undue absolutisation and the associated incoherence. Thus further treatment of the problem was necessary, and the most detailed further investigation of this problem among the sources studied was found in Krüger (1995).

THE TREATMENT OF ABSOLUTISM

Krüger (1995: 118) claimed to deny absolutism, not on absolute grounds, but on provisional grounds. He appealed to the fact that, empirically, he had not found a good reason to believe absolutism. This, to his mind, denied absolutism without doing so in an absolutist fashion. His argument nevertheless suffered somewhat from the fact that the explicit criteria of its falsification were not laid out. Krüger did not specifically say that "in such-and-such a situation, X, I would no longer deny the validity of absolutism, but unfortunately X is not the case." It was thus not clear how his view was corrigible, and how it could therefore be viewed as 'provisional' rather than absolute.

Further exploration of his value-system revealed that, more specifically, it was not 'absoluteness' in the sense of conclusiveness as such, but conclusive affirmations that were rejected: a religious belief could not be conclusively proven, but it could be conclusively disproven or unmasked (Krüger 1995: 118). This meant that religious disproof in effect had in his system the status of an

absolute negation, otherwise it would be as ultimately inconclusive as was religious proof, and would not be rightly describable in straightforward terms as an 'unmasking of untruth', since there can arguably be no real and coherent 'unmasking', or full exposition as false, of any idea whose falsehood is not absolutely certain.

Given Krüger's Buddhist interests it could be suspected that this stance, which admitted a real unmasking of false ideas but not a rigid proof of true ones, was not unrelated to the Buddhist concept of the unconditional non-affirming negation of the self, *pudgalanairatmya*, a negation applicable in principle to all fixed entities (cf. Le Roux 1994: 73) which had the status of a consistent negation of the fixed, a point of standing or falling, in a system that did not allow for absolute fixed affirmations. Such consistent negation did not allow for any exceptions whatsoever: which made it arguably impossible to distinguish a 'consistent negation' from an 'absolute negation' since any principle not admitting of exceptions is by definition an absolute principle.

The blanket statement that 'All our words and concepts cannot describe Reality', used by Krüger (1985: 37) in describing the ideas of Nagarjuna, admitted of no exceptions, and in that sense was an absolute statement: nor could an exception be made by, for example, saying that Nagarjuna's philosophy was an acceptable description of Reality, and therefore absolute or privileged. To exclude all viewpoints except one's own implied an absolute affirmation, and to exclude all viewpoints *including* one's own implied a negation which, being without exceptions, was therefore indistinguishable from an absolute negation. Either way, something absolute appeared unavoidable: perhaps it was not really a formulated dogmatic proposition (given Buddhist insistence on silence or wordlessness) but it appeared nevertheless to amount at least to an unbreakable orientation or attitude against dogmatism in those situations where negation of absolute affirmations was held to consistently.

Absolute negation, however, in word or wordless attitude, introduced the possibility of absolute affirmation into Krüger's beliefs. for it was a simple matter to conclusively deny all but one of a series of possibilities, thereby in effect absolutely affirming what was left.

A SELF-DECONSTRUCTING GOD-CONCEPT

An example of effectual absolute affirmation through exhaustive negation was not lacking in Krüger's theism; for having denied polytheism, pantheism, and traditional transcendental theism, he came up with an idiosyncratic deconstructive God-concept which he described as, and I quote him directly, "the only tolerable concept of God" (Krüger 1995: 130 cf. 39). The words 'only tolerable' implied a consistent and definitive exclusion of all alternative God-concepts outside a given set of parameters of tolerability, and therefore amounted to an absolutist proposal of these parameters. The parameters were themselves described in terms of radical relativisability of the concept - 'one that has implanted in itself the germ of its own explosion, its own radical relativising' - but this merely meant that we were here dealing with an affirmation of-absolute relativity, rather than absolute nonrelativity. The concept affirmed was of a relativistic set of parameters, but the exclusion of alternatives to it admitted of no exceptions, and therefore was something absolute. And between a concept, alternatives to which were totally excluded, and an 'absolute idea', no meaningful distinction seemed evident. In Krüger's system, an individual God could become obsolescent, but only one *sort* of God - namely an obsolescent divinity of this sort - was tolerable at all.

The apparent absolutist affirmation of relativistic criteria for a tolerable God was not made any less problematic, in the context of Krüger's non-absolutist position, by the fact that the God (or anti-God?) possessed what appeared to be a built-in incoherence, whereby articulation of the divine reality simultaneously affirmed comprehensive integration and absolutely denied the same (cf. Krüger 1995: 22-23, 58-57, 129-130). A way out of this existed in terms of Krüger's own

system: he could claim that the contradiction was in fact a 'paradox' rather than a proper incoherence (Krüger 1995: 110-111).

But it was not certain at all that this escape route was workable, since the idea of 'paradox' as implied in, for example, the paradox of light as wave and particle, involved the presence of firm evidence for both sides of the apparent contradiction, and while the integrative side of Krüger's God, intertwined with the interrelatedness of all things *ad infinitum*, seemed to have roots in an involuntary conceptual habit of the human mind (Krüger 1995: 23, 151ff), the transcendent side was based on what was, for him, a non-absolute, and thus potentially fallible, denial of absolutism. Since one side of the dilemma was, *prima facie*, not infallibly or practically necessitated (unless one elevated the denial of absolutism into an absolute or non-provisional denial), it appeared that the contradiction postulated was gratuitous or non-necessitated in terms of his system, and therefore was an incoherence rather than a paradox.

THE TRANSCENDING DYNAMIC OF RELIGION

Krüger's views provided a response of sorts to the argument in the last paragraph, since he made the claim that denial of absolutism was in fact finally required by the transcending dynamic of religion (Krüger 1995: 118) and on that ground was *a posteriori* defensible. Nevertheless, the problems did not stop here, since Krüger had not in fact conclusively established that the unsaying of ultimate religious integration as such (as opposed to individual systems of religious integration) was finally feasible. In fact, the total absence of systematisation in the human worldview was by his own admission impossible in practice (Krüger 1995: 129) which meant that however many systems one exploded, the basic idea of 'Gestalt' or unity of one's world was not finally rejectible, corrigible or replaceable in practice. This was one human need which could not be in practice successfully and conclusively transcended during the course of ordinary life.

The ultimate impression created by Krüger's thought was that, given Krüger's insistence on the rigorous exclusion of alternatives to his own relativistic concept of a tolerable God, without any exceptions [and his reference to 'the death of God as absolute basis and support' (Krüger 1995: 130) seemed to imply a fairly definitive exclusion of the kind of God-concepts he rejected], the problem of absolutising the relative in immanentist concepts of divinity was not in fact resolved in his work, which nevertheless represented the most detailed and thought-out treatment of the problem in the data of the present study.

2.3. DIVINE PLURALITY

Some philosophical problems of immanentist theism may have been largely untouched by the post-traditional Africanised authors of this study, but this did not mean that various practical or conduct-related religious issues were not dealt with - more specifically, the relationship of the invisible with the visible in the process of religious orientation to ultimate reality or the cosmos, and the problem of whether to approach the sacred as One or Many. Since immanence was far more prevalent than transcendence in the God-concepts found in the data, it could be expected that created reality would be included in rather than excluded from the sphere of the divine: and indeed polytheism and ritual images were on the whole more likely to be defended than attacked by the authors studied. This was an important and significant difference from Western thought, influenced as it was by Semitic religion.

2.3.1 THE REPRESENTATION OF GOD IN CREATION

THE TENSION OF DIVINE MYSTERY AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION

In the Hermetic philosophy to which many of the authors of the study pledged allegiance, the use of idols was accepted as lawful and indeed a central religious expression of human creative power: the idol was a physical expression, fashioned by the human, of an invisible animating

power, identifiable with the divine (Tasker 1945: 245ff). It was perhaps a measure of the inclusiveness possible for post-traditional African thought that an author like Kamalu, in forming a general concept of God, could draw on the ideas of Hermes Trismegistus, who accepted this doctrine, and Thomas Aquinas, who denied Hermetic teaching on this point (Summa Contra Gentiles, Book III, Chapter CIV). At any rate there was a conflicting or paradoxical tendency, both in Kamalu's views and in the rest of the data, between the lawfulness of physical representations as expressions of divine power, and the total remoteness of God from anything that humanity could represent or conceive (cf. Kamalu 1990: 71ff, 90, 92).

THE USE AND NON-USE OF SYMBOLS

The interest here was not in an attempt to address the philosophical issue of absolutising the relative, but was more of a pragmatic issue of whether images of God could serve any purpose or not. It was possible that Mutwa (s.a.: 133) portrayed God as indescribable or undepictable, not so much because of philosophical problems in God talk as such, as because describing such a great mystery was so often purposeless, as well as being generative of cruel judgmental God-ideas.

It was often found in the data that there was no universal ban or permission of divine symbols, but rather symbols could be used on some occasions but not on others. Uka (1991a: 48-49) said that symbols could not represent God directly, but could be used to express his power. Other authors gave a similar magical explanation for the permission of images, such as Mutwa himself (1960: 488; s.a.: 133) who, as has been said, viewed representations of God as infantile, but nonetheless permitted the use of images during magical activity, to release power. This was also the explanation of images given by Jahn (1961: 151, 157-158). Griaule (1965: 113) indicated that in Dogon thought some beings were not expressed in depicted likenesses, for fear of drawing on their power prematurely, and a related idea seemed to be found in Somé (1994: 7, 258, 287) who, though making use of physical power-objects as essential means for the release of power, discouraged the representation or even verbal expression of hidden powers lest the power be

lost: which suggested that physical representations both released and at the same time exhausted or depleted magical power in some way. Some also implied that verbal expression somehow profaned and limited the meaningfulness of the power. Perhaps analogous to this idea, but at a more abstract level, were the comments of Barashango (1991: 23, 24, 25) on the psychological utility of divine symbols, and at the same time the danger of being limited or restricted by religious symbolism.

ABSOLUTE PROHIBITION OF IDOLATRY

There were some authors who spoke of idolatry or associated practices in terms implying general rejection; but these tended to absolve African culture from the charge of idolatry. Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 138) regarded idolatry as a term more applicable to what he viewed as the rationally indefensible transcendental deity of the Christians, than to the immanentist deity of the Africans. Cheikh Anta Diop (1990: 150) spoke of the worship of ashes and the ancestral cult as a European invention, but does not seem to have been inspired by a hostility to images in general, but rather the contrary, since he apparently regarded it as a mark of nomadic Western religion that external expressions should be reduced to a minimum (Diop 1990: 156, 158, 159), instead of being richly abundant as in African agricultural religion. Among the Umbandistas (McGregor 1966: 211), who were a spiritualist group inspired by both Yoruba ritual and the spiritualist philosophy of Allan Kardec, the prohibition of idolatry in Kardecism was not carried over into the Umbanda religion. This appeared to confirm a lack of absolute prohibition of images as a prevalent feature of African-derived religion. This impression is confirmed by the characterising of Yoruba religion by Thompson (1984: 5) as dominated and pervaded by aesthetic symbolism.

2.3.2 THE TRINITY

The form taken by divine symbols in the post-traditional African thought of this study seemed to be determined by the African and Christian or mystical traditions that authors drew on, and most

of the authors actually selected for this study - adhering as they did to the less Christianised forms of Africanised religious thought - seemed to defend rather than criticise or dissect the divine concepts of African tradition: they were in effect the apologists of African symbolism in the West. As far as the Western or Christian tradition was concerned, the authors were more critical and less inclined to follow tradition. The Western idea of the Trinity, as a fundamental pattern underlying creation, theology and history, seemed to be largely absent from their non-Christianised African thought. Barashango (1991: 160, 172) showed some familiarity with the Western idea of the Trinity, but criticised it as patriarchal, and viewed it as neglecting the dynamic or creative element of the Logos as the power of thought.

NON-WESTERNISED FORMS OF THE TRINITY

There were some non-Westernised concepts of the Trinity in the data, for example a reproductive triad representing the coming-together of male and female gametes to form the zygote, and illustrating the divine fecundity of Nature (cf. Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 50) and the Yoruba Triad of Nzame, Olofi and Baba Nkwa (Gonzalez-Wippler 1973: 24). But on the whole a Trinity in some Christian sense of the term was not found except perhaps in Rastafarianism (Hood 1990: 89), although even here the concept of the Word bore more in common with the creative immanent principle of Barashango than the Logos of traditional Christianity (Hood 1990: 97).

THE COSMIC TRINITY

Comparison with the Theosophical concept of the Trinity (cf. Preston & Humphreys 1966: 11-12), whereby invisible reality (the One) expressed itself materially as the Logos or created world, and was linked by the mediation of a Third Reality, was a trinitarian concept far easier to find echoed in the data than the Christian scheme. Although the adherents of pantheism or panentheism in this study did not consciously admit to being cosmic trinitarians, such an attitude was implicit in their distinction of three levels in the universe, namely God, the gods and other mediators, and

the earth, which corresponded to the One, the Bridge linking mind and matter, and the materially manifest God or Logos in Theosophy. These, as in Theosophy, were fundamentally identified with each other.

HERMETIC/EGYPTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE TRINITY

The adoption of Hermetic philosophy by some African authors likewise entailed what seemed to amount to Cosmic Trinity of the One, the world of the gods, and the world of matter and animals (cf. Keita 1984: 63): in relation to this Trinity humanity was in an uncertain position, participating both in the sphere of the gods on account of the human intellect and its potential, and in the sphere of matter on account of corporeal limitation. Humanity was, so to speak, without a single place of its own but existing between worlds (2.2.4 cf. Barashango 1991: 206). On the relationship between this dual participation, and the multiple selves of Egyptian and traditional African belief (cf. Gyekye 1987: 10, 85ff, 99ff), more shall be said later in Chapter 8.

2.3.3 THE DIVINITIES

Of greater interest than the Trinity were the pantheons of indigenous and diasporan Africa; and most of the authors of the study who spoke of polytheism in African religion tended to endorse it or defend it. It was a frequently repeated argument that monotheism and polytheism did not contradict each other, since the many were simply aspects or expressions of the One. Uka (1991a: 45) described the divinities of traditional religion as emanations from the Deity with no absolute existence at all, and Barashango (1991: 158) argued a similar perspective from the viewpoint of Egyptian-derived religion. Mutwa (s.a.: 132) professed that the Zulu believed in many gods under the One, most of them evil, but viewed polytheism and monotheism in the same worldview as no more of a problem than the Virgin Mary and the Saints in Catholicism.

THE PROBLEM OF THE ONE AND THE MANY

The religious issue of the One and the Many, though recognised and commented on by authors in this study, was not subjected to profound reflection, and the impression was given by many authors that there was scarcely anything more than a concern to answer Western charges of 'polytheism' and 'paganism', going so far into the problem as was necessary to silence the Westerner, and no further, rather than really coming to grips with the problem as a problem in its own right. Uka (1991a: 44) admitted that the multiplication of divinities or the equivalent tended to crowd out attention to the Deity, but responded by simply deploring the situation and saying that the indigenous Africans should have known better. There was no attempt to ask whether the multiplication of divine aspects in a monotheistic deity tended to encourage a true polytheism among the uneducated, however much the educated avoided this trap themselves: nor was there an attempt, in the appeal to the Catholic practice of saint-veneration, to ask whether or not the Catholic practice itself was questionable, and if so, how one would distinguish levels of veneration precisely, what exactly was *latria* or *dulia* etc. The attitude of Mutwa seemed to be simply: if we and the whites coincidentally agree, why make a problem?

THE DEIFICATION OF HUMANS

The above comments of course take into account the fact that some Africans did deal partially with the problem of the One and the Many, by adopting ideas such as emanationism (used by Uka, and an obvious concept also for those who adopted a Hermetic or quasi-gnostic form of mysticism.) Some authors however complicated the emanationist argument somewhat by alluding to the deification of humans: Barashango (1991: vii) proposed a euhemerist theory according to which the gods of the West were deifications of ancient African heroes, and the complicated theme of the ancestral cult, which was not lacking in its influence even in post-traditional thought, introduced the theme of the deification of the human into many forms of Africanised belief. In the traditional religion of Africa such examples as the deification of Shango in Yoruba religion showed

that the difference between ancestor and deity was sometimes more one of degree than of kind (Thorpe 1991: 93-94). In the more explicitly post-traditional forms of African religion found in this study there was no widespread desire to abolish ancestral veneration: but there were some Egyptian-influenced viewpoints in the data which tried to reinterpret their role, as intellectual forebears rather than spirits to be placated (Barashango 1991: 206; cf. De Montellano 1991: 47). There were also signs of attempts to integrate herolatry and Messianic veneration of living persons into post-traditional Africanised religious thought. Thus, the problem of the One and the Many, in a general post-traditional African context, was not purely a matter of belief in God versus the gods on some remote spiritual level, but was part of the general issue of divine immanence, the distinction of creature and creator.

MODES OF POLYTHEISM

Certain authors, discussing the problem of the One and the Many, did not go into too much detail into the idiosyncratic nature of individual gods: but this did not mean that the personality or individuality of the separate gods was wholly neglected by the authors in general. Indeed, the distinctions between the gods of Yoruba religion (Neimark 1993) and Egyptian religion (Barashango 1991: 155, 183 etc.) were occasionally the object of detailed systematic interest.

There were two major pantheons accepted by the authors of the data. The first was the Egyptian pantheon of gods, which was viewed as being of great cosmological significance. The second was the Yoruba cult of the orisha, in its traditional and Americanised forms. There was also some interest in the various beings of Dogon religion and mythology, but more on account of their cosmological symbolism than anything else (cf. Kamalu 1990: 110ff).

EGYPTIAN THEOLOGY

Those authors who showed interest in the gods of Egypt tended to concentrate on their cosmological and symbolic significance: experiences of personal 'encounter' with Egyptian gods as spiritual realities were not readily available in literary form in the same way as experiences of contact with sub-Saharan spirits (Some 1994: 221 etc.) or the powers behind Yoruba ritual (cf. 4.3.3).

References could be found in the data to the three major Egyptian theological systems, termed the Heliopolitan, the Memphite and the Theban/Hermopolitan theologies. Olela (1984: 84, 87) appealed to the Heliopolitan theology - which viewed the god Atum-Ra or Fire as the source of other deities representing different elements - as proof that the ancient elemental cosmology of the West, and various related ideas among the Pre-Socratic philosophers, were ultimately of Egyptian or African origin. The Memphite theology, which made Ptah the first cause of the universe and Atum-Ra a secondary influence, was accepted by Barashango (1991: 165ff, 183ff) as a living option for Africans today: according to him, the Ptah-principle could be contacted by the individual and drawn on as a power source during meditation. Of all the authors, Barashango paid the most attention to the impact of Egyptian gods on daily religious life. The Theban/Hermopolitan theology, which accepted the existence of four opposing pairs of male and female deities (the Ogdoad), was regarded by Kamalu (1990: 34) as illustrating the oppositional structure of the universe; for in Kamalu's philosophy the unity of Life expressed itself in various dual conflicts, from the fundamental contrast of Being and Becoming that constituted Life itself, to many other oppositions found in this world (reason/emotion, magic/science, perception/conception, etc) which were nevertheless resolvable into a paradoxical unity and coexistence. None of the authors played any one of these systems against any other system or against the monotheism of Akhen-Aten: in fact, the three systems as expounded by Olela (1984: 84) were conceivably integrable into a single worldview, with Ra as the common factor in each. One and the same divinity, under the name of Atum-Ra, functioned as the servant of Ptah and

the source of the other elemental deities, and, under the name of Amon-Ra, generated the Ogdoad.

THE ORISHA

More of a living option for religious Africans than Egyptian polytheism was the cult of the orisha or the many deities of Yoruba religion. They were of course routinely explained away as mere emanations of the One God by many authors (2.3.3), although in practice they could be treated as many, especially in the Umbandista religion (cf. McGregor 1968: 187-188).

THE ORISHA AS POWER-SOURCES

A more innovative treatment found in some authors was the idea of treating the orisha as beings somehow within ourselves, like Jungian Archetypes (cf. Neimark 1993: 7), which could also function as sources of power. Talking of Santeria, a form of Yoruba-derived religion where the orisha were identified with Catholic saints, Gonzalez Wippler (1973: 65) explained:

"I believe saints are just so many points of contact with the subconscious mind, each one controlling an aspect of human endeavour. An unshakable faith and strongly concentrated will could tap the vast reservoir of power which is the subconscious mind, at exactly the point desired, by using a simple key word: the name of the orisha that controls that particular area. I believe this is exactly what the santero does when he controls an orisha. The spells and magical rituals he uses are simply additional fuel for his already unwavering faith and determination."

THE ORISHA AS PRINCIPLES OF KNOWLEDGE

One of the authors (Barnes 1988: 3) identified the orisha as a possible source of understanding and knowledge, and a useful metaphor for the integration of one's worldview and philosophy of life. This was a similar and parallel idea to the opinion of Kamalu (1990: 37, 39-40) that philosophical ideas, such as Infinite Number, Unfailing Will etc. were concepts of God, although Kamalu did not explicitly identify these concepts as orisha. A parallel was seen in the Egyptological views of Barashango already mentioned, where the deities were both cosmological principles and sources of power. This was an instance of a theme prevalent in the forms of African mysticism explored in this study, namely the identification of knowledge with power.

SYNCRETISM

In the description of Yoruba-derived pantheons, it was invariably mentioned that the Yoruba deities were routinely identified with Roman Catholic saints (cf. Hood 1990: 55 etc.): Nor was religious syncretism confined to the Yoruba side of post-traditional African religion: Barashango (1991: vii, 71ff, 125, 127) attempted to integrate most of Western and Eastern religion with African and Egyptian thought, and at the same time prove that Africa was the origin of all that was good in these viewpoints. The presence of polytheism in the post-traditional African thought of this study tended to manifest an inclusive tendency in the sphere of the God-concept, which attempted to incorporate into modernised African religious thought as much interesting material as possible.

POLYTHEISM AND CRITICAL REASON

A question was suggested by the concept of the deity as an archetypal source of knowledge: what sort of knowledge exactly was meant here? It was plausible that knowledge of African tradition, of aspects of culture presided over by culture-heroes, or of mystical experience, could

have some connection with the ritual experience of divinities. But what about critical or sceptical reason, which would encourage in the name of parsimony a narrowing down, if not a complete abolition, of the number of African deities that formed part of African thought? What about demythologisation of Egyptian myth? For certainly, there was a tendency in Kamalu and Barashango to treat the gods more as symbols than beings, and to reduce them to the One, but at the same time one was conscious of an unwillingness to let the myths absolutely go. This seemed part of a more general tendency in the post-traditional Africanised thought of this study, to reject the 'colder' aspects of Western scientism in favour of more humanised forms of knowledge (cf. 5.2.2): and it is this probably this sort of humanistic knowledge, rather than objectivised Western science swept clean of symbolism and myth, that constituted the 'knowledge' and 'wisdom' idealised in Barnes' African god-archetypes. The issues of myth and humanisation in certain post-traditional authors will be discussed in 3.2.2 and 5.2.

POLYTHEISM AND NATURAL WISDOM

The phenomenon of a symbolic ideal of non-critical or symbolic knowledge was to later arise in the form of natural wisdom or nature-symbolism, which could appear as simple religious regard for nature, or in a more complex and esoteric form as mystical astrology, depending on whether an Egyptian-Hermetic or Sub-Saharan model of religion was followed. The polarisation between Egyptian-Hermetic and Sub-Saharan African religion in post-traditional Africanised thought ran like a thread throughout many of the issues dealt with in the present report, although 'missing links' between the two such as Kamalu and Frye were not lacking. This polarity included the two variant forms of polytheism (Egyptian and Yoruban) that have just been discussed. It will also be visible in the discussion of the sacredness of nature dealt with in the next section.

2.4 THE DIVINE IN RELATION TO NATURE

As the result of an immanentist God-concept which identified God with the created world, it was predictable that some form of sacredness in nature should be recognised by certain post-traditional Africanised religious thinkers. The influence of Egypt and occultism on African thought seemed to be related to some trends in thought about Africa favouring an interest in astrology; while in the sphere of the sacred recognition of animal life there was explicit recognition by authors of precedents in Egyptian and traditional religion.

2.4.1 THE SPHERES AND ASTROLOGY

Those authors who accepted the concept of a series of 'spheres' through which one travelled to approach the Divinity seemed to be influenced by Hermetism (Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 64; Keita 1984: 80) and by Western spiritualism (Ortiz 1989: 96). The concept of spheres was based on a Gnostic astrological concept, according to which the Godhead emanated a series of heavenly spheres, each one corresponding to a planet or associated god and forming a series of intermediary planes between our world and the divine.

EMANATIONISM IN MORE TRADITIONAL AFRICAN THOUGHT

Authors who relied more on traditional religious inspiration than on Egyptian religion tended not to explicitly acknowledge a full series of 'planes' beyond the elementary distinction of the seen world and the unseen world (cf. Somé 1994: 230, 253). Nevertheless the theme of gradual emanation of levels of being from or toward the divinity surfaced in two ways in more traditionalised religion, on the assumption that certain descriptions of African religion in the data were reliable: firstly in the form of a cycle of being or a reincarnation concept, which could take the form of explicit stages of animal transmigration (Mutwa s.a.: 137-138); and secondly in the form of a series of stages in the constitution of the universe, whereby - at least in Dogon cosmology - creation

proceeded, by means of the First Word, the Second Word and the Third Word, through progressively less perfect world-states until the present state of ordinary mortality was reached (Griaule 1965: 167). In view of the point argued by Kamalu (1980: 37, 101ff), that the Dogon creation myth and similar accounts were descriptions of the synchronic basis of creation and consciousness rather than a diachronic series of events in the past, it could be argued that emanationist cosmology was not altogether foreign to traditional African thought.

ASTROLOGY

INTEGRATION OF AFRICAN THOUGHT WITH WESTERN ASTROLOGY

At the end of his recorded conversations with the Dogon sage Ogotemmelé, Griaule (1965: 209-216) argued that the twelve signs of the Zodiac in Western astrology corresponded to motifs in the Dogon metaphysical system, and argued that the African contribution to our civilisation was therefore not as negligible as had been hitherto supposed. In post-traditional thought about Africa, the integration of astrology with African thought was carried on more thoroughly by exponents of occultic perspectives. Gonzalez-Wippler (1973: 122) drew up a table of occult correspondences matching the planets with the orisha or Yoruba divinities, and followers of Egyptological Africanism were found to comment favourably on the astrological (or 'astropsychological') knowledge of the ancient Egyptians (cf. De Montellano 1991: 47).

ASTROLOGY AND TRADITIONAL AFRICAN BELIEFS

In a less specific way, Mutwa (s.a.: 68, 177-178) commented on the superior astrological knowledge of his Zulu people and retold a story indicating belief in the influence of earthly history by signs in heaven: and indeed, he believed that humans themselves could be reincarnated as stars (Mutwa s.a.: 138). The occultic and mythological trends of astrological belief converged in an interpretation of Dogon mythology which assigned special significance to Sirius B, as a source

of occult information on which black people could draw by means of the mystical powers conferred by their melanin pigmentation (De Montellano 1992: 163). This latter view seemed however to be confined to Afro-American and extra-continental trends of thought, although the Dogon mythology was not without interest to indigenous African authors for other reasons. On the whole it appeared that while aspects of traditional sub-Saharan African religion offered some features favourable to a belief in astrology, most of the development in post-traditional African thought concerning astrology, as far as could be gathered from the present research, was pursued according to Western and Egyptian precedents, mostly by people off the African continent.

2.4.2 THE RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF ANIMALS

TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS VENERATION FOR ANIMALS

The problem of the significance of animals in religion was commented on in the data. Although Uka (1991a: 47ff) insisted that the traditional African practice of totemism was not a form of idolatry, certain authors in the data treated animals with a certain respect that made them superior to humans. Ogotemelli (Griaule 1965: 126) regarded animals as superior to humans because they did not have to work and because they were silent, or did not speak. Somé (1994: 247) regarded animals as having great power in the spirit world, and mentioned that it was dangerous to strike an animal while travelling on a shamanistic journey in the spirit world, since their power to retaliate was greater than in the physical world. Mutwa (s.a.: 137-138) placed humanity in the middle of the hierarchy of being, above plants and mammals but below sacred reptiles, birds and stars.

EGYPTIAN ZOOLATRY

Trends deriving from Egyptian thought had to cope with a religious problem that had existed since ancient times, namely the problem of reconciling the cult of animals with rational philosophy (Bernal 1987: 117). The allegorical interpretation of animals as symbols for philosophical truth was the solution adopted by the ancients, and also by Frye (1988: 35-36), who related both the hierarchy of being in Mutwa and the animals of Egypt to a symbolism indicating stages of spiritual progress or initiation. Barashango (1991: 35ff) attempted to solve the problem along the general lines used by other authors to address the problem of African polytheism as a whole (2.3.3): he regarded the One as manifesting in various 'zootypes' in addition to the other polytheistic manifestations, and thus applied to animal veneration the concept of the god as a psychological archetype.

2.4.3 VITALISM

Far more common in the data than references to the sacredness of individual animals were references to the sacredness of life and vitality in general. It has already been mentioned (2.2.4) that many authors supported the concept of a 'living universe' where every aspect of reality was somehow endowed with consciousness. This often went hand-in-hand with pantheism or panentheism. There were two principal varieties of vitalism in the data: the vitalism of Tempels and related authors, and the vitalism of the Hermetic tradition.

WEST AFRICAN VITALISM

According to the pre-colonial philosophy of Tempels (1995: 83ff), the basic category of traditional Bantu religion was the theme of vitality or force. The universe was subordinate to a network of interacting forces (the power of the ancestors and so forth) and vital power could be transferred from one person to another. The category of 'Being' was in effect replaced by force by virtue of a

dynamic metaphysics (cf. Tempels 1995: 67). This theme of a vitalist basis for African thought was taken up by subsequent scholars of African religion (Griaule 1965: 2) and echoed by Senghor (1964: 71) who went further and referred to a vital principle of extremely subtle material composition that accounted for human life - thus demonstrating both the tendency mentioned earlier to view spirit and matter as convertible, and the idea of a quasi-material principle which, according to Wiredu (1996: 45, 50), was the standard way of conceiving the after-life of the human in African religion. In Senghor (1964: 24-25) could also be discerned the idea of something of a vital nature which pervaded the whole universe, an idea still more clearly found in the Hermetic tradition and in certain forms of occultic thought relating to Africa which were found in the data.

HERMETIC AND EGYPTIAN VITALISM

According to Diop (1990: 160), the Egyptian cult of animals was based on a vitalist concept. The Hermetic teaching on vitalism, which in its broad outlines seemed to be accepted by most of the Egyptologically influenced African authors in the data, could be described as belief in a 'Nous' or world-soul, by reason of which all of nature was interconnected (James 1954: 100).²⁸ Some authors went so far as to defend animism on the basis of Hermetic vitalist ideas: although Bailey (1964: 107) viewed animism as the most undeveloped form of thought available to Africa, as opposed to the sort of mysticism they might be expected to develop in the future, some Egyptologically influenced authors seemed to view it as not a primitive but an advanced form of thought - for Kamalu (1990: 86-87), it represented something better than the problematic Newtonian 'dead matter' theory. It was noteworthy that some conventional scholars of African religion denied that African traditional religion was animistic (cf. Wiredu 1996: 48), so that explicit animist mysticism in relation to traditional thought seemed to be more of an innovation than a revival of tradition. Indeed, Tempels' very theory of vitalism itself as a basic principle of Bantu religion had not passed without controversy from its beginnings until the present day.

THE SACREDNESS OF NATURE AND THE WORLD

An important result and frequent implication of the aforementioned post-traditional African beliefs concerning vitalism and the sacredness of nature was the absence of any distinction between the sacred and the profane, or the worldly and the unworldly. Although certain precolonial authors were found who deplored the mixing of religion with non-religious activities, such as politics (Bailey 1964: 132; Mutwa 1966: 324), the vast majority of authors appeared not to have any room in their worldview for a totally non-religious view of secular phenomena such as politics and so forth, although of course the misuse of religion in the sphere of politics was known and commented on (cf. Kamalu 1990: 142).

On the whole post-traditional thought in the context of Africa, as far as the present study indicated, tended to be favourable to a worldview where, contrary to the prevailing attitude in the West, the sacred was recognised as universally present in the world (cf. Kaboha 1992: 69, 70, 71). What Gayraud S. Wilmore (1989: 26), alluding to the views of W.E.B. Du Bois, said about Afro-American spirituality - that it was a theology developed not just in the churches but also 'in the streets, in taverns and in pool halls' - seemed to correspond to the widespread post-traditional African view that ordinary life was not a separate sphere of being from the sphere of religion. Elsewhere Wilmore (1972: 303) attributes similar concern for sacredness of life to traditional African religion.

LIFE AND AFRICANISED RELIGION IN GENERAL

A further important feature of vitalism was evident, on the re-examination of all the findings of this study as a whole (3-6), when one bore in mind the modified version of the paradigm model proposed in 1.4.2. The new paradigm model made post-traditional Africanised religious *life* the center, so to speak, of the findings of this study. All the ideas and potential areas of thought explored were about conditions which authors could treat as acting on this 'life', the goals which

could be assigned to this 'life' and the strategies which could be adopted to attain the goals. Although this paradigm model did not have strict descriptive force, it seemed to embody a tendency, in the sources explored so far by the present research, for religious thought about Africa to converge in many respects around the theme of 'life'.

In fact, in certain forms of immanentist Africanised theology the 'life' of the human subject or community forming the centre of all these considerations was on occasion itself identical with the ultimate, or God. Thus vitalism and religious life itself could be, in certain sufficiently immanentist religious opinions, fundamentally identified. This meant that any feature of one's God-concept, if one followed such an immanentism (or even a transcendentalism strongly emphasising, for mystical or other reasons, the theme of the immanence of God in all areas of life), was arguably non-separate from one's ideas of general history, moral life, life-goals and strategies to attain the same. Thus in an interdisciplinary framework of religiosity the problems and internal paradoxes/contradictions of one's God-concept could be expected to have repercussions on the rest of one's philosophy, and the same applied to any less problematic and (by humanistic or democratic standards) advantageous and useful features of one's God-concept.

2.5 OPPOSITIONAL CONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE UNIVERSE

Despite the widespread tendencies towards quasi-monist, inclusive and unitive philosophy present in the data, especially among the more mystical of the authors, there were widespread references to various forms of opposition which were deemed crucial by various authors to the structure of the African universe. Examples were such things as good and evil, or male, female, beneficial spirits, and hostile spirits etc. Belief that all things were One, far from discouraging thought about oppositions, seemed to intensify these authors' preoccupation with them. Oppositions were present not only in certain Egyptian ideas about the elements or principle of the universe but also in the symbolism and mythology of more traditional African religion.

2.5.1 THE OPPOSITIONAL THOUGHT OF KAMALU

The most prevalent case of preoccupation with oppositions in the data was found in the work of Kamalu (Kamalu 1990: 24-26, 31, 35ff, 52, 54, 104-105, 141). Taking his stand on the Hermetic opposition of Being and Becoming, he propounded the view that Life, or the Ultimate, was generated by a mutually constitutive duo of the Noumenal and the Phenomenal, the unseen and unindividualised, and the seen and the individualised.

THE RANGE OF OPPOSITION

The basic paradoxical unity of the noumenal and the phenomenal in Kamalu's philosophy could be conceptualised in a variety of philosophically significant God-concepts or Ideas. Each Idea embodied a 'not necessarily logical' but still paradoxical contradiction; and the oppositions at the root of his philosophy were metaphysical (dealing with the tension between the absolute and the relative in theology and cosmology), psychological (dealing with the unified 'I' verses the individualised material self), epistemological (dealing with the contrast of noumenal intuition and phenomenal experience) and ethical (dealing with the contrast between idealism and casuistry/pragmatism in moral decision-making).

THE INTEGRATION OF OPPOSITES

Kamalu tried to articulate a philosophy that recognised and contained all of these opposites in a unity instead of introducing a Western hierarchical opposition. Although his viewpoint tended to render this unity impossible, in so far as it assigned causality to the phenomenal alone and therefore rendered it impossible to explain (and therefore, presumably, understand) the physical in terms of the metaphysical (cf. Kamalu 1990: 120) in practice he did not apply this principle consistently: for by conceiving the noumenal and phenomenal as mutually constitutive in thought, and mutually interactive/conditioning in reality (cf. Kamalu 1990: 38, 45, 73) he in effect appeared

to assign a causal role of sorts to the Noumenal as ground of being and Unmoved Mover, albeit in a general rather than an individualised or personal sense, and in such a way as to make the Noumenal and Phenomenal co-eternal. In this respect Kamalu's views were similar to the eternal-creation theory of Aristotle, on which he acknowledged explicit dependence (cf. Aquinas' *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Book II, Chapter XXXII-XXXVIII). By a synchronic integration of the noumenal and phenomenal as unmoved and moved reality, each of which gave meaning to the other, and the first of which could be deemed in some sense the sustaining ground of the second, a unified picture of Life as the whole constituted by the paradoxical union of Being and Becoming in their totality was achieved by Kamalu's philosophy.

THE PROBLEMS OF PARADOX IN PHILOSOPHY

The problem of fundamental contradiction, in an immanentistic view of God as both absolute and relative, already alluded to in the case of Krüger (2.2.4), introduced some problems into Kamalu's thought. There was a tendency not to firmly distinguish the paradox from the gratuitous contradiction: Kamalu's contention that the various paradoxes of his philosophy were 'not necessarily logical' contradictions was a statement that, understood in its most obvious sense, seemed to leave open the possibility that there were in fact logical contradictions in his philosophy. The Western ideal of non-contradiction and the conflict-ridden Marxist-oriented thought of Nkrumah, which Kamalu (1990: 15) adopted, were syncretised with difficulty.

THE POLITICAL EXPLOITATION OF PARADOXICAL BELIEFS

A noteworthy implication of paradox-ridden thought that neither Kamalu nor any other author of the study enlarged on, was that, in a universe where contradiction and 'paradox' run wild, the policies enacted by a political leader cannot and should not be required by citizens to make sense, or to tally perfectly with moral ideals. This perhaps raises a question when, under a post-colonial African regime, it becomes the fashion to decry 'objectivity' or 'either/or logic' or Western

'reason'. Is there maybe an attempt to deprive all criticism of the ruling post-colonial regime, by Western democratic standards, of its epistemological basis?

An example of such a use of relativism was present in the thought of Nkrumah (Assimeng 1989: 229). Charged by the Rev. G.T. Eddy with injustice in the detention of persons without trial by his government, Nkrumah defended his practice in a relativist fashion, saying of his Preventive Detention Act that "the rightness or wrongness of the act, in my opinion, depends entirely on the angle from which it was viewed".

He went on to say:

You and your colleagues, having the duty of working peacefully for the salvation of the souls of men, neither involved in the intrigues of politics nor surrounded by the practical dangers of state government, may be justified in looking at the Act the way you do. On the contrary, my colleagues and I, deeply involved in the practical issues of government...cannot afford to be influenced by conventional niceties or deceived by the knavish tricks of imperialists, colonialists and their agents, and naturally we see the act from quite a different angle.

In this way Nkrumah effectively immunised his position from all criticism: because there was no 'objective point of view' on the issue he could simply do as he pleased, regardless of the democratic sensibilities of others, without having to give valid adverse criticism serious consideration. People might argue about the truth was, absolutely, but who could argue about what was 'true for Nkrumah', relativistically? If something was wrong from the white democratic point of view, it could be simultaneously right from the post-colonial African governmental point of view, and that seemed to be the end of that.

Criticism of Western science and logic in the sources studied was, however, not solely a tool for immunisation from criticism. Many of the post-traditional objections to Western science found in the data were based on its de-humanising character (5.2.2) - something which might be linked with its 'cold objectivity'. Implicit in such an argument seems to be the idea that the more critical and rational you are, the less human you are. But here it should perhaps not be forgotten that reason and intellect belong to the human as well as feeling and emotion, and that one can be 'dehumanised' by being prevented from thinking rationally and critically, from acting as a 'rational animal'. In order to bring more of the qualitative dimension into science, it is not necessarily to attack either/or logic or ordinary reason. In fact exclusion of critical reason, and of the intolerance for uncertainly justified or self-contradictory theories in the scientific arena, could de-humanise science as much as the exclusion of the qualitative research paradigm, by preventing an important part of human consciousness from making its contribution to the sphere of science.

2.5.2 OPPOSITION OF GENDER

Not all of the authors in this study, however, elevated conflict or opposition into a principle of thought. Rather, it was various *types* of opposition, of a moral or sexual nature, that held their interest, probably as representative of real conflicts or issues in their lives. A common oppositional motif found in the data was the opposition of male and female. Sometimes this male-female opposition was linked with a law of Opposites, according to which the whole universe was polarised between positive/negative or male-female extremes (Frye 1988: 69-70), a duality reminiscent of the Yin-Yang polarisation in the cosmology of Krüger (1995: 82-83). The male-female dualism varied from explicitly sexual metaphors in African mythology to the mere masculinity/femininity of the Egyptian theological systems. In most cases the opposites were postulated with a background of unity underlying them, and the harmonious integration of female with male was a central motif in the religious orientation in question. Barashango (1991: 172) indeed went so far as to say that the power of the male would be ineffective unless linked with the energy of femaleness.

ANDROGYNY

Patriarchal patterns in Western religious symbolism were questioned or challenged to some degree. Certain viewpoints, integrating male with female imagery, had an androgynous or bisexual concept of the divinity (Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 40-41; Mutwa s.a.: 133). Nevertheless none of the authors in the data dealing with the phenomenon of homosexuality accepted the homosexual lifestyle as valid: Barashango (1991: 188) articulated his feelings on this question fairly forcefully by describing ancient African sexual mores as follows: "In these societies, faggots [sic] were not tolerated." And his description could be confirmed by casual and scholarly observation of a general hostility to homosexual behaviour in African culture (cf. Somé 1994: 212).

ANDROGYNY AS A PROCREATIVE IDEAL

It did not appear that this Africanised anti-homosexual stance was a contradiction of the mythological androgynous symbolism, once one realised that the union of male and female was valued in terms of fertility and procreation: so that any non-procreative androgynous union was in these terms conceived as a violation of the right relationship between the sexes. Androgyny in the God-concept was tolerated by Barashango in so far as it pertained to the divine creative act: but he did not accept the Christian 'androgyny' of the Father begetting the Son prior to creating the world, which for him was an unacceptably non-procreative metaphor (Barashango 1991: 172). It was possibly a confirmation of this fecundity-interpretation of Barashango's Africanised androgyny that he also condemned the practice of celibacy (cf. Barashango 1991: 68), thus manifesting a fertility-oriented concept of male-female union.

AN AFRICANISED HERMETIC IDEAL: NO PROCREATION, NO SEX

Despite the stance of Barashango and of traditional African ideas on the desirability of marriage, it was noticed that some other authors, inspired by Hermetic precedents, seemed to view celibacy and a procreative-unitive concept of male-female union as compatible: for Egyptian ('African') religion contained both the procreative pairs of the Ogdoad and the ascetical anthropology of Hermetic redemption (cf. James 1954: 75; Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 85). An analogy existed between some trends in Hermeticised African religion and Roman Catholicism, in that a worldview accepting both celibacy and the procreative ideal could be formulated which at the same time gave no positive or explicit support to the homosexual lifestyle (cf. Mambo Press 1994: 539-552). The choice was either sex and offspring, or no sex and no offspring. For any intermediate option no precedent could be found in the Africanised-Hermetic or sub-Saharan African traditions or cosmologies presented by the authors studied. One followed either the precedent of the Egyptian or African mythological hierogamies, or that of the redemptive ideal of Hermetic asceticism. Ordinary family life, or the harder way of sexual abstinence for mystical reasons. Admittedly, though, the ideal of fertility and expressive sexuality was, of the two ideals, the more prominent one in the sources studied.

FEMALE SYMBOLISM

The sacred significance of feminine sexuality was a particular sphere of interest for many Africanised authors. The motif of a feminine principle in nature and divinity surfaced in several forms. An important area was in mythical symbolism: Mutwa (s.a.: 1ff) attributed importance to the Earth Goddess as a creative principle in association with the Tree of Life, and the Dogon mythology attributed wisdom and redemption to a female ancestor (Griaule 1965: 26, 27, 56ff).

SYMBOLS OF AFRICAN AND OTHER TRADITIONS

The post-traditional African thinkers of this study who deal with the theme of femininity tended to conceive the feminine principle inclusively, and even to relate it to similar symbols in other traditions: Kamalu (1990: 16) spoke favourably of the Egyptian goddess Isis, and Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 39-40) linked Mary with African nature symbolism. Extreme examples of inclusiveness of the feminine were found in the work of Barashango (1991: 74ff, 105, 121ff) who professed to find African linkages in the female symbolism of the Babylonian Tiamat and the Hindu goddess Kali - and also in the work of Frye (1988: 8-7, 19) who admitted a comprehensive interest in all aspects of the Great Mother Archetype and even stated that the whole aim of black philosophy was none other than pursuit of the feminine principle. Frye's views did not attempt to claim a rigid African monopoly of ideas so much as stress the linkage of black thought with feminist ideas worldwide. Barashango, however, seemed to impose on history the story of a struggle between African respect for the feminine element in religion, and Western or white patriarchy, in a manner that fostered rigid Afrocentrism and a virtual hatred-on-sight of the white race. All the phenomena of world religion seemed to be twisted into this mould in a sort of Procrustean fashion, without much dispassionate discussion of the case against such apparent distortions, prompting one possibly to ask whether the unaided achievement by the white race of any good thing whatsoever in the field of women's rights was really as impossible or absurd as Barashango seemed to be presupposing.

FEMINIST ETHICS

Possible Afrocentric distortions of religious history by Barashango apart, however, was there in fact a link between African thought and feminine respect, comparable to the linkage often asserted between Western thought and patriarchy? Signs of an inclusive or feminist ethic were in fact not lacking in the authors of this study. Indications ranged from Kamalu's reference to the genderless languages of Africa (Kamalu 1990: xi-xii) to the allusion of Senghor (1964: 209) to the

concern for women in traditional African thought. A particularly interesting connection was the one drawn by Maybee (1999: 168) between the caring-oriented (and therefore feminised) ethical tendencies to be found in Egyptian and traditional sub-Saharan African ethics, as opposed to the patriarchal rationality of other perspectives.

THE FEMALE CONNECTION WITH POWER AND WISDOM

The connection of the feminine principle with occult power was of course one of the aspects of the Great Mother archetype in the work of Frye: and in the initiation of Somé (1994: 221) the appearance of a female figure was a key mystical experience. The linkage of feminine symbolism with African witchcraft seemed to be implicitly disavowed in the work of Geschiere (1997: 61) who denied that witchcraft in Africa was, as in the West, linked with the devil or sexuality. Yet Mutwa (s.a.: 20) told the story of an ancient matriarchal government of witches in Africa, which appeared to positively link the two.

A more detailed connection of feminine symbolism with power was found in the work of Barashango (1981: 171ff) who attributed the warmth and positive attributes of the black face to the 'Mother Force', and spoke highly of the female attribute of Ptah as Preserver which provided a necessary complement to all male expressions of power. The feminine principle was specifically mentioned as a source of wisdom, as concretised in the land of the black people itself. Thus 'Mother Alkebulan' or Africa was for Barashango (1981: xii, 167, 171, 172ff) not merely, by coincidence, the place where civilisation arose: it was also a mystical power source or contact point for the continuance of that civilisation's roots and wisdom. The connection of knowledge with power was an important and recurring motif in the systems of mysticism found in the data: the source of feminine power was usually connected in some way with the symbolism of knowledge or wisdom.

MALE SYMBOLISM

The emphasis on female symbolism in the data was not one-sided. There was some indication of the qualities of the male or patriarchal symbolism in African mythology. Many of these indications revolved around the Yoruba deity Ogun, the god of war and weapons, who according to Barnes (1989: 3) "like all deities advances understanding, unifies knowledge and creates a 'first philosophy of nature'." Here the aforementioned connection of knowledge and power was present as in feminine symbolism. Yet, the 'patriarchal rationality' of Ogun's power was evident.

THE ETHIC OF VIOLENCE

The male ethic of self-reliance and martial or military activity, which could be contrasted with the more communitarian and female ethical outlook above, was, despite the criticism of Barashango (1991: 159) not wholly absent from African thought. Indeed, Neimark (1993: 85) viewed the deity Ogun as inspiring the spirit of violence which was willing to fight and kill in the name of justice. Even in Barashango (1991: vii, 167) the themes of heroism and fighting for freedom were not wholly absent. This meant that a certain scepticism perhaps had to be shown about claims that the African tradition was a purely peaceful product of 'sun people'. Egyptian Africa produced, according to a biblical tradition too well known to need any comment, the Pharaonic oppressors of the Jews (a fact glossed over or ignored in many Egyptological perspectives, although the Rastafarian interpretation of the identity of the ancient Jews, and its relevance to this question, will be touched on briefly in a later chapter), while Sub-Saharan Africa had its share of warlike and martial perspectives which both in nobility and depravity were comparable to those of the West (cf. Mutwa s.a.: 185).

THE ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY OF OGUN

The 'patriarchal ethic' of post-traditional African thought, in so far as such a thing was apparent in the data of the present study, did not necessarily conform to any phallogocentric stereotype, but was presented by Ajuwon (1989: 185-196) as a philosophy of life based on the principle of individuality and the contribution to be expected from individual effort and leadership. Ajuwon deduced from African tradition about Ogun an ethic based on three principles. Firstly, humans were alone, and like Ogun, the hunter needed to be self-sufficient. Secondly, the ideal individual took a leadership role. Thirdly, as a human one was judged by one's own achievements. These were principles based on heroic individualism and efficiency, and the linkage of this heroic motif with other significant tendencies observed in the data, notably moral ideals of liberation, accomplishment and overall excellence (and even godlikeness in power and knowledge) meant that the male element would not necessarily be found less essential to post-traditional African religious thought as the feminine element. The very inclusiveness of symbols found in the post-traditional African thinkers of this study seemingly prevented feminism from reigning supreme to the detriment of symbolism relating to certain male or Messianic figures.

2.5.3 THE POLARITY OF GOOD AND EVIL IN NATURE

The theme of evil and evil spirits arose occasionally in the data, and could not be wholly avoided when speaking of African witchcraft. Many authors referred to individual evil spirits or witches as phenomena in African belief, but there was a reluctance to recognise any sort of general evil principle comparable to the Christian devil. This in turn seemed to be linked with a view of human nature that did not accept the concept of original sin.

THE GOODNESS OF HUMAN NATURE

Certain of the more modern post-traditional African authors tended to deny the Christian concept of original sin and the fall (cf. Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 92). Original sin was in this context interpreted in a Protestant sense as the total depravity of human nature and its incapacity for good. Such a concept, as it stood, was contrary to ideas such as that of Neimark (1993: 7) that it was one's birthright to be happy successful and fulfilled; and it was opposed by the Ghanaian leader Nkrumah (who in turn was a significant influence on Kamalu) on the grounds that it fostered the denial of political dignity to the African (cf. Axelsen 1984: 233). Perhaps an ulterior motive for the political rejection of the concept was that the idea of original sin was incompatible with the immunity of African leaders from criticism. A leader born in original sin cannot be perfect and totally immune from evil, and thus the possibility arose of the leader's giving orders that might openly contradict the law of God, and therefore had to be disobeyed. As Wright (1971: 20) put it:

"The President would lay great stress on equality of all men as made in the image of God, though he would not observe that the Christian tradition sees that image as a flawed one and asserts that man's first duty is to God."

THE MYTH OF THE FALL

Certain less modern authors, such as Mbiti (1988: 84ff), alluded to references in African mythology to some sort of primordial fall in the early ages of humanity, as a result of which human mortality entered the world. In the mythology of the Dogon (Griaule 1985: 17, 21ff, 47, 57, 123), the stages of the fall were complicated, involving a transition from immortality to pseudo-death to real death. In the light of what was mentioned before (2.4.1), that the Dogon mythology amounted to a synchronic account of the constitution of the universe and of human consciousness, it could perhaps be argued that fall-myths were to do with humanity's remoteness from the divinity rather than a real historical fall from grace: and the normality of this remoteness would perhaps explain

the absence of redemptive concern in more traditional African thought, as noted by Mbiti (1988: 98). This would tie in with the view of Mutwa (s.a.: 134) that the evil inclination coexisted with the good as part of human nature rather than being contracted by a historical accident.

THE FALL IN HISTORY

In more modern post-traditional authors there were some signs of belief in a historical 'fall' in the sense of a recognition of the power of humanity to cut itself off from its roots in nature - for example by Western-style 'hubris' or spiritual blindness (Kaboha 1992: 78 etc.). Falls of this sort were usually found to be redeemable in various ways. Some authors, who believed in Africa as the source of civilisation, attributed importance to the fall of ancient 'African' civilisation as a result of neglect of human values, and an expected redemption in the future as the cultural riches of that civilisation were rediscovered (cf. Kamalu 1990: 8ff; James 1954: 153ff) - including, for some, lost African secrets, such as the secret of primordial longevity (Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 31).

EVIL SPIRITS

The theme of evil in Africanised religious authors, given the background of traditional African ideas, was not in all cases a matter solely of ordinary human evil. Many of the sources studied made some reference to the powers of evil in traditional African religion. Indeed, investigating ideas about the powers of evil was difficult to avoid in a study of post-traditional African thought, in the sense that many post-traditional Africanised innovative tendencies were linked with occultism and unsocialised forms of religion, or, in other words, witchcraft (Geschiere 1997:1, 7ff). References to witchcraft, which will be dealt with more fully in Chapter 5, tended to be more prominent than references to more non-human evil powers; nevertheless, these too were not lacking.

THE AMBIVALENCE OF NATURE

Several authors tended to treat evil as a part of nature, and in certain respects on a par with good. Gonzalez-Wippler (1973:6-8) applied to Santeria the idea of Dion Fortune, that evil or the Negative Force has a role to play in the world plan, serving to "clear up behind the advancing tide of evolution, removing that which has become effete, so that it may not choke or clog evolving life." Thus, although the orisha were undoubtedly on the side of light, nevertheless the powers of darkness were useful as well and were identified with the shadow side of natural processes.

This echoed a sentiment found in the Yoruba-derived beliefs of Nelmark (1993: 80) who, while not accepting the trickster-deity Eshu as evil or demonic, nevertheless identified Eshu with the harsher and more merciless side of nature. Geschiere (1997: 1, 12-13) did not accept that the power of evil or witchcraft was morally biased, but rather the power of witchcraft was neutral and could have a good or an evil side. In many different ways the idea was articulated that Good and Evil, for whatever reason, could not be rigidly separated: and this seemed moreover to be a natural consequence of a monistic or panentheistic worldview which united all reality into one interrelated whole. Mutwa (s.a.: 132) argued that most of the gods of traditional Zulu religion were evil - and nevertheless he called them gods, not devils. This tied in with his view of the good and evil inclination as existing side by side in the heart of humanity, and with his identification of the entire universe with God.

ESHU, OR THE TRICKSTER

Signs of belief in a supreme evil spirit were difficult to find in the data. Nelmark (1993: 7, 33, 74ff) flatly denied that any such thing as a devil existed in African thought: he approved of the cult of witches under the command of the Yoruba deity Eshu, but insisted that Eshu was not a devil but a master, controller and limiter of evil or destructive powers. He had a destructive aspect, but also a benevolent aspect. Other trends of thought however were more ready to identify Eshu as an

evil god (McGregor 1966: 45) although even in this case he apparently had to be worshipped and placated rather than shunned. Certain Yoruba-derived forms of spiritualism employed the term 'exu' as a general synonym for evil spirit (cf. Ortiz 1989: 95, 98), although even here the absoluteness of the evil was modified by a subdivision into 'pagan' exus and 'baptised' exus, the latter being the source of more benign forms of spirit-possession. The tendency to link good and evil into some sort of unity was found in the view of Abimbola (1994:106) which made Eshu into a sort of intermediary linking the 'Deus de Bem' with the 'Deus de Mal'.

EVIL IN A BINARY UNIVERSE

It was significant that Eshu was regarded, according to McGregor (1966: 39ff), as the teacher of Ifa, a god personifying a famous Yoruba divination system. This divination system had a dualistic basis: according to the description of Thorpe (1981: 98) it could involve the use of sixteen palm nuts, which, being tossed rapidly from hand to hand according to a prescribed scheme, would end up with either one or two nuts remaining in the hand of the diviner. In a procedure analogous to the construction of I Ching hexagrams, the results of many repetitions of the above procedure resulted in a double eightfold sign corresponding to an Ifa myth which could be adapted to the situation of the client. There were 18 principal myths and 256 subordinate myths.

The basis of the Ifa system, as of the I Ching, was binary opposition in the structure of the universe. In line with this oppositional tendency was the aforementioned role of Eshu as mediator of the opposite tendencies of the universe, and of his role, mentioned by Drewal (1992:16), as the principle of change. For change implied ambivalence, innovation and transition from one state to a second. Evil was once again found to be intertwined with good as part of a basic ambiguity - perhaps even a conflict or contradiction - in the structure of the evolving divine universe itself. This theme will be touched on again in Chapter 4, where it will be discussed whether Africanised religion is based as a matter of course on peace and love (as is generally supposed by today's

conventional wisdom), or whether an awareness of violence and conflict in the universe may occasionally play a more pivotal role.

THE PROBLEM POSED BY EVIL: PHILOSOPHICAL OR EMOTIONAL?

A notable impression given by some post-traditional Africanised allusions to evil and evil forces, was that evil tended to be not so much philosophically explained as coped with: there were attempts to 'include' evil as part of a unity, rather than construct an explicit theodicy justifying evil in God's universe and/or solving any philosophical problems related to evil. Evil was not there to be discussed or explained in a detached fashion, but to be dealt with and managed by some means. This approach went to the heart of indigenous African traditional religion, and of the traditional ideas behind sacrifice and ritual (4.3.1, 4.3.3).

2.6 THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSE

The post-traditional African cosmologies explored in the present research - among which West African ideas tended to predominate (1.3.1) tended to be heavily influenced by traditional African mythology, of which the mythology of the Dogon of Mali (Griaule 1965) was a prominent example. Ideas on the significance of creation myths varied: while Mutwa (s.a.: 1ff, 111) seemed to treat them as literal history, integrating them with Zulu oral traditions bearing on the past of his people, many other authors seemed to grant them a synchronic explanatory role. Barashango (1991: 18-19, 183ff) distinguished between aesthetic myths (animal stories), explanatory myths and heroic myths, and like Diop (Moore 1986: 238) seemed to agree with the standpoint that the Egyptians provided Africa not with a mere mythology, but actually with a philosophy, albeit one expressed more by means of symbolism than literal prose (Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 8, 11).

2.6.1 THE CONSTITUTION OF THE WORLD-ORDER

It has already been mentioned that many of the authors conceived the myths of traditional Africa as offering a synchronic scheme corresponding to the present and continuing constitution of the world and the self, rather than describing events in the remote past (2.4.1). The nature of the 'structure' so understood could frequently be conceived as an emanation of the world from the divine. According to Kamalu (1990: 6, 24-25, 101, 113-114) there was only one original African cosmology, alluded to by both the Hermetic cosmology of Being and Becoming, and by analogous concepts in traditional mythology such as the 'zo' and 'yo' of the Bambara. Kamalu's idea that the creation of the self was also described in the original cosmology seemed to be related to the attempt of some authors to identify the divine creative principle with one's deepest self (cf. Barashango 1991: 166; Legesse 1994: 332).

REALITY: SUBJECTIVE OR OBJECTIVE?

The identity of the self and the universe had an important epistemological implication: it undermined objectivism and scepticism about ungrounded and unrationalised personal convictions about the universe. It was not unusual in the course of this research to see authors holding a cosmological or quasi-theological concept of the self and also espousing a humanistic or non-rational approach to the problem of knowledge and valid experience. Kamalu (1990: 28) was a case in point: he pointed out that science as a cultural product had to necessarily be culturally relative. He portrayed 'common sense' as a cultural product rather than a set of panhuman ideas, thus apparently implying that science was built on a relative foundation whose tests were more intersubjective than objective. Kamalu did not wholly reject Western science: he accorded it a limited validity, but he did try to question its necessary supremacy to all other perspectives.

THE DECOLONISATION OF THE MIND

It was not difficult to see a possible reason or motive for a post-traditional African to refrain from wholly embracing Western science. Apart from Western science being a proof frequently appealed to as evidence of Western superiority, Western science dominated cosmology, and therefore its acceptance conferred on scientists the power to shape an ideology. In order for traditional African ideas to be safeguarded from Western domination, therefore, it could be argued that some way had to be found of articulating traditional African cosmology, and its authoritative traditional means of transmission, in such a way as to deny the power of Western science to criticise or pick holes in such an arrangement, to the degree of totally invalidating African cosmology.

It appeared to follow from this that cosmology, in the context of post-traditional African thought, was not necessarily a purely theoretical position on the nature of the universe, but could function as a tool of empowerment, whereby the Africanised person could have an overarching ground for his/her worldview that was not subject to Western control. From such a standpoint liberation or decolonisation of the mind, rather than a disinterested search for truth, could appear as more central an issue.

It is not being maintained here that the present influence of Western science on our society is necessarily a 'dictatorial' or 'undemocratic' thing, since ideology in a social milieu cannot be wholly unshaped by anything, and there are, in the sphere of the struggle for human rights, some possible means of thwarting dictatorship that are offered by an objective sphere of intellectual and moral ideals which are immune from co-optation by political leaders, as has been alluded to in 2.2.1.

2.6.2 THE PATTERN OF THE UNIVERSE

Post-traditional African thought, as has been said, involved, *inter alia*, various attempts to resist the hegemony of Western objectivist or critical science. Nevertheless, if Western science was not to dominate cosmological thinking, then what sorts of influences would motivate its systematic development? In order to answer this question, authors had to investigate how exactly traditional and 'ancient African' systems held themselves together before Western civilisation came along.

The 'African' mythological traditions alluded to, both Egyptian and traditional African, contained patterns and systems serving to generally classify everything in their universe: an equivalent to this in Western culture would be the arrangement of all words in the respective categories of 'Abstract Relations, Space, Physics, Matter, Sensation, Intellect, Volition, Affections' and their subcategories in the synopsis of Roget's Thesaurus (Roget 1962: xv-xxii), or the arrangement of creatures found in Daniel 3:51-80 in the Deuterocanonical (or 'Apocryphal') version.

EXOTERIC CLASSIFICATION

Some authors alluded to the inherent classificatory tendencies of Bantu language, in the form of noun classes. In place of grammatical masculine, feminine or neuter gender, Bantu nouns were placed in various classes corresponding to the notions of 'person', 'thing', 'place', 'action', 'abstract state' and so forth (cf. Jahn 1961: 96, 99ff). Over and above this one could point to the eightfold Dogon correspondence scheme linking mythological ancestors, the structure of the human, the layout of villages, the design of granaries, the construction of musical instruments, the classes of animal and so forth (Griaule 1965: 222-223 etc.). In Egyptian thought one could indicate the four elements (cf. Kamalu 1990: 31), and it was perhaps arguable that the difference in the spheres of patronage of the gods of any polytheistic religion, whether Egyptian, Yoruba or Greek, afforded a clue to the way worshippers of these gods divided up and prioritised the various aspects of their world (e.g. if sex and love, war and wine were not important to the Greeks, Aphrodite, Eros, Ares and Bacchus obviously would not have been worshipped or venerated! See also 2.5.2 above).

The categories of mythological thought could not be treated, particularly in post-traditional African thought of West African origin, as necessarily unconnected with the categories of cosmology and ordinary thought in general.

ESOTERIC CLASSIFICATION

The predominance of mythical motifs in West African systems of classification (particularly those related to Dogon belief) meant that a widespread tendency arose, in the sources studied, to articulate Africanised belief, especially cosmological belief, in terms of authoritative myth or culture-story rather than critical objective study. Nevertheless not every author in the study was content to just accept the myths at face value, as given: there were some authors who attempted to see a deeper meaning to the patterns of Egyptian and traditional African mythology. In addition to Western science and the ordinary classification of the universe according to traditional mythological precedents there were attempts at 'esoteric classification' or the construction of tables of correspondence between African concepts (such as orisha) and other concepts of mythical significance - in line with the search for nonlinear patterns that was regarded by Faivre (1992a: xv-xvi) as one of the marks of esoteric philosophy. Worthy of mention were the attempts of Gonzalez-Wippler (1973: 122) to match up the African orishas with the planets and the Sephiroth of the Cabbala, and the table of opposites drawn up by Frye (1988: 40) which seemed to be connected with the Being/Becoming Scheme of Kamalu (1990: 35) and the all-pervasive integrative/transcendent interaction of Krüger (1995: 55ff, 62-63). Many of these correspondence schemes seemed to have in common the theme of a fundamental duality or opposition in the structure of the universe, a hidden structure underlying the major symbols of religion (cf. Gonzalez-Wippler 1973: 97-100). Thompson (1984:109, 112) refers to patterns in ordinary Africanised religion reminiscent of such hidden structure in the form of the Kongo cosmogram, and of mandala-like Trinidadian ground-drawings which function as "spiritual aids to mediation".

2.6.3 THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNIVERSE

Despite the efforts of certain authors to rehabilitate African traditional mythology, myth, even esotericised myth, had to somehow come to terms with the impact of history. How were mythology and history related? In line with the synchronic interpretation of mythology, some authors argued for a cyclic or non-linear approach to time. Influential even in the post-traditional thought of Frye (1988: 121) was the much-discussed theory of Mbiti concerning the nature of African time. Mbiti (1989: 22) explained African time in terms of the two concepts of 'sasa' and 'zamani', as follows:

"Sasa is in itself a complete or full time dimension, with its own short future, a dynamic present and an experienced past. We might call it the *Micro-Time* (Little-Time)...Zamani is not limited to what in English is called the past. It also has its own 'past', 'present' and 'future' but on a wider scale. We might call it the *Macro-Time* (Big Time). Zamani overlaps with Sasa and the two are not separable. Sasa feeds or disappears into Zamani. But before events become incorporated into the Zamani they must become realised or actualised within the Sasa dimension. When this has taken place, then the events 'move' backwards from the Sasa into the Zamani. So Zamani becomes the period beyond which nothing can go."

As described by Mbiti, 'zamani' was a sort of 'macro-time' which could be viewed in a sort of synchronic relation to 'sasa', thus making the two degrees of time analogous in some respects to the 'Being' and 'Becoming' of Kamalu.

NONLINEAR TIME AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Among post-traditional Africanised thinkers, there could be found indications of an interest in such things as the history of Western and African thought, which resulted in a linear historiographical

concept of time being integrated with the more cyclical concept. Mutwa (s.a.: 32) seemed to accept a cyclical concept of time based on traditional symbolism, but the detailed quasi-mythological history of his people that formed the substance of his work created a sort of linear arrangement that divided African history into various ages or epochs (Mutwa s.a.: 6ff, 10ff, 15ff etc.). The combination of cyclic time with historical study had the general effect of apparently increasing or stretching out 'sasa' so as to encompass the whole of known history: cyclic time became a timeless reality signifying the natural background of the beginning, sustenance and end of all things, and this was continuous with an extensive linear history as the West conceived it. The cycle had not wholly vanished, but the reabsorption of time into timelessness was reinterpreted in terms of a synchronic interaction rather than, as in Mbiti, a part of the diachronic passage of time (cf. Kamalu.1990: 36, 117), or, alternatively, the reabsorption could be related to some nonfragmented quality inherent in the 'stream' of time itself (Frye 1988: 91).

PROCESS AND EVOLUTION

None of the authors of the study denied the concept of evolution as conceived in the West. On the contrary, the tendency found in Krüger (1995: 173ff) to integrate the theme of evolution or process with cosmology and theology was widespread among Egyptological or Hermetic authors: there were even attempts to find evolutionary motifs in Egyptian myths (cf. De Montellano 1991: 48). In the anthropology of Barashango (1991: 208) there was the attempt, typical of much New Age thought, to link physical evolution with spiritual evolution: the human was viewed as progressing from the state of animal being to that of a purer spiritual being. An influential factor in the acceptance of evolution for many authors was the theory of modern Western paleontology that humankind had first evolved in Africa.

2.7 CONCLUSION

The intervening ideological conditions acting on various aspects and varieties of post-traditional African thought, and expressed in the various theologies and cosmologies of the data, were difficult to describe by means of neat categories or neat schemes. But certain recurrent features of debate on cosmology could be indicated.

- Firstly, there was a tendency to look for an inclusive worldview which had a place for everything. God-concepts formulated by Africans, whether pantheistic or polytheistic or monotheistic, were not played off against each other but integrated into a common scheme (2.2.2, 2.3, 2.5) - even the exclusive ideas of God were incorporated to some degree in the concept of God as beyond full human comprehension (2.2.3). Male and female, good and evil, mind and matter both had some place in the overall harmony of things (2.2.4, 2.5.2-3). Many of the post-traditional viewpoints were monistic and faced the problem confronting all monisms, to integrate the negative and dualistic aspects of experience with the underlying unity. The problem of absolutising the relative, with its attendant paradoxes (2.2.4, 2.5.1), seemed to pose some challenges, and there was no total solution to this problem in any of the sources studied.
- Secondly, there was a sort of polarity between more 'traditionalist Subsaharan' Africanised viewpoints on the one hand, and modernised or Egyptological viewpoints on the other (cf. 2.4.2, 2.4.3 etc.). Two different approaches existed among the authors, a less sophisticated traditional approach (Mutwa, Somé, Neimark, and many Class A or B authors in 1.6) and a more sophisticated Hermetic or esoteric approach (Kamalu, Frye, Osabutey-Aguedze, and so forth). Yet the proponents of the latter view in Africa would not dissociate themselves from proponents of the former (cf. Kamalu 1990: 3) and certain authors whose interest seemed to gravitate towards the former view would nevertheless refer respectfully to proponents of the latter view (cf. Masolo 1994: 18ff, 24ff, 37ff). Hermetic African thinkers could be found to

claim that their roots still lay in the indigenous traditional religion of the African continent. The relationship was reminiscent of the situation of the myriad developed Christian theologies, whether Catholic, Protestant, liberal or conservative. These viewpoints, though more developed and complex than the biblical thought of the first century, did not see in this complexification any fundamental discontinuity with their biblical roots. This applied despite the fact that the various contradictory tendencies arguably could not all be deemed equally reproductive of the original tradition, which presumably favoured at most either one or the other of any two radically conflicting positions. Similarly debatable identifications were made by many post-traditional Africans of their myriad personal philosophies with their continental religious roots; although the mutual disagreements were not so harsh or prominent as in Western theology, the degree to which these claims could be reasonably justified was highly uncertain, and seemed to vary from author to author as described in 1.6.

- Thirdly, the themes of knowledge and power tended to be significant in the post-traditional African thought of this study. As far as knowledge of the divine was concerned, discourse about God involved the issue of his transcendence and representability (2.2.3, 2.3.1), and often the articulation of some sort of rational philosophy of the divine, and cosmology could not be discussed without raising the issue of the cognitive significance and meaning of myths (2.6). As far as power was concerned, ethical questions relating to occult and social power arose whenever the divinities or spirits of the universe were discussed (2.5.2-3). The theme of the Word, a creative and enlightening power, was important for many authors. The pattern of the universe was not unrelated to mystical awareness (2.6.2). This was a manifestation of an interdisciplinary tendency which constantly linked African cosmology to the psychology of the human (2.2.3, 2.2.4, 2.6.1).
- Fourthly, questions relating to the manipulability of ideas formed a sort of hidden agenda coexisting with more overt cosmological aims. There were signs of an attempt to break the dominion of Western scientific and rational ideology over the intervening conditions which

acted on Africanised thought (2.6.1-2), by replacing objectivism and critical/sceptical science with a culturally oriented and often mythologised cosmology. The power of dictatorial leadership to exploit a non-rational or non-objectivised cosmology (2.2.1) was not generally recognised by authors, nor was there explicit interest in constructing an objectivised series of intellectual, moral and religious ideas whose domination did not lie in the hands of the State who professed accountability to them.

Fifthly, the dualism of Being and Becoming, of Stability and Change, of Eternity and History, of Reality and Symbol, arose whenever the more 'static' or unchanging traditions of indigenous Africa had to be integrated with the more dynamic and sophisticated concepts of civilised Egypt or the civilised West. This meant that expressions of panentheism, and other concepts integrating the transcendent with the immanent, arose frequently and shaped the overall philosophy of post-traditional Africans into something nonsecular and at the same time temporally oriented (2.1, 2.2.4, 2.4, 2.6.3).

The areas of interest in post-traditional thought, which constituted intervening conditions acting on the religious life of post-traditional Africa, were therefore relatable to five broad areas: firstly, an inclusive and unitive view of ultimate or divine reality, incorporating and integrating a wide variety of God-concepts; secondly, the pooling of the resources of everything African, both Egyptian and sub-Saharan, and the exploration of these resources in order to find an African identity in the spheres of philosophy, culture and religion; thirdly, the search for an integration of science, religion, ethics, magic, and anything of interest to African individuals or peoples; fourthly, the search for a way of breaking the dominion of Western science over the cosmology of African peoples; fifthly, the articulation of a view which combined history and the world, as modern or ordinary humanity experienced it, with an experience or awareness of the sacred or divine.

The variations between Africanised thought on theology and cosmology seemed to be more complementary than polemical, and it was less a matter of 'sides' to be taken in a controversy

(except for the 'anti-Western' or 'anti-colonial' side, which in most authors went without saying), so much as differences of emphasis on a question. Outright disagreements between authors, though not lacking (cf. 2.5.3), did not appear to be the life and soul of religion, as in many Western trends of thought.

Some principal areas of conflict seemed to be: the degree of personality in God (2.2.3); the admissibility of Christian or Western God-concepts (2.2.2); the defensibility of patriarchal ethics (2.5.2); the nature of cosmic evil (2.5.3); the historicity of myths (2.6); and the degree to which history should intrude into the timeless cosmology of traditional Africa (2.6.3). All of these disagreements seemed to center around the theme of exclusive particularity (the individuality of one being or class of beings over-against another) in relation to inclusive unity in one's view of theology, cosmology, sexuality, culture and history.

3 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AFRICAN LIFE

The discussion in the last chapter, which concerned the general ideological intervening conditions acting on the religious life of the post-traditional African authors explored in the present research, concluded in 2.6.3 with some remarks on the acceptance of evolution for Afrocentric reasons. This phenomenon marked an intersection point of sorts between the general cosmological background to Africanised thought, and the more particularised Afrocentric approach to history that exercised a more immediate influence on religious and political attitudes. A widespread preoccupation in the authors of the study was the question of race relations, and the status of black African culture and religion in relation to the supposedly 'superior' culture and religion of the West. Many of the authors were concerned with rewriting the supposedly distorted Western history of civilisation in general, to give African culture the place they thought it deserved in the history of human thought. Certain Egyptological trends in the post-traditional African thought of this study thus differed from traditional sub-Saharan religion in the sphere of the 'sacred history' of the African race which it offered as an alternative to the Western conception. The Egyptologists tended to be mostly West African and American authors, although the example of Samkange (1971) from Zimbabwe showed that Egyptological enthusiasts were not restricted to West Africa.

3.1 AFRICA AS THE SOURCE OF HUMAN HISTORY

Many of the sources studied subscribed to the theory, supported by paleontological findings, that Africa was the place where humanity first originated. Krüger (1995: 173-174) attributed to Africa a qualified sacred significance as the ancestral home of the human race, although arguing that independent of human conventions no one place in the universe was more sacred than any other. Barashango (1991: xii) however showed no such reservation, but waxed lyrical in his praises of 'Mother Alkebulan' and did not hesitate to attribute everything admirable in world religion to some African precedent. The significance of Africa seemed to be a sort of meeting point where scientific

and religious ideas happened to coincide, an important feature in a worldview where the approach to science and religion tended to be interdisciplinary or syncretistic (5.2.2).

3.1.1 THE AFRICAN SOURCE OF CIVILISATION

Many authors were not content to treat Africa as the origin of humanity, but insisted that, through Egypt, it was also the origin of civilisation. Sometimes this was carried to an exaggerated extreme: De Montellano (1992: 162) mentioned a source that did not confine itself to discussing the verifiable influences of Egyptian thought on Greek philosophy and history (cf. Bernal 1987) but went so far as to argue that Egypt was the source also of ancient Aztec civilisation. Other authors appealed to non-Egyptian sources, particularly the ancient civilisation of Ile-Ife to which Yoruba religion traced back its roots (Gonzalez-Wippler 1973: 1) and which, according to Neimark (1993: 2) was the source of the world's oldest monotheistic religion, the Ifa religion. Mutwa (s.a: 7, 9 etc.) was alone in explicitly tracing the origin of civilisation to a now-extinct ancient race commemorated in the secret myths of the Zulu. Somé (1994: 278) mentioned a vision of a vanished people which he experienced during his secret training, but the significance and degree of historicity of this vision was not clear.

3.1.2 AFRICA AS THE SOURCE OF RELIGION AND ACHIEVEMENT

Some authors expressed, explicitly or implicitly, the understandable conviction that the religion they had grown up with in Africa was the only true one (cf. Masero 1991: 96). Others, though sometimes more tolerant of different perspectives, insisted that true religion originated in Africa, and that the Egyptians were indeed, according to an ancient classical saying, 'the first of men to be allotted the participation of the gods' (Bernal 1987: 120) and the originators of monotheistic religion. Adamo (1998: 9ff, 165) indicates some African contribution to biblical and Near Eastern religion. The primacy of Egypt in the sphere of religion was frequently interpreted in an interdisciplinary sense, so as to imply an equal proficiency in the spheres of science and magic -

although only one source went so far as to suggest that the Egyptians invented the airplane (De Montellano 1991: 49).

3.1.3 AFRICAN MONOCULTURALISM

It is needless to add that authors such as those described in the previous paragraphs obviously adopted the monocultural perspective, defended in the well-known work of Diop (1990), according to which ancient Egypt and sub-Saharan Africa belonged to one and the same African culture and were racially related. For this reason it was argued that the modern African could legitimately claim that it was his race, not the whites, which originated the admirable features of Western civilisation. A further conclusion, drawn implicitly by authors such as Kamalu (1990) and Osabutey-Aguedze (1990), was that the African had the legitimate right to draw on Egyptian mythology and mysticism for the construction of authentically 'African' thought and philosophy. It was not surprising therefore that the 'sacred history' taken for granted by much of the post-traditional Africanised sources of this study frequently assigned a privileged role to the ancient culture, religion and achievements of Egypt, and likewise to the mysticism of the Hermetic tradition.

Perhaps worthy of comment was the fact that, given the newness of many of the religious viewpoints arguing for an African monoculturalism, the authors concerned were in the position of people challenging the confidence of orthodoxy. They were not in the position of having to defend unpopular beliefs against new contemporary ideas, but rather they were themselves offering the new contemporary ideas. This meant that in their anti-Western arguments a state of affairs was generally presumed to exist where the West took the defensive role and the burden of proof rested on the Establishment. It was not clear therefore how much of the apparent popularity of their movement was due to newness and the unpopularity of the trends of thought they were replacing, and whether they would face problems with the passage of time, when it was no longer a matter of comparing their views with hated 'colonial' viewpoints but defending them in their own

right. The verification of many of their more mystical historical claims posed a possible problem, although this was not a central concern of the present study. What shall be remarked on, however, as their views are expounded below, are certain features of the Afrocentric treatment of history that introduce a problematic form of bias open to exploitation by a post-colonial dictatorship and/or impede the rational examination of history in other ways.

3.2 ANCIENT EGYPT AND MODERN AFRICA

As was indicated in 1.4.2, the present study was concerned not with historically verifying the claims of post-traditional Africanised religion concerning its past, particularly its Egyptian heritage, but with understanding what various post-traditional African authors could be found to believe about their history, and how it affected their religious worldview. Thus, the material which now follows should not be taken as embodying real facts or conclusions concerning the history of post-traditional Africanised religion, but at most to indicate what many post-traditional authors believed about their putative African and Egyptian past. The scientific verification or falsification of many of the opinions explored in Chapter 3 must be left for future research.

3.2.1 HOW BLACK WERE THE EGYPTIANS?

ACCEPTANCE OF A BLACK EGYPT

An important area of discussion for many authors was the question of whether the Egyptians were black Africans. An important proponent of this theory was Cheikh Anta Diop (1986a: 42ff, 46-47), who appealed to historical evidence that the Egyptians regarded themselves as a black people and were so regarded by others. He mentioned an Egyptian word, *k-m-t*, which he said meant 'black' and was a name the Egyptians had for themselves. This word was also used by other authors, such as Barashango (1991: 158), who used 'Kemetan' as a synonym for 'Egyptian.'

Diop (1988a: 49) further supported his thesis by arguing that the Senegalese language Wolof was related to Ancient Egyptian. Many authors, especially proponents of an Egyptological form of mysticism, accepted Diop's findings, and were familiar with his theories.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF EGYPT AND TRADITIONAL AFRICAN RELIGION

Some authors accepted that the ideas of Egyptian and traditional African religion were related in some way. Maybee (1999: 151-152, 158, 164, 170-171), while respectfully disagreeing with the strong Egyptological school of African thought represented by Obenga, nevertheless thought that Akan concepts could be useful in elucidating certain aspects of Egyptian ethics. Keita (1984: 59) traced the totemism and ancestral veneration of traditional sub-Saharan religion to precedents in Egyptian religion, and outlined a historical scheme of three stages in African thought: the classical or Egyptian phase, the medieval or Islamic phase and the modern phase. This resembled Kamalu's linkage of Egyptian religion with traditional religion as mother and daughter (Kamalu 1990: 2-3).

A NON-EGYPTOLOGICAL VIEW

Mutwa (s.a.: 29, 111) seemed unaware of any strong identifying linkage between Egypt and African culture, treating Egyptians as another form of Westerner, and tracing the ancient ancestors of the blacks to extinct races which seemed impossible to identify with Ancient Egypt. The closest Mutwa came to accepting the 'Egyptian' thesis was to acknowledge that his people received from the Nubians the secret of herding cattle. The existence of a Nubian presence in ancient Egypt was accepted even by the American segregationist Putnam (1981: 43), one of the sceptical sources consulted in this study (1.4.2), who nevertheless insisted that Egypt's 'Nubian' period was one of stagnation, and that the contribution to human progress of the medieval philosophers of Timbuktu was not worthy of comparison with the far more influential works of Aquinas. It appeared that Mutwa's ideas of the relationship between Africa and Egypt were

shaped more by the colonial-Western history of which Putnam's remarks were representative, than by the heavily Africanised and Hermeticised history accepted by G.G.M. James, Diop, and those who followed in their footsteps.

3.2.2 HOW CIVILISED WERE THE EGYPTIANS?

EGYPTIAN PRIMACY

The Egyptians' supposed relation with Africa, and the African origin of the human race, was not of itself sufficient to make Africa the supreme culture of our planet. It had to be shown, as Diop himself emphasised, not only that humanity was African in origin, but that civilisation itself was African in origin (Van Sertima 1986: 14). Thus, Diop (1990: 156, 157, 159, 161, 164) argued at length not only that Egypt had attained civilised religion, but that the West had nothing comparable to offer prior to the Egyptian achievement. The Egyptians, for example, were deemed by Diop not merely to have discovered monotheism, but to have pioneered it.

THE ANCIENT WISDOM OF EGYPT

Some still more mystical trends in post-traditional African thought made much of the superiority of Egyptian thought to Western thought. James (1954: 150) speculated that there were undiscovered and secret sciences hinted at in Egyptian documents that went beyond the atomic science of the West; and another source alluded to in the data (De Montellano 1991: 47-49), as well as claiming that the science and technology of the West had been anticipated in ancient times, identified the secret wisdom of Egypt with occult forms of science, including 'astropsychology' and 'psychoenergetics'. Barashango (1991: 183) seemed to follow a similar path, understanding intelligent thought in a broad sense as encompassing not only natural science but also 'academic' disciplines (logic, dialectics and pure philosophy) and esoteric knowledge (involving such things as psychokinesis and aura vibrations). De Montellano (1991:

46, 50) recognised that this tendency among Afro-Americans was motivated by the laudable aim of dealing with the under-representation of minorities in science, but argued that the esotericising approach was the wrong way to go about it. As he put it (De Montellano 1991: 50):

"Concerned scientists need to develop reliable and scientifically valid curricular material that deals with Africa and African-Americans. There is much in Egypt that would be useful, shorn of its New Age accretions. For example, the building of the pyramids can be usefully developed into lessons about mechanics, there is interesting technology involved in irrigation, and we owe the division of the day and night into twelve hours each to the Egyptians."

THE POSSIBLE MYTHOLOGISATION OF ANCIENT EGYPT

The wondrous achievements of Egypt were presented by many post-traditional Africanised esotericists as history, but the remarks of De Montellano (1991: 46) on the concern for minority underrepresentation in science as a motivation for the African-American Baseline Essays suggested that an ulterior mythological motive might exist for the whole 'ancient Egyptian mystical civilisation' idea. Eliade (1959: 187ff) mentioned that in primal cultures mythology described events in an 'ilud tempus' or privileged sacred time in the past, which formed a sort of pattern to which events in the present had to conform. Thus, the central features of Dogon life, such as the craft of the smith, weaving, ancestral veneration ceremonies, and so forth, were all traceable to mythologically related deeds about ancient times (3.3). Now how would such mythology fit into a worldview that was familiar with Western civilisation? It seemed evident that the retention of such a mythological outlook by a person in the twentieth or twenty-first century would require a sort of technological upgrade in the 'ilud tempus' paradigms: no longer could the people of ancient times, the models for contemporary behaviour, dwell in villages or live in the wilderness. Instead, the ancient time had to be one of a mythical advanced civilisation, to furnish an ancient precedent for the ideals and drives more suitable to a modern civilisation. Thus what we saw in Kamalu and

in the African-American Baseline Essays, namely the attempt to link Dogon mythology with Egyptian mythology and esotericism and with the great achievements of this vanished civilisation (cf. 3.3 below), was not wholly unexpected.

It is not here being argued, of course, that all the ancient Egyptian achievements, and all connections between Egypt, Africa and the West, were in fact mythological. The work of Bernal (1987: 27ff, 202) indicates that Western claims of the inferiority of Egypt to Greece, which were influential in the development of modern white racism, tended to unjustifiably minimise the true achievement of Ancient Egypt. Nevertheless there were some very debatable attempts to exaggerate the occult expertise and general influence of Ancient Egypt, and authors like James seemed to treat Hermetism as a real ancient wisdom of Egyptian origin, and not the post-Christian development as which Western scholarship tended to treat it (cf. Steyn 1994: 74) thus paving the way for a possible scholarly disillusionment of Afrocentric and Egyptological religious ideals.

THE DEMYTHOLOGISATION OF EGYPTOLOGICAL MYTH

A concern not addressed by any of the authors, but not without a possible solution, was what to do, should it ever become necessary for this myth of Egyptian mystical achievement to be demythologised: was it possible to recover its basic meaning, that of the need to aspire to the sort of intellectual, moral and technological ideals of excellence that made ancient civilisations great? Certain of the authors were already used to treating African cosmological mythology as symbolism rather than history: and it seemed not beyond conception that, should the evidence in favour of the largely mythical nature of many post-traditional claims about Egypt become irresistible, Egypt could still live on as a sort of symbol for an interdisciplinary worldview where science, civilisation, religion and mysticism coexisted in harmony.

3.2.3 THE USE OF EGYPTIAN RELIGION

The themes of Egyptian religion used by the Egyptological African authors investigated could be roughly divided into ideas and symbolism derived from the popular religion of Egypt, on the one hand, and beliefs derived from Hermetic mysticism on the other.

POPULAR EGYPTIAN MATERIAL

The most common form of popular Egyptian religious belief found among the authors of the data was the use of Egyptian creation myths, which were compared with the mythology of more sub-Saharan religious traditions. Also of importance was the use of Egyptian belief concerning the afterlife: Diop (Moore 1988: 233) mentioned that Egyptian ideas about the afterlife lay behind Western beliefs in immortality, and several sources treated the Book of the Dead as a source of African religion. Barashango (1991: vii) however insisted that the title 'Book of the Dead' was a misnomer, that it was really entitled 'The Booking of Coming Forth by Day and by Night' and dealt with the creation of the world; and James (1954: 122-125) viewed Aristotelian psychology as a mere truncated version of Egyptian beliefs concerning the soul. There was some attempt also to claim Egyptian moral insights as African creations (cf. James 1954: 30; Kamalu 1990: 142-143), but at this point Hermetic mysticism started to introduce itself.

HERMETISM

The ancient mystical tradition of Egypt known as Hermeticism, according to Faivre (1992b: 4-6) shared with later trends of Western occultism four characteristics: a belief in a worldwide 'perennial philosophy' admitting of reconstruction eclectically from world religion, a lack of absolute dualism (implying a monistic theology), belief in fall and redemption, and belief in the transformation of the world through the transformation of the human (which linked up with a belief in the magical interconnectedness of aspects of reality). These four tendencies were found in the

sources studied to be slightly modified among African thinkers in so far as the 'perennial philosophy' was usually heavily Afrocentric and the theme of the fall tended to be de-emphasised and horizontalised, thus subtly altering the ideal of redemption in a socio-political direction (cf. James 1954: 153). Several authors, by means of Hermetism, were led to see an African connection with schools of esotericism in the West (Keita 1984: 61ff; Frye 1988: xi, 53, 55 etc.). Significant and recurring themes in the data relating to Hermetism were belief in the duality of Being and Becoming (cf. 2.6.2), the divinisation of the human, and an interest in the hermetic ideals of mystical (or gnostic) awareness and magical power.

3.2.4 WHY DID EGYPT FALL?

THE STOLEN LEGACY THEORY

A predictable question to anyone reading of such glorious and utopian achievements as were attributed by post-traditional African sources to the civilisation of ancient Egypt was: what went wrong? For obviously in modern times people were well aware that the civilisation of ancient Egypt was now extinct, and its glory a thing of the past. An answer of sorts was attempted in the 'Stolen Legacy' theory of James (1954: 21, 27, 148-149, 154-155, 157, 181-182). According to this theory, Greek or Western civilisation falsely claimed credit for Egyptian achievements, and sought to repress or supplant the Egyptian heritage with Western imperialism. The damage hereby inflicted was, according to James, perpetuated in later history by Christian imperialism and by anti-African feeling in the modern West. The need to repair such damage was given by James (1954: 151) as an explanation for the writing of his book in the first place:

"This is the legacy of the African continent to the nations of the world. She has laid the cultural foundations of modern progress and therefore she and her people deserve the honour and praise which for centuries has been falsely given to the Greeks. And likewise it is the purpose of this book to make this revelation the beginning of a universal

reformation in race relations, which I believe would be the beginning of the solution of the problem of universal unrest."

THE FALL OF EGYPT FROM WITHIN

A more total potential answer to the problem of Egypt's fall could be inferred from the views of Kamalu on Ancient Africa in general (1990: 9). Kamalu explained the failure of ancient African civilisations to survive in terms of an excessive concentration on material ideals at the expense of the spiritual. The Egyptian civilisation was not explicitly included or excluded from the category of 'Ancient African Civilisations' in this explanation, but Kamalu's dictum that 'Ma'at, the moral order, does not discriminate' (Kamalu 1990: 8 cf. 9) seemed to imply that Egypt in the past fell from its own cultural standards of humaneness and morality (Ma'at), and paid the price for this. Such a pitfall seemed a possible explanation for the fall of Egypt, a pitfall that presumably would be avoided by the new schools of African thought which had arisen in modern times. Barashango (1991: 32) made the primacy of human values over materialism a priority in his Egyptologised theology, and seemed to view the 'improvement of life' in terms of an ideal that did not exclude material comforts, yet at the same time did not rule out more intangible forms of life-improvement, such as the benefits of 'high culture science' (Barashango 1991: 92).

THE HIDDEN AGENDA OF THE 'AFRICAN FALL' CONCEPT

As in the case of cosmology, the actual aim of post-traditional Africanised treatment of Egypt and Egypt's fall by the sources of this study was somewhat uncertain. It seemed impossible to say whether such treatment of Egyptian history constituted a truth-argument or a power-struggle or both, and whether such sources were attempting to decolonise the mind from European dominance, rather than to search for the truth for interest's sake. The 'mythological' interpretation of the achievements attributed to ancient Africa, proposed in 3.2.2, led one to consider it theoretically possible that there was, in the background of certain conceptions of the Fall of

Ancient Africa' or of Egypt a covert preoccupation with the conflict between contemporary African (humanistic) and Western (materialistic/naturalistic) modes of thought. For example, the cause given by Kamalu for Ancient Africa's fall, namely the ignoring of human values, could be deemed an expression of the desire for a truly humanised form of civilisation, and of a belief that Africa could provide for it the ideological basis. As will be seen (5.2.2), post traditional African authors were concerned for many reasons to emphasis a humanistic and non-profane ideal of science in place of the purported Western secular and dehumanised technological ideal.

3.3 THE DOGON COSMOLOGY

The ancient mystical heritage claimed for Africa was not restricted to Egyptian models: an important exemplification of African mysticism lay in the mythology of the Dogon of Mali. An important and influential text, alluded to by many of the authors, was *Conversations with Ogotemmeli*, by Griaule (1965), which advanced the thesis that Africans were not wholly unable to make their contribution to the thought and culture of the world, and defended this assertion by means of conversations with the Dogon wise man Ogotemmeli about the mythology of his people.

3.3.1 THE BASIC IDEAS OF DOGON TRADITION

THE CONVERSATIONS WITH OGOTEMMELI

The general structure of Griaule's book could be outlined as follows. After a brief consideration of the background of thought about Africa, in the work of Placide Tempels and others, Griaule recorded conversations between himself and Ogotemmeli dealing with the Dogon creation myth. This myth was structured according to a logocentric scheme of Words: the First Word spoken by the god Amma generated the earth, two beings of water called Nummo, and a trickster-figure of Jackal. The Second Word generated eight ancestors, the seventh of whom gave the world the knowledge of the art of weaving. The Third Word was responsible for the constitution of the

world-system, symbolised in the structure of the Dogon granary. Connected with the enunciation of the Third Word was the death of the old man Lébé, who underwent death in order to recover the Third Word from the seventh ancestor. According to Ogotemmelé the symbolism of the Third Word was connected with various aspects of Dogon culture including the structure of woven baskets, the layout of a village, the types of musical instrument and so forth. The conversation went on to discuss the symbols painted on a Dogon sanctuary, the various rituals practised by the Dogon, especially those connected with ancestral veneration, and the myth concerning the introduction of death as we presently know it and of ancestral veneration. Unfortunately the conversation was interrupted by the death of Ogotemmelé, so the exposition of Dogon tradition was never completed. Griaule (1965: 209-216) finished off with an attempt to correlate Dogon mythical symbols with the signs of the Western Zodiac, and argued that the concept of African peoples as merely culture-bearers, and not culture creators, possibly had to be revised.

THE USE OF DOGON IDEAS IN LATER THOUGHT

The features of interest in Dogon mythology which most frequently recurred in later authors were the idea of African cosmology expressed as a complex system of symbols (cf. Kamalu 1990: 111), and the idea of the Word as a creative principle (cf. Jahn 1981: 121, 127). In both of these motifs was a combination of the theme of creation with the theme of words or symbolism. The idea of a creative word, or creative thought, was an important theme in certain Western and West African-derived ideas of magic (cf. Senghor 1964: 262; Jahn 1981: 127), and gave the Dogon tradition the appearance of something esoteric. It was not therefore surprising to find indicated, in some of the sources of this study, evidence of a debate concerning whether or not Dogon mythology was in fact an esoteric or secret teaching. Griaule (1965: 3) argued that the knowledge of Ogotemmelé was not a secret but merely an expert or specialist form of knowledge, available when asked for but not studied in detail by the common people: and his viewpoint was echoed by Odera-Orika (1990: 40-41). Kamalu (1990: 11) however regarded Dogon and Bambara cosmology as an esoteric wisdom revealed only to initiates.

3.3.2 THE SECRET WISDOM OF THE DOGON

THE CLAIM OF A DOGON ESOTERICISM

The perspective treating Dogon cosmology as an esoteric wisdom seemed to be implicit in several post-traditional viewpoints, which claimed that unusual occult powers could be achieved by means of the Dogon teachings. For example, it was claimed that the Dogon possessed superior astronomical knowledge, and knew about a companion star to Sirius that was invisible to the naked eye (De Montellano 1992: 165). The explanation offered for this by Welsing was that the Dogon had discovered how to contact this star by extrasensory perception; it was further claimed that this star was an information source reflecting events on earth, which could be contacted by means of the melanin in the skin of the African, which had a sensitivity to vibrations not picked up by the ordinary senses. A more prosaic explanation was suggested by Sagan (1980: 89-90) who argued that the Dogon furnishing this information probably picked up the knowledge from exposure to Western ideas and integrated it into his tradition - if indeed the correspondence between an isolated datum in his admittedly complex mythology and an isolated datum in Western thought could not be accounted for by simple coincidence.

A CONNECTION WITH MITHRAISM?

The conjecture of a possible Dogon connection with the mysteries of Mithraism was suggested by a reference in Griaule (1965: 15) to the Dogon habit of wearing a Phrygian-style cap, a well-known Mithraic symbol, leading to the title of the 'Capped One' found in Augustine's reference to the god Mithras (cf. Wynne-Tyson 1958: 9, 54-55). No author in the data investigated this African-Mithraic connection in sufficient detail to make it a confirmed or disconfirmed hypothesis, a fact perhaps explainable in the light of Mithraism's linkage with white Western militarism and imperialism, which Barashango (1991: 68) strongly castigated, and seemed to dissociate utterly from the genius of Africanised religion.

3.3.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DOGON FOR MODERN AFRICA

The above differences of opinion suggested that various levels of critical thought about the Dogon were possible, ranging from conventional Western scepticism or appreciation of their achievement as an ordinary African culture to the veneration of their culture as the repository of an occult wisdom. The post-traditional significance of the Dogon could be viewed from many perspectives: their culture represented the interdisciplinary ideal of the integration of life, religion and cosmology; they were examples of a still-extant mystical tradition on the African continent, containing possible features paralleling those of significant ancient cultures, such as that of Egypt (cf. Kamalu 1990: 6, 11); they furnished possible proof that Africans were culture-creators and not just culture-borrowers. No author explicitly commented on the fact that the Dogon culture and the culture of Timbuktu were both from the same country (Mali) but it was clear that the Dogon, like the people of Timbuktu, had special meaning for African authors as an index of their culture's potential sophistication and achievement.

3.4 AFRICA AND THE EAST

In addition to linkages with Egyptian and traditional mysticism, a small minority of authors claimed for their own convictions a connection with the wisdom of the East. The idea that the Dravidian race furnished an ancient connection between Africa and the East was reiterated by some authors (cf. Kamalu 1990: 8; Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 55). Barashango (1991: 88ff, 92, 95ff) argued that Eastern civilisation was African in origin and that Buddhism was a version of a distinctively African 'High Culture Science': he also recognised the avatars of Hinduism as connected with his own religion - although he criticised the Eastern belief in Brahman as originating in excessive honour paid to a forest god, and said that Buddhism had roots anterior to Brahminism (Barashango 1991: 88ff, 88, 91). Somewhat less extravagant indications of interest in Eastern thought lay in the attribution to Egypt of a quasi-Oriental idea of liberation through reincarnation by Kamalu (1990: 70), and, among the Class B sources (1.6), in the comparisons

between Bushman trance-states and Hindu meditation, as well as the linkage of Bushman art with the mandalas of the East, which were to be found in the work of Krüger (1995: 321-322, 328ff). Mutwa (1988: 344) claimed to be indifferent to the conflict between Christianity and Buddhism: the important thing was rather that everybody should worship the same God.

THE AFROCENTRIC APPROACH TO THE EAST

Apart from Krüger (1991), who seemed interested in studying Buddhism in its own context, as a tradition in its own right, the above authors seemed to look at the East through Afrocentric spectacles, and to investigate or allude to the East purely from the standpoint of concerns related to African cultural existence. In Kamalu this strategy produced few distortions, but in Barashango there was an attempt to co-opt all the good in every religious tradition as an African contribution. Tiamat of Babylon, Kail, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, the gods of the ancient West, the religion of Egypt - all of these were linked in a sort of mythological 'story' running through Barashango's book, the story of how the Blacks and their originated everything good in world religion and the Whites originated most of the evil (in the form of Mithraism, Brahminism, Trinitarian theology, and so forth). The general argument of Barashango seemed to be based on theomachic myth treated as history, rather than on strictly verifiable history itself, and it seemed that in his treatment of the East, ancient history was reinterpreted in terms of a (perhaps unconscious) mythologisation 'in illo tempore' of the black-white racial struggle.

THE PRESENT STATUS OF AFRICAN-EASTERN DIALOGUE

The possibility of interreligious dialogue between Africa and the East was an issue related to this aspect of the subject matter. What could be said at this stage of post-traditional religious development was that investigation of the East by Africans seemed from the indications in the data to be still in its early stages. Very few of the authors dealt with this question at all (although those who did tended to be the more sophisticated among Africanised thinkers in the sources

studied), and those who did tended, apart from Krüger, to borrow Eastern concepts, or notice Oriental parallels, from the standpoint of an intention to present Africa as a world-class culture, rather than that of a desire of religious dialogue for its own intrinsic interest.

3.5 THE AFRICAN RESPONSE TO WESTERN CULTURE

An important part of the post-traditional African self-understanding of a significant number of authors was the re-writing, from a more Afrocentric point of view, of the history of Africa in relation to the West. The story which many of the authors were concerned to refute, and whose attempted African refutation could be found in its essential features in G.G.M. James' *Stolen Legacy* (1954), could be stated in a simplified form as follows: once upon a time the Western people, without significant aid from any other culture, originated science and culture and European civilisation. And on account of the excellence of the Western way of life and its religion, the West gained well-deserved dominion over many other cultures, including the cultures of black Africa. The Africans therefore had the colonial West to thank for their transition from barbarism to civilisation, a transition which, left to their own resources, they would have found near-impossible. Such was the picture that colonial black Africa grew up with; and, predictably, the authors of the data were concerned to refute the idea of black inferiority implied by such an attitude.

3.5.1 THE ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY OF THE WEST

An initial point of attack was at the origin of Western thought itself, namely the great philosophies from which the West claimed to derive its superior intelligence and accomplishments. Many authors followed the argument of James (1954: 1, 9ff, 27ff etc.) that the essential teachings of pre-Socratic, Socratic and Aristotelian philosophy were borrowed from the cosmology and mysteries of Egypt, so that in fact it was Africa and not the West who invented the basic rational roots of Western civilisation. The great philosophers of the West simply borrowed their teachings

from Egyptian beliefs, and, judging by the criticisms of Western thought by some authors, did not improve them overmuch in the process.

GENERAL ATTITUDES TO WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

AFRICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SUPREMACISM

As the originator in modern times of the 'Stolen Legacy' theory, G.G.M. James was of course among the harshest critics of Western philosophy found among the authors studied, who wasted few opportunities of demonstrating what he perceived as the inferior and derivative nature of Western philosophy. James (1954: 98, 125, 136) frequently used the following form of argument: Egyptian belief X and Greek belief Y are similar: belief X is more complex and sophisticated; therefore Y is an inferior and derivative version of X. In such a way he implied that the achievements of the West were not worthy of comparison with those of Africa, and the philosophers of the West were wholly unworthy of the respect generally given them (James 1954: 160ff).

In a similar vein, Barashango found it just about impossible to show respect for a white-skinned thinker. He routinely gave praise, or so it seemed, only to religious figures whom he had no problem thinking of or reconceiving as racially African - he believed Krishna was a black (Barashango 1991: 88ff) - and it was perhaps on account of his conviction that Jesus Christ was a black religious teacher with an Egyptian background (Barashango 1991: 166, 168) that he still retained respect for the teaching of the Bible. White esotericists were dismissed by Barashango as unable to understand African esoteric symbolism to the degree that was possible for black people. On the other hand, Barashango's admiration for anybody whom, rightly or wrongly, he conceived as a black religious figure (this included Jesus, Krishna, and of course everybody in ancient Egypt) allowed him to be very respectful and open towards their teachings: he seemed more willing, for example, to learn from the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels than were other

authors such as Somé (1984: 103) and Osabutey-Aguedze (1980: 33, 44ff, 71-74), who appeared to dismiss Jesus as respectively an absurdity and a myth. This Afrocentric tolerance thus seemed to offset to some extent the impact of his hostility to Western thinkers.

QUALIFIED AFRICAN PHILOSOPHICAL PRIMACY

James and Barashango were the two most prominent anti-Western perspectives in the data, the former not being wholly anti-Western but manifesting hostility to aspects of Western culture which he deemed connected with the plagiarism of the African or Egyptian heritage, the latter seeming to more or less oppose the West in so far as it was the West. Other perspectives took a more benign approach to Western philosophy, viewing it as beneficial and worthy of respect in so far as it had African roots, while criticising it for various faults such as materialism and dualism. Thus, several authors were admirers and users of the 'African' thought of certain Western thinkers (cf. Kamalu 1990: 38, 39; Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 32). Mutwa (s.a.: 173-174, 176, 177ff) noted the superiority of Western thought to Africa in the realm of technology, but insisted that the ability of Africans to think rationally was equal to that of Westerners, and in other areas (such as herbal medicine) the African culture was the superior partner. The attitude of 'benign superiority' to the West seemed to be the most widespread perspective in the data, the hostility of Barashango and his like and the general attitude of equal black and white contribution favoured by Mutwa and his like being minority perspectives, at opposite ends of the scale among the authors studied.

ATTITUDES TO INDIVIDUAL WESTERN PHILOSOPHERS

Two of the most important Western thinkers considered by the data were Plato and Aristotle. These two figures were related to the ancient past which many of the authors of the data claimed for African thought, since the ancient Hermetic mysticism claimed by James and others to be an African cultural product had many features in common with Neo-Platonism (Steyn 1984: 74), while Hellenic and Aristotelian thought had been of interest to the ancient Moorish civilisation of

West Africa (cf. Keita 1984: 87, 88). Nevertheless, the approach of most of the African authors of this study to these philosophies was eclectic, since they did not accept the philosophies of either thinker as a rigid authority but at most accepted isolated ideas of interest, such as the *Summum Bonum* or the Platonic archetypes. Some authors were actually critical of Platonism and Aristotelianism.

PLATO

The Platonic idea most frequently referred to in the data was the idea of Forms or Ideas of divine origin, which contained the pattern of the world's creation. Kamalu (1990: 37) related the Platonic ideas to the Egyptian concept of 'aru' and treated them as archetypal god-concepts corresponding to major themes of philosophy: the relationship of the theme of archetypes to some post-traditional Africanised articulations of polytheism has already been remarked on (2.3.3). Some followers of Egyptological theories also claimed an African origin for Platonic ideas on the structure of society, and on the immortality of the soul (cf. James 1954: 87, 138; Odele 1984: 86, 88). Overemphasis on the spiritual and theoretical side of life was a principal reason for the criticism of Platonic thought (Frye 1988: xii; Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 30). The striking feature of Platonism for the authors who referred to it, from both a positive and negative point of view, seemed to be its idea of the spiritual or ideational world. The scheme of cardinal virtues (Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance) shared by both Plato and Aristotle was accepted by James (1954: 20) and Kamalu (1990: 142-146) although both authors gave priority to the expanded Egyptian/Hermetic list of ten virtues from which Plato, they said, had plagiarised his own concepts of virtue.

ARISTOTLE

CRITICAL VIEWS

The views of the authors of the study concerning Aristotelianism were mixed. Aristotle was criticised by Frye (1988: xii) for overemphasising the theme of matter, as Plato had overemphasised the theme of spirit. James (1954: 125, 131, 136) viewed Aristotle as a plagiariser of Egyptian thought, whose psychology was an imperfect version of Egyptian psychology, and whose very arrangement of books into 'Logic', 'Physics', 'Metaphysics', and 'Ethics' was borrowed from the outline of the works of Hermes Trismegistus. James (1954: 112-125) however, despite his hostility to Western philosophy in general and Aristotle's deficiencies in particular, gave the most detailed account of Aristotelian thought present in the data, which seemingly suggested that, for James, Aristotle's plagiarism from Egypt did not render the basic ideas in his system wholly unworthy of serious consideration - provided, of course, that they were related to their proper origin, and assimilated in their more perfect Egyptian form. Such an assimilation was attempted by authors like Kamalu who, while accepting the 'stolen legacy' theory of James as valid, adopted a less overtly critical attitude to Aristotelian thought.

POSITIVE VIEWS

Positive assessments of Aristotle were found in several authors who tried to elaborate on their 'Egyptian' heritage, vestiges of which were to be found in the ideas of ancient Western philosophy. The idea of God as the Unmoved Mover was accepted by Kamalu (1990: 45) and Odele (1984: 89) and related to themes in Egyptian mythology; Kamalu (1990: 39) also accepted the Aristotelian distinction between potency and act, and the idea of the Summum Bonum was common to Kamalu (1990: 129) and Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 30), although Kamalu along with James viewed Aristotle as having departed from the original Egyptian understanding of the concept.

The Aristotelian/scholastic concept of motion and causality, according to which an object causing motion continues somehow to act on the moved object for as long as the motion is sustained, was influential in Kamalu's reinterpretation of Newtonian mechanics to fit in with the concept of 'action at a distance'. According to his interpretation the motion of a billiard ball once the cue ball had stopped moving was to be accounted for by the active force of the cue ball still somehow continuing to inhere in the billiard ball, as a result of mutual contact, despite their apparent separation in space: by this quasi-Aristotelian idea of motion Kamalu (1990: 81) sought to relate science and African magic.

Most of the spheres of interest in Aristotelian thought found in the data seemed to concentrate on ideas concerning the creative principle, more specifically motion, and the unmoved principle on which that motion depended. This was analogous to the interest in the creative ideas of Plato, which were also linked with ideas on the invisible basis of creation. Western philosophy seemed to interest the post-traditional African authors of this study on the basis of the shared moral ideals (traceable from Plato and Aristotle to an Egyptian origin) and on the basis of cosmological creative ideation, represented in the forms of Plato and the Unmoved Mover of Aristotle. Western philosophy, in other words, was valued for what it could reveal about the pattern or order behind the universe. The motif of logocentrism in West African thought, so influential in ideas of mysticism or magic, seemed related to both the Platonic ideas and the Aristotelian scheme of cosmic and moral order, and appeared to have some connection with the 'magical' or esoteric tendency to be found both in Hermetism and in some post-traditional enthusiasts of the Hermetic tradition.

CULTURAL AND CRITICAL REASON

An important feature of the treatment of Western philosophy by the African authors selected for this study - who were mostly non-Christianised and included many proponents of mystical and/or African Diaspora-related perspectives - was that, in the positive adoption of concepts, they

tended to follow the model of what could be called 'cultural reason' rather than 'critical reason'.

These terms will be explained below.

DEFINITION OF CULTURAL AND CRITICAL REASON

The meaning of the terms 'cultural reason' and 'critical reason', as used here, is as follows.

'Cultural reason' works by means of the generally positive acceptance of a matrix of ideas, derived from some culture or tradition, within the midst of which the thinker works out his/her thought, in such a way as to preserve and retain the basic outline of the culture as handed down.

'Critical reason' works by means of the rejection of aspects of such a matrix, and an attempt to be as parsimonious as possible in the retention of ideas. Foundationalist and antifoundationalist worldviews can both be articulated from either the cultural or the critical standpoint.

Ordinary human thought tends to retain both aspects for various reasons: in childhood education 'cultural reason' is the main tool of thought, whose establishment is a necessary precondition for later 'critical reason' (for of course questioning the elementary foundations of mathematics and language is out of the question if one has not, by means of parental and educational authority, been taught to talk or count yet!). Cultural reason is not limited to childhood but exists in the form of conservative traditions, new sub-cultures or fashions in thought and action, customs, professional ethics, or commonly-held conventions in any community, including the scientific. It is not necessarily false but can be found to retain some true concepts when analysed by means of critical reason. And the application of critical reason can be found, not only in sceptical viewpoints, but also in the form of debates within a conservative tradition (as in the case of differing schools within Catholic scholasticism). Cultural reason offers critical reason something to work with, and critical reason has the capacity of pruning and perfecting cultural reason. The relationship between the two sorts of reason here defined is linked to the integrative and transcendent dynamics of religion mentioned by Krüger (2.2.4), although, human understanding of these being variable, it is possible for schools of thought to conceive the dynamics either as

basically opposed or in dialectical conflict, or as fundamentally in harmony and intending a common goal.

THE PREDOMINANCE OF CULTURAL REASON IN CERTAIN FORMS OF AFROCENTRISM

The Afrocentrism of James, Kama, Barashango, Frye and other authors, owing to the inclusive attitude to African thought alluded to earlier in this report (1.5, 2.7), tended to stress the approach of 'cultural reasoning'. The concern was to preserve African tradition, the Egyptian legacy, the insights of Cheikh Anta Diop, the importance of the Dogon heritage, the rightness of the anti-colonial liberation struggle, the greatness of African thought in all ages, the validity of traditional medicine and religion, the significance of all these traditions in our time. Most of the authors tried to preserve a basic outline consisting of all the 'positive features' of African civilisation from ancient times to the present. Criticism and debate could be carried out within the framework of a viewpoint retaining the basic Afrocentric big names like James, Diop and so forth: but there was a reluctance to dethrone any aspect of the glorious tradition and heritage that the thinkers were trying to refashion for themselves in the spirit of Afrocentrism and the African Renaissance. Loyalty to this seemed an overriding concern (see Chapter 4). The big names themselves also gave the impression of being uninterested in submitting black ideas to the same detailed criticism as they applied to white ideas.

THE RACIAL IMBALANCE OF CULTURAL AND CRITICAL REASON

The habits of criticism mentioned above meant that in James and many commentators on Africa's Egyptological heritage, there could be noticed a racial subdivision between cultural and critical reason: cultural reason predominated in the analysis of black or Afrocentric thought, critical reason in the analysis of white or non-Afrocentric thought. James did not ask, for example, whether or not Aristotle, if his philosophy was in fact attenuated Egyptian philosophy, might have done Egyptian thought a favour in simplifying its ethics and psychology and getting rid of

'deadwood' on the name of parsimony. On the contrary, James seemed to adopt the approach that the Egyptian tradition as he saw it should have been preserved in all its splendour and sophistication: and if Aristotle had constructed a less complex version, this had to be viewed as an inferior 'gutting' or cheapening of the original African thought and all its profundity.

CULTURAL REASON AND LOGOCENTRISM

DEFINITIONS OF LOGOCENTRISM

The logocentric motif in the post-traditional African thought of this study, instanced in the Dogon cultural 'Word' and the patterns behind cosmology, seemed to be linked to cultural reason and veneration for the sophistication of one's given African heritage, whether traditional or recently constructed as an 'emerging culture' (cf. Jahn 1961). Logocentrism, as the term is used here, means the concern with a given pattern or order of some sort in one's life and world, comparable to the Logos of Christian and Platonic thought. An alternative and more facetious definition of this concept is given in Beard and Cerf (1992: 36) as follows:

"[Logocentrism is]...the belief - in the face of evidence to the contrary presented by deconstructionist Jacques Derrida - that truth, meaning and reality are actually "knowable" and can thus be represented by language, and that those claiming "knowledge" or the ability to use words clearly or argue convincingly are somehow superior to those who cannot. Logocentrism is commonly accompanied by a feeling of contempt for the differently logical."

POST-TRADITIONAL AFRICAN SUPPORT FOR LOGOCENTRISM

Logocentrism as defined by Beard and Cerf was indeed accepted by most of the authors in this study: they generally seemed to take for granted that it was possible to know and describe the

world (5.2), as was normal in most non-deconstructionist viewpoints. They did not refrain from passing judgements or observations of unclearness, cognitive falsehood, incoherence, absurdity, or even reprehensibility, on views they disagreed with. The only author in the data to explicitly utilise a deconstructionist style of writing, namely Krüger (1995: 185), restricted the unknowable and unspeakable part of life, in the name of radical empiricism, to that which lay beyond the reach of the human sensorium, admitting a limited sphere of valid cognition, a 'cognised world', within empirically decided boundaries. The 'Word' in the form of religious symbolism apparently formed part of his universe, and of the integrative dynamic of religion as he conceived it (cf. Krüger 1995: 65ff), although he made some attempt not to absolutise it centrally. Other African authors followed him in similarly restricting the unknowable to a transcendent area of life and admitting knowability of truth in the empirical area, although here it was full understanding of unseen reality, not understanding of unseen reality as such, that was negated (2.2.3). The success of Krüger's attempts to abolish the necessity for discourse about the non-empirical itself will be discussed in 5.2.1.

INTELLECTUAL AND ANTI-INTELLECTUAL TENDENCIES

In the appropriation of Western philosophy, one could perceive in certain post-traditional authors of this study a basic desire to integrate, to build sophisticated thought, to intellectualise. A highly pro-intellectual tendency was very prominent in the thought explored, and to some extent this could be attributed to the interest in the African Renaissance that motivated the general exploratory process of the present research, and to the use of literary data sources (cf. 1.4, 1.8). Yet, as could be argued from the indications in Wright (1971: 20), evidence of a tendency in post-colonial African thinkers to oppose Western ideals of intellectual attainment was not lacking. Some authors in fact seemed to apply critical thought more to Western than African tradition, or to implicitly devalue the Western achievements in critical philosophy (as in James' attitude to Aristotle referred to earlier). This meant that a certain imbalance was introduced into the concern for the truth that motivated such post-traditional Africanised intellectualisation (cf. 2.5.1).

3.5.2 THE RELIGIOUS ROOTS OF THE WEST

Although Barashango (1991: 68) and Diop (1990: 158ff) devoted some attention to the defects in the ancient pre-Christian religion of the West, for the most part the authors of the study confined their attention, in the criticism of Western religion, to the Judeo-Christian tradition, the religion of the colonial West and the most common form of Westernised religion in Africa. Viewpoints in the data were polarised between outright hostility to Christianity and qualified openness to it. To some degree the fact of concentration on non-Christianised sources (1.3.1) in this study meant that apart from some Rastafarian perspectives, some very heterodox Egyptological theology, and various viewpoints related in some way to less explicitly Christian post-traditional African mystical ideas, such as that of Senghor (1964), the authors that were explored tended on the whole to hold beliefs to some degree uninfluenced by the central concerns of the Christian religion. It should therefore be borne in mind that, had this study included more Christianised African thought (such as black theology or inculturated African Christian theology), the picture of Jesus and Christianity presented in the data would have possibly been more positive than the one actually uncovered by the present study.

JUDAISM

The problem of the Jews and their oppression by the ancient Egyptians, and the reconciliation of the biblical picture of the harsh yoke of Pharaoh with the high degree of enlightenment and civilisation attributed by many authors to ancient Egypt, was not addressed in detail by most of the constructors of African history - and admittedly these tended to be non-Christianised sources - who were included in the present research. Most authors preferred to criticise Western religion in its Christian rather than its Jewish form. The critique of Christianity, in so far as it extends to Old Testament teaching, can of course generate ideas relevant to the study of Judaism, as in the case of the tracing of African mythological, historical and linguistic undercurrents of Genesis by Oduyoye (1984: 6ff, 26, 51, 87) and the work of Barashango (1991: 135) on Genesis.

THE REINTERPRETATION OF JEWISH IDENTITY

One author who touched on aspects of the problem was Diop (Finch 1988: 229), who questioned the historicity of the Exodus story, more specifically the idea that a Jewish child (Moses) could be adopted by an Egyptian princess. He argued that any Jews coming out from Egypt would in any case be thoroughly Egyptianised, speaking Egyptian as their first language. In this way he seemed to imply that the first 'Jews' were more Egyptianised/Africanised than the West conceived them to be. A similar attempt to minimise the racial separation of the Jews from 'Africa' was the Rastafarian idea that the Jews of ancient times were reincarnated in the black race of the present era, who were the true Jews or Israelites (Turner 1980: 53) and thus, presumably, the true heirs of the Exodus.

JUDAISM AND EGYPTOLOGISED THEOLOGY

Barashango (1991: 187) likewise tried to minimise any racial distinction of the disciples of Jesus from African people, by implying that Jesus' disciples were actually black. Barashango was very critical of what he portrayed as the plagiarism of the Jewish people from Egyptian sources: he was especially critical of the Genesis account of creation which he deemed an inferior version of the account in the Egyptian 'Book of Coming Forth by Day and by Night' (Barashango 1991: 127-142). Although not denying Genesis all value as a human document, he found fault with what he deemed to be contradictions in Genesis 1 and 2.

For example, the fact that Adam was a servant of God in Genesis 2 and a master of the earth in Genesis 1 was deemed a contradiction. (Such an argument suggested that Barashango's thought lacked the concept of 'stewardship' whereby these concepts were reconciled in Western Christian theology, and this had implications for his view of the status of the humanity in relation to nature which will be discussed in a later chapter.) Also criticised were the two different accounts of the creation of wild animals in Genesis 1 and tame animals in Genesis 2, the question of whether Eve

was created separately from Adam or together with him, and (on the basis of a somewhat literalist interpretation of 'day' in Genesis 2:4 and Genesis 1) what he deemed to be a discrepancy in the length of time ascribed to the creation. Barashango's arguments against Genesis seemed to be directed against it in the context of a literalist reading (e.g. of 'day' as 24 hours rather than a period of time of unspecified length, of 'male and female he created them' as implying an exact sequence of creative acts rather than a general statement of origin of both sexes from God). Not surprisingly, therefore, he made it clear that his main attack was more against Christian literalist interpretations of Genesis than against those who valued Genesis as a human document but did not insist on a literalist reading.

AFROCENTRIC MARGINALISATIONS OF THE JEWISH PROBLEM

An important point in the post-traditional African ideas about Judaism uncovered in this study was that most of the authors who dealt with Judaism showed no explicit sign of interest in the Jewish problem for its own sake. As in the case of Eastern religion (3.4), Afrocentric spectacles predominated in the treatment of Judaism. The question of how black the Jews were seemed to constitute a frequently recurring 'hidden agenda'. An example of such an agenda guiding one's interpretation of Scripture was found in Samkange (1971: 51-52): in discussing the objections of Aaron and Miriam, in the book of Numbers, to Moses' Ethiopian wife, he avoided without detailed discussion the obvious explanation for their objections viz. that the Ethiopian wife was black and Moses' family wasn't, an inconvenient admission if one was trying to present the Jewish founder as Africanised. Instead he explained it as an objection by the 'aristocratic' family of Aaron to Moses' marrying beneath his station. This seemed a somewhat contrived or laboured reading, applied to a text which made perfectly good sense without the introduction of such a between-the-lines reinterpretation - given the fact that the passage in question, in explaining Aaron's objections, did not mention riches or poverty at all, but merely said that she was 'a Cushite woman' (Numbers 12: 1). Dialogue with Judaism for its own sake did not seem to be a widespread or popular cause in this study's research population.

JESUS

Since most of the sources of this study were non-Christianised, there were some authors that simply did not deal overtly with Christianity, much less the Christian-African common ground indicated in Bediako (1992: 293, 388), or else, while professing Christianity, dissociated their religion from the African perspectives they were discussing - such as De Rosny (1985: 201). Nevertheless there were still a number of authors who touched on the themes of Jesus, Christianity, and the Church. The treatment tended to be hostile to traditional Western ideas about his status, often being coloured by acquaintance with the results of colonial Christianity.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO JESUS

Four different approaches to the person of Jesus stood out in the data, significant primarily in a collective sense as showing a spectrum of possibilities open to post-traditional African thought outside or on the borderline of mainstream Christianity. From the most Christianised to the least Christianised, these approaches could be arranged as follows:

- Firstly, some authors adopted an approach to Jesus that, implicitly or explicitly, gave him divine veneration and/or a supreme status of sorts over other religious teachers. Senghor (1964: 27ff), a principal figure in the Négritude movement, gave a positive assessment of Jesus, saying that his worship was popular with Africans and that emotional devotion to Jesus was praiseworthy, at least more so than attachment to the Hellenic God of reason. As has been mentioned before, Senghor was a Catholic, although his ideas on Négritude, magic and religion arguably constituted a new development in this tradition and/or a movement beyond former Westernised perspectives and theological schools within Christianity or Catholicism. From a much less orthodox point of view, one could also point to an attitude of emotional divinisation of Jesus in the Umbandista religion (McGregor 1968: 176-177, 203): Jesus was syncretised with the Orisha Oxalá and accepted as Supreme Master of Spiritism

in Umbanda, and the Umbandistas Africanised the 'Jesus' of Kardecist spiritualism so as to make him more of an active than an intellectual figure.

- Secondly, Jesus could be venerated as a divine figure, but not necessarily a supreme manifestation of God. Barashango (1991: 88ff, 89, 166) viewed Jesus as a Black Messiah, and on a par with other Eastern Avatars who were also identified as Black Messiahs. The motif of a Messianic Jesus was reminiscent of the Rastafarian idea of Ras Tafari as an incarnation of God (Hood 1990: 89, 90-91; Legesse 1994: 331-332) although Barashango (1991: 22-23) specifically stated that his beliefs were not accepted by the Rastafarians as compatible with their own. Both Barashango and the Rastafarians shared a conviction, different from that of mainstream Christian tradition, that God was not restricted to incarnation in Jesus but was also incarnate in other humans. This trend, popular in certain Afro-American perspectives, was represented also, to some degree, in the ideas of Father Divine (Martin 1990: 51ff).

- Thirdly, Jesus could be treated as a divine myth rather than a human teacher. Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 8, 33-34, 39, 44-45, 72-74) and Kamalu (1990: 16) viewed Jesus as a symbol, related to the Egyptian Horus and to Christ-figures in other traditions. Osabutey-Aguedze argued, following the precedent in Frazer, that the Dying God symbolism shared by all the religions of the world proved that Jesus was just a virtual composite of various pagan Christs and was not a singular historical person. According to him, lots of people in Jesus' time were called 'Jesus' and 'Christ'. Whether one of these historically plural 'Jesuses' corresponded in some respects to the Jesus of the Gospels was a question that seemed to hold no interest for Osabutey-Aguedze. The use of biblical criticism in the data tended on the whole to be based on nineteenth-century modernist perspectives, or approaches reminiscent thereof, rather than contemporary centrist biblical scholarship.

- Fourthly, there was the approach of Somé (1994: 103) that simply dismissed Jesus as the white man's god, for whose death the blacks could not be held accountable, and whose redemption their race had done without for ages, and could do without indefinitely.

ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT CHRISTOLOGICAL POSITION

Of those authors who exercised creative thought about African religion rather than articulating explicit post-traditional African perspectives from an insider's point of view, special mention seemed to be appropriate for the work of Krüger (1995: 184), whose panentheist reinterpretation of Christ as the principle of concretisation in the universe resembled in some respects that of Barashango. Krüger (1995: 85-86) did not apparently belong to any one organised religion but adopted a 'between religions' orientation that showed interest in Christianity, Eastern thought and African thought. It was not therefore certain whether his Christology really belonged to post-traditional Africanised thought or not. It did however correspond in some respects to a post-traditional African approach to Christology which attempted to extend the idea of 'Christ' beyond the Christian tradition, to include other manifestations of God that were not specifically Christian. The presence of the 'inclusive Christ-idea' as a significant tendency in the (non-Christianised) post-traditional African trends of thought studied seemed to be sufficiently substantiated by the data despite the idiosyncratic variation in the Christologies of individual authors.

CHRISTIANITY AFTER JESUS

While statements on the person of Jesus were limited to a few of the authors in the data (although these tended to be the ones with the most complex and deeply thought-out belief-systems, and thus had an importance that could not be overlooked), statements on the Christian religion itself, without direct reference to the person of Jesus, were much more common. These tended on the whole to be negative assessments. Although Jahn (1961: 17) insisted that both Christianity and African religion had to be judged by their best manifestations, not by their worst

expressions, and although some African authors indicated that Christianity had roots in the African religion which they admired and had some good in it to that extent (Keita 1984: 60), many authors - and sometimes the same ones who spoke positively of the African roots of Christianity - tended to find fault with Christianity.

A few authors acknowledged that African thinkers such as Augustine had influenced Western Christianity in ancient times (cf. Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 88ff; Barashango 1991: 135). But these authors seemed on the whole to take a rather dim view of the beliefs of the African Fathers: Osabutey-Aguedze did not approve of what Augustine had, in his view, done to the African concept of predestination by bringing in concepts of original sin; and Barashango viewed Origen's and Augustine's allegorical interpretation of Genesis as related to a general desire of the priesthood to keep the true meaning of Genesis concealed from the common people. Augustinian and patristic theology did not figure as major interests or influences among the less Christianised authors of the study, although had the study included Christian and Islamic movements, instead of concentrating largely on post-traditional trends outside these categories, a greater interest in the theological concepts attributed to the Fathers might have been discernible in the data.

PIETISM AND THE REMOTE GOD

A very frequent area of criticism was the unworldliness or social disinvolvement encouraged by the Christian religion, especially in colonial times. Nkrumah (Axelsen 1984: 233) related this disinvolvement to the concept of original sin, which in the sense of total depravity was also rejected by other sources. The idea of a 'remote God' or transcendent deity was often rejected in favour of a more immanent or pantheistic/panentheistic divinity (Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 77, Mutwa s.a.: 132, 133) and various reasons were found for rejecting the Christ of the West. The particularity of Jesus seemed to be a stumbling block: Somé (1994: 103) quoted with sympathy an African perspective that found it difficult to comprehend how the death of a white person unknown to Africa for centuries could have anything to do with the black race. Osabutey-Aguedze

(1990: 8) and Barashango (1991: xii, 23, 159) both rejected the idea of a religious monopoly on truth, and perhaps for the same reason both rejected the idea of an 'exclusive' Christ or a God incarnating in Jesus of Nazareth only. Arguably a sufficiently immanentist God-concept could not identify any part of the universe as not being a vehicle of divine incarnation. Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 75) derided the Christian divinity as half God and half human, a caricature that may nevertheless have indicated a sense that the Western God, as understood by pietistic perspectives, was detached or dissociated from our normal state of human life. A common thread running through the post-traditional Africanised criticism of Western theology in many sources was the remoteness of the Western God from nature and humanity: and the criticism of Somé added the further dimension of remoteness from the black race itself. One could say that the Western God in Somé's view imposed himself on the black race without having any connection with them, or nearness to them.

THE PROBLEMS OF THE CHURCH

All of the assessments of Western missionary activity in the data were generally negative. The only real exception seemed to be Bailey (1964: 107 cf. 130-132), whose views seemed to be tinged by a pro-colonial mentality and a bias in favour of Protestants and against Catholics. Mutwa (s.a. 248) admitted the personal integrity and contributions of some missionaries, but laid emphasis on the negative results of the Western missionary effort. The complicity of missions in colonialism and racism was frequently reiterated. In a more general sense, there were found criticisms of the religious formalism of the West: Mutwa (s.a.: 249) gave a vivid description of the funereal appearance of Western church services in African eyes. Some of the authors were ex-Catholics who had left their former faith in favour of a more Africanised worldview. Somé (1994: 95ff) related a horror story about being abducted from non-Christian parents by Western missionaries and forcibly re-educated as a Catholic - a re-education which, needless to say, he was later on in his autobiography to abandon, in order to become initiated into the African traditional esotericism and magical discipline that, according to him, was taught in secret by his

own people. His account of Catholic education, ghastly as it was, did not appear to have any palpable 'Maria Monk' type exaggerations or other examples of traditional anti-Catholic myth. Despite the 'evil priestcraft' atmosphere pervading his story, nuns were not walled up, the Pope was not worshipped as Almighty God, and nobody paid for their confessions. Nevertheless Somé intertwined his life-story, and his case against Catholicism, with accounts of paranormal events (such as his initiation and the persecution of his father by ancestral spirits) whose historicity did not seem a straightforward issue.

Somé's (1994: 33-35) anti-Catholic message included his story - of uncertain historical verifiability - of the suffering and calamities his father had to undergo at the hands of the ancestral spirits, for refusing, as a Catholic, to have his son traditionally initiated. This suffering came to an end after a traditional healing ceremony had been consented to; and eventually Somé was initiated. In this way the ancestral religion, for Somé, scored a triumph over Catholicism - though, in this case, arguably more by violence and force than by demonstrating innate beauty, truth and goodness! The fact of a preoccupation with violence, visible and invisible, underlying certain elements of post-traditional African thought, will be dealt with in Chapter 4.

RELIGIOUS EXCLUSIVENESS AND INCLUSIVENESS

Some of the authors, discussing the mission of the Christian church from what seemed to be an outsider's perspective, touched on something reminiscent of what Saayman (1981: ix, 1-21, etc.) referred to as the 'missio politica oecumenica' or the struggle of the church to at the same time preserve unity among its own members and remain relevant to the political situation of evangelised people. Since this study concentrated on non-Christianised sources, the viewpoints here referred to were for the most part outside the movements of 'Black Theology' or 'African Theology' which attempted to address these questions from a Christian insider's perspective.

RELIGIOUS DISUNION

On the question of what the Christian church should do about religious disunion there were two opposed viewpoints. One viewpoint treated religious disunion as a scandal: representative of this stance was Mutwa (s.a.: 248-249; 1966: 324) who contrasted the Western denominational splits unfavourably with the unity of his own Zulu tradition, and even advised that missionaries of all but one carefully selected denomination should be banned from his country to avoid confusing the people. On the other hand, a more inclusive approach was adopted by Barashango (1991: xii, 23ff, 159) and Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 8) who were anxious to avoid monopolisation of the truth by any one religious group. The common problem faced by both was that of religious disagreement and the associated quarrels: but the two suggested solutions of pluralism and resolution of disputes in favour of one group were mutually incompatible. It should be noted however that Mutwa (1966: 344) did not extend his restrictions on denominational groupings to the broader area of religion as such: he was willing that Western and African and even Eastern religions should all coexist in South Africa, but on the proviso that there be no infighting *within* any of the traditions. This insistence on a unified tradition instead of a plurality of sects may have owed something to Mutwa's Catholic background (which believed in only one visible Church of Christ), although, since he spoke of the Catholic-Caminist split as undesirable, it is possible that Mutwa would have seen his ideal of unity more directly embodied in the Zulu tradition itself (Mutwa 1966: 332).

This problem was related to the issue of inclusiveness versus exclusiveness in theology, or cultural versus critical reason (3.5.1), and possibly indicated tension between an unwillingness to criticise Africa and at the same time a need or desire to respond to the claims of non-African exclusive religion.

POLITICS AND RELIGION

As far as politics was concerned, Mutwa (1966: 324) and Bailey (1964: 132) stood alone in requiring, explicitly or implicitly, the exclusion of politics from religion in Africa. Other viewpoints in the data tended to support the view of James (1954: 162), reminiscent of later trends in Black Theology, that missionaries should concentrate more than previously on the Social Gospel and happiness on this earth rather than in a remote heaven. While not all authors explicitly gave the church a new manifesto for social action the way James did, they implied the need for such a thing in their criticism of the apolitical attitude of colonial missionaries and their recommendation that religion be demonstrated in actions rather than empty words (cf. Kamalu 1990: 72, 142).

3.5.3 WESTERN ACHIEVEMENT AND FAILURE

If the religious achievements of the West met with less than complete approval by post-traditional African authors, the achievements of Western civilisation scarcely fared any better. There were several attempts in the data to minimise in various ways the significance of the technological achievement of the West.

WESTERN TECHNOLOGY

THE PRE-TECHNOLOGICAL IDEAL

Mutwa (s.a.: 254) protested that he had no real wish to become a "black white man", arguing that "All I ask of life is to be granted the opportunity to live again in a typical Zulu kraal, at peace with the world..." Although he admitted that the West excelled Africa in technological development, he pointed out that Africa excelled the West in other more human areas, and seemed to imply that traditional Africa had chosen the better part (cf. 5.2.2). Several authors commented on the fragmented understanding of reality and the loss of unity of vision that the 'modern' scientific

mentality had brought with it (Frye 1988: 89-94; Kamalu 1990: 24; Kaboha 1992: 71 etc.), and many sources spoke in favourable terms of the simpler and more peaceful lifestyle of the traditional African and the less technologised human. Somé (1984: 208-209) went so far as to claim that Western 'science' was a barrier to alternative mystical states of perception, and related how in his initiation he had to struggle against the barriers to awareness imposed by Western education.

THE SOURCE OF WESTERN TECHNOLOGY

Some authors did not deny the existence of the tangible benefits of Western technology, nor indeed of the intangible benefits brought about by the introduction of Western religion and philosophy. But they got around this threat to African cultural self-esteem by claiming that the West did not deserve the credit for any of this - on the contrary, the ideological basis of technology was in fact African in origin. These authors were of course generally the same ones who claimed an African origin for civilisation as a whole (3.1.1, 3.2.2). Where the ideological basis of Western science was demonstrably alien to African thought (e.g. in its hostility to magic), the strategy was sometimes adopted of claiming that the African idea was superior, or at least equally valid on the grounds of the cultural relativity of science (cf. Kamalu 1990: 28, 75ff). Many expedients were resorted to, in order to avoid acknowledging straight out that Western people were better than Africa in the area of scientific discovery.

ANCIENT AFRICAN CLAIMS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Occasionally the scientific status accorded to ancient Africa, as has been said, verged on myth, as when the Egyptians were credited with advanced knowledge of astro-psychology and psycho-energetics, and the invention of the airplane (3.1.2). Such a viewpoint was not however essential to an Afrocentric or African-Egyptological viewpoint. Samkange (1971: 35ff, 51), despite his Egyptological interest, avoided the more mystical or esoteric claims of post-traditional African

religiosity in this area, merely claiming on a more moderate scale that most significant contributions to human culture in prehistory were African in origin. Samkange (1971: 44) indicated that the desertification of the Sahara round about 2000 BC marked a time of African decline from its former excellence, and a time when African culture was cut off from the rest of the world, thus accounting for its loss of ancient world-leadership in the sphere of culture.

WESTERN INFERIORITY TO AFRICA

CULTURAL INFERIORITY

Several authors went out of their way to prove in other ways that white civilisation was inferior to black civilisation. Apart from the frequent references to the non-holism and fragmented vision of the West, and the frenetic pace of their unrestful lifestyle, there were also references to the barbaric origin and history of the white races. Diop (1990: 155ff) traced white civilisation and religion to nomadism on the fringes of civilisation, and Barashango (1991: 22, 67ff etc.) interwove with the history of African achievements a subtext on the introduction of patriarchalism, intolerance and oppression by various types of Westernised or white thought. The Western injury to Africa through colonial racism was of course brought up as a matter of course, and mention has already been made of the accusations of a 'stolen legacy' pioneered by James (3.2.4). In some trends of Rastafarianism hatred for the ways of the whites was elevated into a principle of religion: everything white was evil or taboo (Turner 1980: 53).

RACIAL CRITICISM

THE RACIAL UNIQUENESS OF THE WHITES

The criticism of the West did not always stop at what Westerners had done but occasionally went so far as to question the very dignity and being of the Westerner, even as the Westerner had

once questioned the dignity and being of the African. Cheikh Anta Diop alluded to problems faced by whites in proving their racial distinctiveness from the black; he showed familiarity with the theory that denied that any existing race (e.g. the whites) was an absolutely pure stock unmixed with any other race, although he did not accept the denial, on the basis of racial theories, that Black Africans could be identified as a race in their own right (cf. Moore 1986: 235; Diop 1986c: 350; Diop 1990; Van Sertima 1988: 9). No post-traditional black author, however, appeared to question the dignity of his/her own black race.

ATTITUDE TO FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

The idea of 'malignant apartheid', here defined as oppressive racial discrimination *by whites against blacks*, was not accepted by any black author, and as far as 'benign apartheid' or segregation was concerned, Mutwa (s.a.: 253) was the only black author to suggest that the racial differences between black and white justified the benign segregation of their communities. Somé (1994: 29) implied that it was not a good thing to be separated from the land of one's people, but did not argue for international segregation of Africa and the West on this basis.

THE QUESTION OF ANTI-WHITE RACISM

It should be noted that the above definition of malignant apartheid was specifically formulated so as to leave open the question of oppression by *blacks against whites* or so-called 'reverse racism'. Casual observation of media-reported events in Zimbabwe during the writing-up period of the present research suggested that there was, at least in the minds of many contemporary Africans, no manifest connection whatsoever between rejection of anti-black oppression and rejection of anti-white oppression: and this conclusion seemed to have implications for the interpretation of post-traditional Africanised views on racism.

The stance of Barashango (1991: 22, 159, 203) seemed to confirm the idea that the non-recognition of any connection between opposition to anti-black racism, on the one hand, and opposition to anti-white racism, on the other, was not restricted to self-styled war veterans and politicians in Zimbabwe, but could even be discerned in some of the sources of the present study. For Barashango, while rejecting anti-black discrimination, nevertheless made various remarks on, for example, the inherent inability of white thinkers to adequately understand black religious symbolism, which could be construed as a racial slur on whites. Still other indications of a racist attitude existed in the religious trend of which Barashango was part, since the 'melanin scholars' counted among their members Leonard Jeffries, of whose anti-white views more will be said later. Barashango's position on black liberation, arguing that the blacks had the right to be a free and sovereign people without any mention of racial equality or non-racial social ideals, seemed to amount to a conception of black sovereignty reminiscent of popular European patriotic idealism, of the 'ruling at heaven's command' type, albeit articulated in a black rather than a white context (cf. Barashango 1991: 167).

Similarly Nkrumah's consciencism, which formed part of Kamalu's cultural vision, seemed to address race relations and social problems in terms primarily of Afrocentric liberation and empowerment rather than racially unrelated democracy (cf. Axelsen 1984: 233; Kamalu 1990: 148). This tended to marginalise, if not utterly exclude from serious consideration, the question of equal rights for everyone in a post-independence government. The important thing was that the black government should gain and retain power, and democratic principles would not under any circumstances overrule this (cf. Assimeng 1989: 228-230). It could be argued from the examples of Barashango, Jeffries, and Nkrumah - whom Mutwa (1966: 327) called an ogre, and not a true Bantu - that post-traditional thought about religion and other issues was not in all authors wholly compatible with generally accepted Western ideas on basic human rights and freedoms.

THE MELANIN SCHOLARS

Barashango seemed to accept Leonard Jeffries' stereotype of blacks as caring agricultural 'Sun people' and whites as vicious 'Ice people' (Barashango 1991: 171 cf. Beard & Cerf 1992: 30, 60) which resembled an exaggerated version of the theory of black and white racial history propounded by Diop. There was evidence that Barashango (1991: 8) followed the melanic theory of racial achievement, whose racist implications will be detailed below. Leonard Jeffries, the originator of the 'Sun People' theory was deemed by De Montellano (1992: 163) to be a partner of the 'melanin scholars' in creating a new scientific rationale for Afrocentricity. Jeffries was a person of notoriously anti-white convictions, viewing whites as less biologically proficient than blacks on account of their melanin deficiency (Beard & Cerf 1992: 32), a view which will be explained in more detail below. The melanin scholars were mainly Afro-American, but Wade Nobles, an associate of the melanin scholars, had an indigenous African admirer in Kamalu, who nevertheless made no mention of the claims of melanic racial theory.

De Montellano (1992: 164) mentioned that: 'Welsing...uses the notion of whites as melanin recessives to explain white racism on a "scientific" basis. She professes that white men have to destroy black men in self-defense because black men have the potential to destroy white men genetically.' Having discussed her theories, he went on to discuss some more extreme claims by other authors who in his view expanded melanic theory to the point of 'classical racism'.

THE MELANIC THEORY OF RACIAL ACHIEVEMENT

The most overtly racist perspectives in the data of the present study were to be found in Barashango and the authors alluded to by De Montellano, all of these being sympathetic to melanin scholarship. The explanation for this appeared to be related to the melanic theory of racial achievement held by these authors. According to this theory, blacks had a special substance in their skin called 'melanin', produced by the pineal gland, and utterly lacking in the

skins of whites. This substance conferred genetic and biological superiority on the species that possessed it, and accounted for racial achievement and excellence. It accounted for the fantastic achievements attributed to ancient Egyptian civilisation, and was something of which blacks seemed to be assured of a monopoly by virtue of their pigmentation. According to De Montellano (1992: 165-166), the claims made for melanin could even go further than this:

"According to Welsing the Dogon's melanin functions in a manner similar to an infrared telescope, and they were able to detect Sirius B through the melanin in their pineal glands. Welsing claims further that everything that happens on Earth is converted to energy and beamed up to Sirius B. She maintains that the high melanin content of black people enables them to tap into that information. She alleges that Greek oracles were black and their melanin enabled them, as it does present-day blacks, to foresee the future."

WADE NOBLES ON MELANIN AND HUMANITY

The Afro-American author Wade Nobles (quoted with approval by Kamalu (1990: 28, 49) as an authority on the significance of Africanised science and African mythology, albeit admittedly not in the context of melanic theories) identified melanin as part of what makes us human, and proposed the equation $CNS + EMS = HB$. That is, central nervous system plus essential melanic system equals human being. The implication of this was obviously that whites, who lacked melanin in their skins, were not fully human. De Montellano (1992: 164) reacted to this by pointing out that "[the] idea that people to be discriminated against are not fully human has always been used by racists as a justification for their actions. It is sad to see it being used by people who have suffered so much from racism themselves." He also criticised Afrocentric melanic scholarship strongly from a scientific point of view (De Montellano 1992: 163-164):

"The alleged properties of melanin, mostly unsupported, irrelevant or distortions of the scientific literature, are then used to justify Afrocentric assertions. One of the most common is that humans evolved as blacks in Africa, and that whites are mutants (albinos, or melanin recessives)...No one disputes that humans evolved in Africa, but the rest of the statement profoundly distorts genetics. Afrocentrics treat skin colour as if it was governed by only one gene, and thus subject to absolute Mendelian dominance/recessiveness. If this were true, humans could only be black or white. However, skin colour, like intelligence or height, is controlled by several genes, which is why humans exhibit a wide colour spectrum...There is also no evidence that the amount of melanin in internal organs correlates with the amount of melanin in the skin. For example, the amount of melanin in the substantia nigra is normal in albinos..."

THE PROGRESSIVENESS OF BLACK THOUGHT

A disturbing trend noted by De Montellano (1992: 185) as particularly fostered by the melanic theory of racial achievement was one of indifference to effort as a means of cultural excellence:

"The consequences of a wide acceptance of this notion by African-American schoolchildren could be quite damaging. Children could reject appeals from teachers to study hard for years in order to become scientists. Black children could respond that in order to be a scientist all they need to do is 'Let my melanin pick up the vibes.'

A tendency of disinclination to work for social progress, in a more non-melanic context, could be suspected in certain trends of thought that theorised about the excellence of the Egyptian past (cf. Kamalu 1990: 148): they gave the impression of 'resting on their laurels', of luxuriating in the supposed achievements of the African past without making any firm effort to personally and externally contribute to these efforts in the present. Although the formulation of post-traditional African philosophy and mysticism by various authors was itself a sign of improvement of thought

in the subjective sphere, and Barashango (1991: 6ff), who followed the melanic racial theory, pursued these ideals with vigour it was not altogether obvious what contribution such thought could make externally to present-day technology, economic growth or sophistication of lifestyle.

The ancient Egyptians certainly seemed to have had a motivation to develop their own civilisation, but it was not clear whether the anti-technocratic viewpoint of many authors in the data would in any way encourage such a tendency in modern African thought. Did mysticism impede the development of critical science? In the abstract, arguably, it did not have to, if mystical perception was treated as a supplement or enhancement of, rather than a replacement of, ordinary human reason. But in the concrete, it seemed that the danger of replacing ordinary knowledge with questionable forms of non-rational knowledge-claims was a possibility (cf. 5.1.1).

3.5.4 THE PROBLEM OF WESTERNISED AFRICA

Apart from the ancient traditions of Egypt and Africa, and the heritage of the West, a final element in the historical consciousness of post-traditional Africa was modern Africa itself. There were two major concerns in the data concerning modern Africa in a religious context: firstly, the relationship of Western and African culture in the area of philosophy and religion, and secondly, the impact of post-colonial African politics on the post-traditional African worldview.

THE DOUBLE LIFE

As far as the relative perceived value of African and Western culture was concerned, many relevant points have been raised already in 3.5.2-3. A further phenomenon which recurred, however, was the comment that the modern African was forced to wrestle with the dilemma of a double life - on the one hand, the traditional heritage of his/her culture, and, on the other hand, the newly introduced ideas of the West (cf. Jahn 1961: 21-24). The problem, arising in a religious context, was not confined to Africa but also arose in the problem of the self-definition of Afro-

Caribbean movements: the Umbandistas, whose religion was derived from a combination of African and Western spiritualism, recognised the African contribution to their belief but felt the need not to be confined rigidly by these traditions but to define themselves autonomously (Ortiz 1989: 90).

RECONCILIATORY APPROACHES

Kamalu (1990: 9), understanding the 'African' side of the double life to include Egypt, argued that the African experience of being 'top dog' and 'underdog' at different periods of history gave them a broadness of perspective that uniquely fitted them for significant contribution to future history. A similar positive interpretation of the 'two worlds' experience, given by Somé (1984: 40), was the motif of a mutually beneficial reconciliation and interaction between ancient tradition and modern culture, leading to dialogue and harmony. Epega (1993: xv-xvi), Neimark's spiritual teacher, expressed approval for the fruitful combination of white and black ways by pointing out that the orisha Obatala was white-skinned, and in our esteem for traditional African religion we should be thinking 'African', not just 'black'. In the area of philosophy a reconciliatory approach surfaced in the willingness to be open to the ideas of non-Africans and adopt a global rather than a narrowly ethnocentric approach to philosophy (cf. Kamalu 1990: 23-24) - although this was in the case of Kamalu defended on the grounds that much of Western philosophy was only borrowed or 'stolen' African philosophy anyway.

NON-RECONCILIATORY APPROACHES

Certain authors, however, were not sympathetic to the idea of a Western contribution to African thought. This tendency was present in a relatively benign form in Mutwa (s.a.: 249; 1986: 339) who simply argued that African tradition should not be changed or corrupted, and it would be best if the Western habit of tinkering with religion and ideas, and forming many denominations etc. were not adopted. This attitude for Mutwa was a sign of disrespect for religious tradition and

failure to see that humanity was made for religion and not vice versa. In a more rigid fashion James (1954: 159-160) argued against respect for Western ways in so far as they stemmed from the theft of the African legacy, and even advised the refusal to join societies like Phi Beta Kappa etc. which were based on an undeserved respect for the Greeks. Barashango tried to integrate syncretism with anti-Western hostility by, in effect, applying to the beliefs of the world the acid test of African relationship and Afrocentricity. He was very much open to 'African' beliefs (including the religion of that famous and enlightened 'black', Gautama Buddha), and very much closed to non-African 'white' beliefs (cf. Barashango 1991: 83, 203). The 'Osaist' religion of Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 28) likewise accepted or rejected ideas in other traditions on the basis of relation to an Afrocentric corpus of belief and tradition.

THE PROBLEM OF INCULTURATION

INCULTURATION OF WESTERN THOUGHT

There were some approaches to the problem of the double life which were largely left out of this study on account of the predominantly non-Christian character of the sources consulted (1.3.1), for example those of complete Westernisation or inculturated Christianity. The status of Senghor's ideas on 'négritude' was uncertain: they contained indications of sympathy with Catholicism, which was his personal religion (cf. 3.5.2), but at the same time Senghor (1964: 264ff, 267ff) also found interesting features in traditional African religion and in the magical beliefs of Eliphaz Lévi. It was therefore not clear whether Senghor's ideas were independent of any particular religious confessional standpoint, or constituted an inculturated form of Christian thought. They did not seem to be directly theological in nature, in the sense of appealing to biblical or ecclesiastical precedent directly, but had a more philosophical/experiential character.

INCULTURATION OF AFRICAN THOUGHT

Of the approaches to the West uncovered in the data that remained in addition to those mentioned in the above paragraph, most appeared to involve an inculturation which was the reverse of that found in inculturated Christianity - in other words, we were seeing attempts to present *African* thought in terms of ideas that the *West* could understand. The type of inculturation varied from inadvertent and Western-influenced philosophifications (cf. Tempels 1995 etc.) to Afrocentric perspectives that were anything but uncritical of the Western thought which they confronted, although they took into account such things as Western science, philosophy and Christianity in the defence and exposition of their beliefs (cf. Barashango 1991, Kamalu 1990 etc.). There were few, if indeed any, purely African viewpoints in the data untouched by Western influence in some way, and most sources had to deal with the problem of how much of Western thought to agree with and how much to criticise. The dilemma of the double life was not simply resolved in such authors by the strategy of ignoring or blindly resisting the incursion of the West into the African world: some sort of position had to be taken up on the use of cultural versus critical reason, and the result was not always a strict and harmonious balance (3.5.1).

POST-COLONIAL AFRICAN POLITICS

The theme of postcolonial African politics was alluded to in some of the sources, and indeed some trends in post-traditional religious thought were related to political philosophies. Both Afrocentric and more global tendencies were represented in the sources studied.

NKRUMAH

The thought of the Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah involved an anti-pietistic approach to religious issues representative of certain trends seen elsewhere in post-traditional African religion (2.5.3); his philosophy of consciencism, a Marxist-influenced political viewpoint taking African

conscience as its starting point, was endorsed by Kamalu (1990: 3, 15, 44, 132, 148) and portrayed as not necessarily non-religious. Themes of interest to Kamalu included a conception of pragmatism in ethics, an awareness of conflict as a basic reality in nature and society, and a plan for the Afrocentric restructuring of society and culture. A significant theme suggested by all these motifs, albeit one difficult to reconcile with Western democracy, was the idea of an emergent African state guided by the norms of violent revolution rather than more universal principles relating to human rights (cf. 3.5.3).

The question of such a possible threat to democracy posed by Nkrumah's pragmatism was not commented on by Kamalu, although history seemed to show this was not an empty misgiving (cf. Assimeng 1989: 228-229). The identification in consciencism of progressive social tendencies with revolutionary violence, and the implied rejection of non-violent tendencies favouring peaceful and fully democratic transition as reactionary - again, not an empty fear at all, given the paranoia against alleged enemies of the state, and the non-reliance on democracy, displayed in history by Nkrumah and his ilk (cf. Assimeng 1989: 229ff) - was likewise not dealt with by Kamalu. On the whole the data sources studied seemed not to address in detail the possibility of a logical connection between political corruption and post-traditional Afrocentrism and anti-Westernism, especially as manifested in Nkrumah's philosophy. Kamalu (1990: 141) attempted to formulate a response to the ethical issue of violence as follows:

"Violence is rarely, if ever, an end in itself. Often it is used to take possession of people or things; conversely, it may be the only means of self-defence. Now we cannot justify violence that puts things before people. We cannot justify the violence that justifies the domination of some people by others. But what of the violence used to end this domination and restore a moral order?"

Kamalu thus rejected violence that placed things before people, and led to the domination of one people by another (as in white racism and colonialism). Since, however, the violation of human

rights in the name of the African people and their liberation did not exactly fit either of these descriptions of violence, while attempts to resist the same could be made to fit these criteria easily by playing the 'money-grabbing white racist' trump card. It was difficult to question certain aspects of Nkrumah's dictatorial policies (e.g. his forcibly detaining people without trial), and those of other African leaders, using Kamalu's ethics.

SENGHOR

The *négritude* philosophy of Senghor (1964), a post-independence leader of Senegal, offered a plan, in less explicitly Afrocentric terms, for the equal contribution of both black and white to the emerging global culture. His words, given on the jacket of the book *Liberté 1: Négritude et Humanisme*, defined *Négritude* as follows (my translation):

"*Négritude* is the totality of such cultural values of the black world as are expressed in the life, institutions and works of black people. As for us, our concern, our unique concern, has been to affirm this *Négritude* by living it, and, having lived it, by plumbing the depths of its meaning, in order to present it to the world as a cornerstone in the construction of that Universal Civilisation, which will be the common work of all the races, of all the different civilisations, or else will never exist."

Senghor's philosophy offered an alternative to the nationalistic and anti-Western approach of Nkrumah, and focussed on the concept of blackness as transcending national boundaries. This concept of *Négritude* defended by Senghor was also influential in the perspective of Jahn (1981: 140, 148) who argued in favour of a new global African culture no longer confined to the continent itself. The esotericist Frye's definition of 'Black Philosophy' was similarly transcultural and universal, and indeed he specifically rejected the term 'African philosophy' as being too culture-specific to correspond his own particular ideas on blackness (cf. Frye 1988: xi, xiii, 4-5).

Nevertheless he did not rule out the possibility of using ethnographic data about Africa as sources of philosophy, as was the fashion among contemporary African ethnophilosophers (Frye 1988: 3).

THE ISSUE OF POST-COLONIAL MISGOVERNMENT

The problem of the conflict between the viewpoints exemplified above by Nkrumah and Senghor respectively, and indeed the problem of the less-than-spotless history of post-independence government in Africa, was not discussed in detail by the authors studied. Somé (1994: 95) blamed the corruption of African government on the whites and their system of education. Geschiere (1997: 7) identified sources of political instability within the African tradition in the form of trends inspired by witchcraft, which constituted 'other languages of power' dissenting from the constraints of the status quo. At the times of publication of the sources employed in the present study, various significant events in African history (e.g. the Zimbabwean land invasions, the war in the DRC) had not yet happened, and this may have been a reason why the post-traditional religious sources studied did not deal in detail with the problematic side of non-Western militancy and governmental oppression in Africa.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF RELIGION AND POLITICS

The relationship of post-traditional religion to postcolonial politics, on the basis of the preceding paragraphs, could be indicated as follows. Although the possibility of a religious critique of post-colonial African governments was not yet an important issue for the authors studied (3.5.4), the general non-secular frame of mind adopted by many authors meant that the problem of black-white political relations tended to acquire a religious aspect (3.5.2). Among the 'melanin scholars' the mystical properties of melanin and their claimed connection with the achievements of ancient Egypt furnished a connection between occultism and support of Afrocentrism (3.5.3). The quality of 'blackness' was moreover linked with mystical or religious experience in Barashango (1991: 203-204) and Senghor (1984: 24-25). The adoption of political philosophy, in addition, was linked

with ethics, and ethics was linked with religion. In consequence, a philosophy like 'consciencism' (3.5.3) offered itself as an alternative to religious pietism and religious democracy (Assimeng 1989: 228-230) and thus competed with religion in its own sphere. In the thought of Kamalu consciencism itself possessed a quasi-religious dimension (2.2.4). The important links between black religion and politics appeared to lie in the sphere of the religious or occult significance of blackness itself, and the replacement of religious pietism by a political activism admitting of a quasi-religious interpretation.

3.6 AFRICAN SELF-DEFINITION

The exploration of the historical spheres of interest in post-traditional Africanised authors, summarised above, led to the emergent idea of an African 'sacred history'. Although not all authors constructed history the same way, many themes tended to recur in their constructions. Firstly, an ancient past that lent dignity to the black race (3.1-4). Secondly, an encounter with the culture of the West, and the suffering of indignity from the same (3.5). Thirdly, an attempt to recover the same dignity in an encounter with the modern world (see below). These stages were not rigidly separated, since the ancient past and the indignities of the past could be deemed to continue even in the present. Nevertheless they presented a quasi-historical picture of ancient glory, fall and redemption - and James (1954: 153) used the metaphor of 'redemption' explicitly - which was influential in the attempts at black historical self-definition which shall be discussed below.

3.6.1 PHILOSOPHICAL SELF-DEFINITION

Many of the sources consulted in the study dealt with African philosophy. The importance of philosophy for self-definition was indicated by an ongoing debate on what African philosophy actually was, a debate which was polarised between ethnophilosophers who focussed on the data provided by indigenous African sources, and more global philosophers who demonstrated

interest in the philosophical heritage of the West (cf. Frye 1988: 3). African philosophy was not restricted to theistic belief, but among those perspectives which paid attention to theism and religion there could be found three broad groups: firstly, 'philosophications' or artificially created worldviews generated by the imposition of systematic frameworks on African traditional religion; secondly, interest in philosophically significant features of traditional thought, and thought critical of African tradition formulated by expounders of the tradition, such as were explored in Odera-Oruka's work on Sage Philosophy (Odera-Oruka 1991); and thirdly, intricate philosophies related to Egyptian Hermetism. These three sorts of philosophy corresponded roughly to the three classes of literary sources mentioned in 1.6, although these classes included non-philosophical material in addition to the philosophical trends to which they corresponded. The existence of the subdivisions revealed that post-traditional African self-definition was not in all cases purely a matter of preserving African dignity in the face of Western influence, but in certain contexts involved a decision on the degree to which African tradition had to be elaborated or modernised. More will be said on the relationship of philosophy to African tradition in Chapter 4.

3.6.2 RACIAL SELF-DEFINITION

Racial self-definition in the sources of the present study tended to be connected with two themes: the concept of 'blackness' as such, and the historical consciousness of what Keita (1984: 57) called 'Africity'.

BLACKNESS

As far as the first was concerned, reference has already been made to the melanic theory of racial achievement (3.5.3) and the concept of *négritude* (3.5.4), which furnished respectively a biological and cultural understanding of blackness from a mystical perspective. The definition of black philosophy given by Frye (1988: xiii) as an 'inter- and intra-psychoic striving for consistency with all that is through an identification with the essential manifestations, or archetypes, of all that

is' identified inclusiveness as a particularly distinctive feature of the black worldview. This was a more benign and non-racialised counterpart to the 'Sun People' concept of Jeffries, which gave the worldview of the black race a virtual monopoly on the qualities of inclusiveness, caring and harmony (3.5.3). Senghor's philosophy of *Négritude*, which identified emotion as a defining quality of the black soul, was related to the phenomenon of inclusiveness in so far as it was linked with the humanisation of all of nature (Senghor 1964: 23-24). The idea that the defining quality of the black was the possession of a more inclusive attitude than the white was echoed in such tendencies as the preference for integration of religion and politics, and the articulation of immanentist theologies, by many of the Africanised authors studied.

AFRICANITY

As far as the second category was concerned, 'Africity', as outlined by Keita (1934: 57ff), involved an awareness of the glorious past of the African people, especially as expressed in Ancient Egypt and Medieval Timbuktu. Preoccupation with this sort of 'Africity' was present as a matter of course in all the Egyptologically influenced authors of the study, but was also found in the work of Mutwa (s.a. etc.) who tried to demonstrate, in his claimed revelation of the secret aspects of Zulu tradition and of the sagas which, according to him, were handed down by his people, that his own people had a tradition and history of their own comparable with that of the whites. The theme of 'Africity' manifested also in some attempts to rewrite non-Africanised history and redefine modern culture from an African perspective: Rastafarianism was a case in point, with its redefinition of the Israelites as blacks, of Ethiopia as the promised land, and the virtual creation of a new culture for young people outside Africa who had no firm roots in indigenous Africa or in the West (Hood 1990: 99ff; Hill 1980: 81). Barashango's reinterpretation of global religious history carried the tendency of preoccupation with 'Africity' to the most exaggerated extreme found in the data.

THE ISSUE OF A DEFINITIONAL SANDBOX SYNDROME

The possibility faced by a definitional debate such as the one discussed, of people wasting much words and ink on deciding who or what a 'black' or 'African' was, that no time was left for constructive debate or action on more concrete social issues, was not wholly left out of consideration by the authors of the study. As has already been mentioned, the possibility of blacks resting on the laurels of their historical self-definition was an issue to which attention was explicitly drawn by Kamalu and De Montellano (3.5.3). Moreover, a connection could be consciously made between self-definition and concrete issues in the real world, in the sense that there were authors who recognised that the question of self-definition had to have some sort of concrete impact, in the attitude wherewith a black approached the problems of his/her life and society.

The idea that personal achievement was based on effort and action was not absent from the data, and indeed the rejection of original sin (2.5.3) and the propounding of a Pelagian-like idea of salvation (6.2.1) by certain post-traditional Africanised authors tended to emphasise this theme. But the point where self-definition came in, was the need for a sufficiently confident black self-understanding to inspire the contemporary African to the requisite heights of achievement. And this raised the issue of black self-definition through achievements.

3.6.3 SELF-DEFINITION THROUGH ACHIEVEMENTS

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN WHITE AND BLACK SELF-CONFIDENCE

The problem of black self-definition could be explored in a concrete everyday-life-oriented fashion by a consideration, related to certain questions raised by Barashango (1991: 5-9), of the contrast between the historical self-understanding typical of a colonial white and a colonial black. The colonial white generally looked back in pride to the achievements of the British empire, the fruits

of Western science, exploration and discovery, the accomplishments of Western art and literature, and his/her culture's high reputation for achievement. This created a sense of power, of being able to tackle anything and achieve excellence. Whereas, on the other hand, the mentally colonised black looked back on a history of barbarism, savagery, remoteness from civilisation, scientific primitiveness, inferiority in every respect to the great civilisation of the white. Even after emancipation from oppression, the black still laboured under this sense of inferiority, a sense that learning and intellectual advancement was a 'white thing', that blacks would not be able to imitate or equal, much less surpass what the West had done.

THE BLACKS AS PIONEERS AND ACHIEVERS OF CIVILISATION

A question at the back of Barashango's mind, and also the mind of Diop (cf. Van Sertima 1986: 12) was this: could the African regain a sense of being supreme in the world, a sense of power such as belonged to the white, which would spur him/her on to intellectual excellence, achievement and confidence in himself/herself and his/her power to attain whatever heights of civilisation he/she desired? Both Diop and Barashango answered, "Yes". The means of restoring this consciousness of confidence and control of one's own life was not merely consciousness of the uniqueness of the African person in general, or of the black experience: it lay in an awareness of the particular history of the African people as originators of civilisation, as pioneers in Egypt of all that was good in subsequent cultures and civilisations, and of the superiority of the resources of African culture to the resources of the Nordically-inspired civilisation of the whites. On a lesser scale Iwuagwu (1991: 260), while not making any exaggerated claims about the Ancient Egyptians, held that education should involve, for black people, the teaching of the history of one's own people, and not just white history.

THE TEMPTATION TO MYTHOLOGISE

The problem of the mythologisation of ancient Africa was acute here: how much of the ancient past, the basis of a post-traditional African Renaissance, could be expected to survive a critical and sceptical investigation of, say, the achievements of ancient black civilisation as related by the melanin scholar Frances Cress Welsing? Resources for dealing with such a problem existed in the form of an interest in the positive aspects of more verifiable African history generally overlooked by possessors of a conventional colonial worldview. For those who might view a mystical or esoteric Egyptological exaltation of the African past as difficult to credit or verify, other sources in the data raised the possibility of investigating less Kemetan cultures of sub-Saharan Africa and developing the philosophical and other resources to be found there. Griaule's indication of the sophistication of the Dogon mythological system (Griaule 1965: 216) was influential in such investigation, and the construction of New-Age-like mystical systems on the basis of African beliefs, yet without everything standing or falling on the tradition of an ancient past (as in Neimark or Gonzalez-Wippler), was yet another way of regaining a sense of power in being African. Many of the important tendencies in the investigation of the new emergent African culture, from a standpoint based more on *négritude* than melanin, were summarised in Jahn's book on *Muntu: The New African Culture* (Jahn 1961).

SELF-DEFINITION VS. UNDERSTANDING THE OTHER

A possible feature of the preoccupation with 'self-definition', but not a widely shared area of concern among the authors studied, was the question of whether an intense preoccupation with self-definition might not impede one's ability to understand the other. It was perhaps predictable that the only author to attempt dialogue other non-African religions for their own sake, Krüger (1995: 88ff), paid some attention to the need for understanding other people and religions empathetically. In other sources, the self-definitions of non-African religions were frequently not taken seriously on their own terms but rather forced into a prior Afrocentric mould (3.4, 3.5.2).

The possibility was a real one, that concern for racial self-definition and self-development could lead directly to racial prejudice, and/or lack of concern for the Afrocentrically uncoopted perspective in its own right.

3.7 CONCLUSION

While the intervening ideological conditions acting on the religious life of the thinkers and believers of this study were characterised by a broad inclusiveness of perspective, the immediate causal conditions which influenced post-traditional African thought through their effect on its historical consciousness tended to be characterised by awareness of conflict and polarisation, between black and white, and between nationalist and globalist. The areas of disagreement about history and black self-understanding in the authors studied were greater than the areas of disagreement about theology.

If there were any areas of unity, they lay in the concern for preserving what was good in the heritage of Africa (3.1-4), critically confronting the challenges posed by Western thought, religion and civilisation (3.5), and achieving some sort of self-understanding in relation to Africa and the West (3.6). Of the debates and disagreements found in the data, the following were most prominent:

- Firstly, the interpretation of the African past and the influences contributing to and relating to it was an area that gave rise to some differences of perspective (3.1.1-3, 3.4). The relationship of Egypt to Africa was a question on which some differences of viewpoint existed, not all authors offering the same allegiance to the traditions of Egypt as purported sources of African thought, civilisation and religion (3.2). Moreover, the significance of the Dogon tradition gave rise to a few more areas of variation of opinion, especially on the questions of whether it was a form of esotericism and, if so, whether or not it offered any keys to occult power (3.3). The problem of how ancient Africa fell from its glory was addressed by some

authors (3.2.4). Nevertheless, the question of possible disasters faced in turn by modern post-colonial Africa was not addressed in detail, despite certain indications thereof alluded to or indicated in the viewpoints of some authors studied (cf. 3.5.4).

- Secondly, the philosophy of the West, particularly of Platonism and Aristotelianism, was assimilated or rejected to varying degrees, areas of interest tending to include logocentrism (3.5.1). Opinions varied on the degree and fashion of adapting to the West in the course of black or African philosophical self-definition (3.6.1). The question of how to integrate cultural and critical reason (3.5.1), how to make a choice between, or harmonise, the preservation of the outlines of a tradition and the radical questioning of commonly held assumptions, was an issue that recurred in various forms throughout the exploration of black and white history, culture and racial conflict, and responses varied from conciliatory to anti-white Afrocentric approaches. An important problem in the area of black self-definition was the tendency to define 'other' in terms of 'self', to Afrocentrise the understanding of Eastern, Jewish and other religions instead of treating with them empathetically from the standpoint of their own view of themselves.
- Thirdly, the religion of the West was assimilated or rejected to varying degrees, preference being shown for immanentist and inclusive forms of theology as opposed to exclusive or transcendental theologies. There were differing assessments of what was wrong with the Church and how it could improve in the area of religious union and political activity (3.5.2).
- Fourthly, the significance of Western technology was accepted or rejected to varying degrees, and varying viewpoints were held on its implications for African inferiority or superiority to the West (3.5.3).
- Finally, differences in political opinion and racial attitudes ranged from globalist perspectives which accepted racial equality to Afrocentric ideas that had features tending to encourage

anti-white racism (3.5.4). This range of opinion was related to religion in various ways. Varying opinions were held on the way in which Africans could achieve a cultural self-confidence comparable to that of the whites (3.8.2-3). The theme of Afrocentrism, definable as concern for the particularity of the African heritage, could be understood either in benign terms as a simple appreciation of the role of Africa in the history of humankind (3.1), or in extreme terms as a view that nothing good in humankind could come from anywhere but Africa (3.5.3).

A widespread problem in much of the post-traditional debate on the 'sacred history' of Africa explored in the study was how much of the ancient and contemporary world to identify with, and how much to exclude from African tradition. The inclusive approach found in the exploration of African theology and cosmology seemed to be in operation in certain Afrocentric reconstructions of history that seemed to see African connections everywhere. But pure inclusiveness was not always possible when authors were faced with the problem of responding to the religion, philosophy and civilisation of the West, and the issues of racial conflict and colonialism - and in dealing with issues of inferiority and superiority. Black self-definition in post-traditional Africa involved a confrontation between an inclusive or harmonising tendency of thought related to indigenous African cosmology, and a polarising, argumentative and at times even polemical tendency of thought, related inter alia to the confrontation of Africa with the West and the experience of colonialism and oppression.

It was not to be thought, of course, that aspects of the indigenous African tradition were without a violence and preoccupation with conflict which were all their own. In the next chapter the nature of the African traditional heritage as perceived by the authors of this study, whether conceived in Egyptological or sub-Saharan or Afro-Caribbean terms, will be explored from the standpoint of abiding characteristics and fundamental qualities, including the overall attitude to life itself.

4 THE ROOTS OF AFRICAN LIFE

In addition to cosmological and historical ideas which could function as the background to Africanised religious life as post-traditionally conceived, the data of the study included ideas that formed part of the immediate perceived context of African life, such as indications of esteem for the traditional or indigenous way of life, or concepts of morality or ritual. The context of post-colonial modernisation placed these ideas in a precarious and paradoxical position: for although these were identified by certain authors as the abiding 'roots' of African culture, they were often threatened by the influence of modernity which led to the discontinuing of traditional customs. Although some of the authors in the data had actively engaged in traditional African ritual, such as Neimark (1993: 21-22 etc.), many authors seemed to attend more to the spirit of traditional African ritual than the letter, and the inner significance of traditional culture, ritual, mythology and so forth seemed to matter more than the actual practices. Thus, the ideological cultural roots described below could be understood as proximate contextual conditions in a state of transition towards becoming more remote historical conditions - as things which were woven into much of African life at the time of publication of the sources, but which in later times would probably have vanished into obsolescence under the impact of the West. The problem of the gradual slipping-away into oblivion of African cultures subsequent to modernisation and Westernisation was an issue that had to be borne in mind whenever references were found to non-modern traditions in post-traditional authors.

4.1 THE SACRED SPACE OF THE TRADITIONAL WORLDVIEW

The vast majority of the authors studied insisted that the African worldview was deeply religious, and that religion was an integral part of life. Such statements were found not only in the discussion of traditional cultures, but also in more post-traditional viewpoints which attempted to integrate religion with the scientific paradigm in an interdisciplinary fashion (De Montellano 1991: 46). Western civilisation was frequently criticised as having divorced religion and mysticism from

life, in addition to its other offences against holism (cf. B'Nasseem 1992: 25; Kaboha 1992: 76). Although Kamalu (1990: 71-72) stated that neither theism nor atheism could be proven with certainty, his worldview nevertheless showed respect for magic, mythology and philosophical concepts of divinity. Certain viewpoints explained African non-secularism by saying that African religion was founded on direct experience of the sacred (cf. Barashango 1991: 204; Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 138). There were also references to the Egyptian concept of Ma'at, an interdisciplinary 'truth' that included concepts of factual, moral, mystical and religious order (Kamalu 1990: 7; De Montellano 1991: 47; Barashango 1991: 173). The esoteric ideal of a new mode of knowledge that would link science, religion, mysticism and morality into one was similar to the 'seamless web' associated with African traditional culture. This seemed related to the relationship between the themes of 'shaman' and 'magus' in world religion noted by Steyn (1994: 67-68), which will be dealt with later in the report (5.3.3).

4.1.1 LAND AND NATURE

Sacredness in African religion was in some authors associated with the phenomenon of land, especially the land of Africa. Barashango (1991: 167) regarded the land or earth as a mystical source of knowledge and consciousness, while other authors on a lesser scale simply insisted on the importance of land for the traditional agriculture-practising African (Maquet 1972: 17, 22ff ; Senghor 1964: 274). The attachment to one's land could take the form of an unconditional preference for residence on one's native soil (Somé 1994: 29) or simply a recognition of the importance of sacred places in general and the sacredness of Africa in particular (3.1). Certain post-traditional perspectives referred not only to reverence for land, but also reverence for nature as such, and confessed support for ecological ideals (Kamalu 1990 138; Mutwa s.a.: 141). Neimark (1993: 36-37) argued that even animal sacrifice had to be carried out in an environmentally friendly fashion, with an attitude of appreciation towards the animal for providing itself for the ritual, and so forth. Although basically in sympathy with the ecological ideal, Neimark (1993: 18) argued that ecological objections to sacrifice were based on an unwillingness to face

the reality of death, and regarded butchery as far more of an injury to animals than the practice of sacrifice.

LAND AND THE CONTEXT

Land, and other contextual features such as society and tradition, tended to be interwoven with thought in Africa, and by reason of this relationship a pragmatic attitude to moral issues, such as that of Neimark, could become a sort of deontology-equivalent, like conventional Christian observance of the commandments, by reason of the constancy of the contextual features appealed to, and the unwillingness of the Africanised culture concerned to give them up. Ecological values could be deemed 'relative' to the situation of being in contact with nature: but it seemed likely that an attachment to land and nature, which Africanised persons might be unwilling to give up in the face of urbanisation, could lead these relativities to take on the character of quasi-absolutes. Human values might be relative to a social structure: but they could take on a rigid and uncompromising character if the social structure was conserved and perpetuated. Thus what will be said later about a pragmatic attitude to morality (4.2.4) observed in various post-colonial thinkers studied in the course of the present research, does not rule out the presence of rigid and even dictatorial rules articulated in the context of these 'pragmatic' systems. In Nkrumah's 'pragmatism' a rule, being pragmatically formulated, needed in the eyes of its formulator no defence in terms of an absolute system, yet could become oppressive if its contextual ground (e.g. the instability of political conditions in Africa, requiring the detention of suspicious people without trial) achieved a semi-permanent state (cf. 4.2.4).

THE ABSOLUTISATION OF THE RELATIVE IN ETHICS

The problem of the 'absolutisation of the relative', already remarked on as a problem in post-traditional Africanised immanentist theism (2.2.4), seemed to surface in some form, in the integration of pragmatic attitudes in the data with the desire to conserve tradition. This was to

some extent only to be expected, since religion and morality were often related in the post-traditional Africanised thought explored in the present research, and problems in the former area could have repercussions, in the form of problems in the latter area. Thus 'absolutisation of the relative' was not a purely philosophical problem but could have practical implications in the sphere of ethical rigidity based on uncertain foundations.

4.1.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIETY

In addition to natural space, there were also signs in the data of the recognition of social space as sacred for Africans. More specifically, stress was laid on the themes of the priority of the community over the individual (Shutte 1993: 75; Oguah 1984: 220; Uka 1991d: 190; Maybee 1999: 168) and corporate responsibility (Kamalu 1990: 137). This social emphasis nevertheless was not universal: the presence of individualistic ethical ideals in the cult of Ogun has already been remarked on (2.5.2), and two authors, both of them mystically inclined and interested in meditation, argued for a post-traditional individualistic ethic, Barashango (1991: 7) speaking of the need modern African youth had for individual satisfaction with self as a key to behaving well, and Somé (1994: 287) stressing the need to gain religious answers from within the self, not from others. Senghor (1964: 275), in contrast to both one-sided communitarianism and individualism, attempted a balanced personalism that emphasised the importance of the community but did not deny the value of the individual. Krüger (1995: 34, 35, 193), although not accepting the traditional Western idea of the metaphysical self, also endeavoured to balance emphases on individuals and on society.

There seemed to be a tendency, in thought about Africa - more noticeable in sources relying on indigenous sub-Saharan African thought than in Afro-Caribbean or Egyptological perspectives - to stress the community over the individual, particularly in an ethical context (cf. Uka 1991d: 181, 191-192). This was generally deemed necessary as a corrective to Western selfishness and political indifference. Authors like Senghor who stressed the contrary need to avoid devaluing the

individual, while not absent, tended to be less easy to notice on the actual continent of Africa. Among Afro-American Egyptologists and Afro-Caribbean authors, though, the individualism of the Western Hemisphere seemed to be taken for granted.

This distribution of communalism versus individualism in values seemed to be linked with proximity to Western culture. The individualistic authors in the data tended to be those who had enjoyed some prolonged exposure to Western culture, as in the case of Somé (1994: 1, 7ff, 40) and the Afro-American melanin scholars, and the Francophile Senghor. Those who favoured communalism, however, seemed to possess sympathy with African culture in a form that was more untouched by Western influence. It would have been simplistic to equate white values with individualism or black values with communalism (cf. the philosophy of Ogun in 2.5.2). Nevertheless, interest in individualism in the post-traditional authors of this study appeared to derive in many cases from a positive relationship to Western culture. Thus, the balancing of individualism versus communalism in ethics could not be viewed in isolation from the attempt to find a fruitful accommodation between African and Western values in contemporary society, a problem which was touched on earlier (3.5.4).

4.1.3 THE FAMILY AND MARRIAGE

Many authors referred to the value of the family as an important concern for traditional Africa. The sacredness of the family was indicated by two principal themes: firstly, the recurrent theme of concern with the ancestors (Griaule 1965: 27, 60, 123; Barashango 1991: 206), and secondly, the theme of ethical ideas connected with sexuality and fecundity. The implications of a fertility-oriented ethic, and the hostility to both celibacy and homosexuality implied in such a stance both in traditional thought and in modern thought, have already been remarked on (2.5.2). Uka (1991a: 47) and Mutwa (s.a.: 507) linked the themes of ancestors and fertility, the former claiming that marriage was a requirement for ancestral status, the latter claiming that the duty to marry was one of the High Laws of the Bantu handed down by ancient Zulu tradition.

Mutwa (s.a.: 251) and Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 169-173) dealt with the question of traditional African polygamy, and they both defended the practice against Western Christianity. Osabutey-Aguedze based the custom on the woman's need for protection and argued for its superiority to the pseudo-monogamy of the West, with its frequently broken marriage vows. He also appealed to the Mormon practice of polygamy.

One gained the impression that one was here dealing with 'cultural reason' rather than 'critical reason' and that perhaps Osabutey-Aguedze would not have bothered to defend polygamy to the modern world if it was not a basic part of African culture to begin with. That he was defending polygamy for Africa's sake seemed a plausible idea; that he was defending it for its own sake seemed less certain. Osabutey-Aguedze was not unfamiliar with critical reason, but in him, as in certain other Afrocentric authors, much of the critical dynamic was directed outwards, towards the West, rather than towards indigenous African tradition itself and its various practices (cf. 3.5.1).

4.1.4 LAW, ORDER AND GOVERNMENT

Ideas on the sort of government which would best preserve the traditional values of Africa - towards which, as has been indicated in the last paragraph, the attitude of authors was not always consistently critical - varied from author to author. Barashango (1991: 125) and Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 144) both seemed to be arguing that Africa was the primary source of Western civilised and legal government as such, Western values and even the Ten Commandments being borrowed from this. Yet there was no one 'true' system of African government ascertainable in the sources studied, but rather a wide variety of viewpoints.

DEMOCRATIC CONCEPTIONS

Some authors argued for something approaching Western democracy, popular sovereignty and absence of dictatorial rule, as best representing the ideal and traditionally sanctioned government

for Africa. Oguah (1984: 223, 225) argued that the traditional government of the Fanti embodied what he called 'libertarian basicism', and Diop (1990: 162-163) argued that the government of the ancient Nubians, unlike some systems in the Nordic West, was not an aggressive-militaristic one delighting in wars of conquest.

Although Gyekye (1987: 129ff) argued that the ethics of the Akan were secular rather than theistic, other authors grounded democracy in theism. Senghor (1964: 270-271) described traditional government as a 'democratic theocracy' under benign rule by chiefs. Legesse (1994: 331, 338ff etc.) applied to Rastafarianism the concept of 'democharisma', whereby experience of the God within gave every ordinary believer the charism belonging by right to the ruler of his/her people. This belief that could be expressed in the dictum that "Ras Tafari is in every black man and all he has to do is recognise it."

Admittedly, both of these examples showed some Christian influence. Other non-Christianised material relating to consciencism expressed a preference to keep God in the background of political life rather than applying his absolute laws rigidly to concrete situations (Kamalu 1990: 141, 142; Assimeng 1989: 228-230).

MONARCHICAL AND DICTATORIAL CONCEPTIONS

Mention has already been made of the way in which the Afrocentrism of Nkrumah conflicted with democracy in the sense of equal rights for everyone in the community (3.5.3). Also opposed to the democratic trend was the view of Mutwa (s.a.: 257) which viewed Western democracy as unsuitable for Africa and preferred the custom of government by chieftains in the traditional Zulu fashion. Many other authors likewise expressed an admiration for African monarchy, but in many cases the ideals of monarchy or unitary leadership and democracy were combined, the example of Rastafarianism being a case in point (4.1.4). Casual consideration led to the hypothesis that this preference for simultaneous monarchy and democracy was not unrelated to the Zambian and

Zimbabwean idea of a one-party state allegedly espousing democracy or humanism (cf. Wright 1971: 21) - a combination of uncertain workability in practice. Although the Rastafarian example suggested that acknowledgement of a unitary ruler did not have to be oppressive or dictatorial, the difficulty inherent in reconciling unitary rulership and democracy in post-colonial African government was not explored in detail by any of the explicitly post-traditional sources studied.

4.2 ETHICAL IDEAS

The discussions of African values among the authors explored in the present study occasionally went beyond the realms of political preference and of general principles such as those discussed in 4.1. The study found indications of explicit ethical systems claiming to summarise the values of the African tradition; and these had an arguable significance, since they seemed to embody the most lasting and survivable contributions of indigenous or ancient African tradition to the contemporary context. There were three broad varieties of ethical system handed down in the data: Traditional African, Afro-Caribbean and Egyptological.

4.2.1 TRADITIONAL AFRICAN ETHICAL SYSTEMS

African ethical systems in the data tended to be based on traditions indigenous to the continent. Often they were expressed in terms of values rather than rules, as in the system of Uka (1991d: 181, 184ff, 188f, 192). Uka stated that every society required rules concerning sexuality, violence, property and respect for human life, sanctioned by appropriate authority in the society. He characterised African ethics as 'prescriptive, societal, teleological, communitarian and legalistic'. He mentioned the idea of 'taboo' as an important expression of African ethics. Mutwa (1960: 507ff) mentioned some important High Laws of the Bantu such as the obligation to marry, the prohibition of violence against father and mother, and the prohibition of false slurs on a young woman's virginity; the motifs of kinship and filial piety seemed to play an important role in Mutwa's system. Other references to a family-oriented way of life favoured by African tradition, and its

associated ideal of fecundity (cf. 2.5.2), could be found in Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 155ff, 169ff, etc.) and other authors.

As so described by these authors, the African way of life seemed to be based more on deontology than on a contextually adapted system of ethics. This was a curious fact given that other authors attributed pragmatism to the typical African moral attitude (4.2.4). But as has been argued earlier, a rigid law could sometimes arise when the situation to which it was adapted was perpetuated as part of the whole which was tradition (cf. 4.1.1).

4.2.2 AFRO-CARIBBEAN ETHICAL SYSTEMS

THE COMMANDMENTS OF VODOO

Two of the authors (Gonzalez-Wippler 1973: 25; Hood 1990: 53-54) referred to the 'commandments of Voodoo', an Afro-Caribbean system constructed along the lines of the Western Ten Commandments. It could be outlined more or less as follows:

1. Do not steal.
2. Do not kill, except for food or self-defence.
3. Do not practise cannibalism.
4. Do not covet.
5. Do not curse.
6. Honour your father and mother.
7. Accept your destiny.
8. Do not commit suicide or fear death.
9. Teach your children the commandments.
10. Obey the laws of God.

Gonzalez-Wippler added an eleventh commandment: Be at peace.

THE MOSAIC AND VODOO SYSTEMS COMPARED

Comparison with the Western Ten Commandments (Exodus 20: 1-17) revealed that the commandment to worship no God but the Lord was missing, and there was no prohibition of graven images or Sabbath-breaking. Likewise the commandment to refrain from adultery was missing, and the commandment not to covet one's neighbour's wife - which in a Catholic environment, such as formed part of the background to Voodoo (cf. Métraux 1959: 323) would have been taught as a separate commandment from the commandment not to covet one's neighbour's goods (cf. Mambo Press 1994: 573-576, 577-580). The prohibition of false witness was also missing. On the other hand, there were, among the Voodoo commandments, the new features of a prohibition of cannibalism, and of injunctions to accept destiny, to be without fear of death, to teach one's children to behave well, and to obey the laws of God.

POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR DIFFERENCES

Many tentative possibilities could be suggested to account for the similarities and differences in the Western and African systems mentioned above. The Voodoo value-system apparently shared with the West a concern for filial piety - even more so than the West, judging by the commandment on the upbringing of children - and likewise abhorred violence, envy and disrespect for property. The rules on violence however needed clarification and an important loophole in Commandment 2 was plugged by Commandment 3. (One could not justify the killing of a human on nutritional grounds!) The practice of polytheism and voodoo ritual seemed to have led to the substitution in Commandment 10 of general respect for the Supreme Being - implying, in the context of African tradition, observance of ceremonial taboos - for the restrictions on orisha-worship and non-Christian ritual implied by the Mosaic system. The rejection of Western sexual ethics may have been related to polygamy, which in Catholicism would have been understood as

forbidden by the Sixth Commandment (cf. Mambo Press 1984: 539ff, 550). The Yoruba beliefs on destiny or fate (especially in the context of Ifa) required an important series of commandments not emphasised by the Mosaic Decalogue (cf. Abimbola 1984: 111). And finally, the prohibition of false witness, as understood in Catholicism (Mambo Press 1984: 564ff), might have posed problems for a person who pretended outwardly to be a good practising Catholic, while resorting to Voodoo ceremonies in secret (cf. Jahn 1981: 55; Métraux 1959: 345ff).

NEIMARK'S ETHICAL SYSTEM

Neimark (1993: 7, 16, 18, 117) took a less rule-oriented approach to the issue of Yoruba ethics: while accepting the need to observe some taboos, he offered pragmatic justifications for prohibitions of theft, adultery and harm to the environment, and professed a disbelief in absolute moral truth, in as much as the Universe itself was morally neutral. The basic values of the Yoruba-related Voodoo system were reiterated by Neimark (1993: 7) in the form of the Sixteen Principles of Ifa. These outlined an entire worldview, not just a moral system, although they included moral ideas, and could be summarised as follows:

1. There is a single God.
2. There is no devil.
3. Except for your dates of birth and death, there is no event in your life that cannot be foretold and, if necessary, changed.
4. It is your birthright to be happy, successful and fulfilled.
5. You should grow and obtain wisdom.
6. You are reincarnated in your blood-relatives.
7. Heaven is Home and Earth the Market-Place, and we are in constant passage between the two.
8. You are literally part of the universe.
9. You must never initiate harm to another human being.

10. You must never harm the Universe.
11. Your temporal and spiritual capacities must work together.
12. You are born with a specific destiny, to be travelled of your own free will.
13. Our ancestors exist and must be honoured.
14. Sacrifice guarantees success.
15. The orisa live within us.
16. You need have no fear.

Significant resemblances to the Voodoo code and to traditional African ethics existed in the references to destiny, fearlessness, the orisha and the ancestors. Certain of the principles such as Nos. 5, 8, 10, however, seemed to argue a New Age influence (cf. Steyn 1994: 209ff, 213, 229 278ff). As has been said, moral principles omitted from the sixteen truths of Ifa tended to be justified in pragmatic terms by Neimark.

In fact the coexistence of absolute rules with pragmatism was arguably not really absent from the lists of Voodoo commandments in Hood and Gonzalez-Wippler, since the list of rules, though offered as commandments, bore signs of having resulted from a pragmatic adaptation of the Western commandments to an Afro-Caribbean context.

4.2.3 EGYPTOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

The Egyptological systems of ethics found in the data tended to be related to the Ten Virtues of James (1954: 30) which were claimed to be the original virtues underlying Western philosophical systems. They were, respectively: under the heading of Justice, control of thought and control of action; under the heading of Fortitude, steadfastness; under the heading of Temperance, identity with the spiritual life; under the heading of Prudence, having a mission in life and having a call to the priesthood, under the heading of Courage, freedom from resentment under persecution; under the heading of Fidelity, confidence in the teacher, and in one's own ability to

learn; and finally, in a class by itself, the virtue of Preparedness for Initiation. Perhaps the most significant characteristic of this system was its utter lack of apparent relationship with any of the Africanised systems hitherto discussed, apart from an affinity to the concept of 'destiny' under the heading of Prudence: it had a concern with intellect, mysticism, priesthood and asceticism that was utterly absent from the previous systems. Nevertheless this did not prevent certain authors from treating Egyptian intellectually-oriented ethics and traditional African communitarian ethics as complementary (Kamalu 1990: 136ff, 142ff, Maybee 1999: 151, 155ff, 158, 164, 168). After all, intellectual/mystical concern on the one hand, and respect for family and community on the other, were not necessarily logically opposed to one another.

However, a noteworthy feature of this 'Egyptian' component of Africanised ethics was the fact that pragmatic considerations did not come into it as an essential constituent part of the system. The ideals were simply proposed as virtues to be followed, and that appeared to be that. This was a major difference from the standpoints typical of the less Egyptological Africanised systems mentioned above. (Kamalu was an exception here, since he attempted to embrace both pragmatism and the Egyptological virtues. Nevertheless, Egyptological ideas did not occupy centre stage in his discussion of Nkrumah's political policies, judging from the quotes given below in 4.2.4.)

4.2.4 ABSOLUTE LAW OR PRAGMATISM?

It has been mentioned repeatedly in the previous paragraphs that pragmatism formed a significant part of the post-traditionally proposed ethical systems in this study; certain worldviews explored in this study, especially Afro-Caribbean ones, manifested a concern for reconciling absolute rules of morality with pragmatic adaptation, in such a way that definite systems of conduct were drawn up, but concern with efficacy of practice, especially in the realms of religion (cf. De Rosny 1985: 194ff) and politics (Kamalu 1990: 132) led to the structuring of choices in terms of what appeared to work rather than what was right.

IDEALS VS. HISTORY

Kamalu followed Nkrumah's distinction between rules and principles - an approach which had the problematic quality of emptying the 'principles' of much practical significance. Kamalu (1990: 141) said:

"Ideally we would be happy to follow all righteous ethical rules if these were followed universally: for we sense within ourselves that the spirit of these rules is correct. However, when these rules are not obeyed universally, we continue to abide by them, in some cases, at our own peril. History shows this and it is because of this that we must go along with Nkrumah in founding our ethics, not on idealist conceptions of the goodness of human beings, but on our observance of the nature of human beings. Let us take, for example, the commandment 'thou shalt not kill'...In the present reality it is not followed by all and it has become a law which forbids the victim of aggression the right of self-defence; for effective self-defence often involves armed struggle."

When one bore in mind that the violent struggle Kamalu defended here helped establish a dictatorial regime that set aside the democratic rights of some of its citizens (cf. Assimeng 1989: 228-230), a certain problem area seemed to suggest itself. Certainly, some absolute ideals had to sometimes be modified in the face of historical obstacles. But there was all the difference in the world between the attitude of supporting maximal objective rights and duties, defending absolute values, not necessarily to the point of impossibility, but at least to the point of maximum possibility (as in the criteria laid down by the Christian 'just war' ethic), and between appealing to situational difficulties as an excuse for abandoning the ideals of objective law and letting history rage out of control (as in the concept of 'martial law' which simply suspends human rights until the war is over). The former alternative adapted values to situations while trying simultaneously to maximally avoid their compromise, while the latter alternative suspended the values totally while a problematic situation lasted. The viewpoint of Kamalu (1990: 142) seemed to gravitate towards

the latter alternative in the realm of political non-violence. Discussing the reasons why a theist might reject a non-violent ideal in practice, he said:

"He or she may conceive that although God exists as the ground of our reality, God does not exist as a human being and therefore cannot be associated with such human acts as listening, speaking etc. or, in this case, judging, unless this is through human beings themselves. Thus the oppressed, by retaliating in self-defence, have not made the final judgement. For in this sense, God and history may be seen as one in determining the final outcome."

In other words, when situational considerations (e.g. the need for self-defence) prevent the observance of an ideal perfectly, we suspend the ideal, do what seems fit at the time, and let history show who was in the right. Understood in the light of the earlier citation concerning the commandment "Thou shalt not kill", Kamalu's words seemed to require not merely a mitigation of the ideal of non-violence, but rather the suspension of the ideal itself as something useless, in situations where self-defence was needed. Therefore, Kamalu's views seemed to imply, if Nkrumah or any other African dictator was faced with a situation of emergency where perfect non-violence was unobservable, this was no time to worry about better or worse exceptions to the rule. Rather, it was time to take action in virtual independence of the rule itself. A subsequent victory by violence would historically or situationally justify whatever means was chosen to resolve the state of emergency, even if there was no attempt to reduce compromises with democracy. This interpretation of what Kamalu's views implied was in line with Nkrumah's own impatience with "conventional niceties" such as the issue of the democratic rights of political detainees during the times his government seemed to be under threat (Assimeng 1989: 229).

CONSTANCY VS. ADAPTABILITY

Among the Class C authors of the study (1.6), there was no detailed attempt, along the lines of Jewish, Christian (Jesuit) or Islamic casuistry, to lay down any firm moral norms for responding to conditions, in such a way as to minimise the compromising of principles: although, with regard to his own conditionalist system of ethics, Krüger (1995: 119, 299-300) made some attempts in this direction by specifying qualities of the context that might call specifically for this or that change of emphasis, by distinguishing force and authority, and so forth, and otherwise preventing situational considerations from turning ethical decision-making into a total free-for-all.

It appeared that the goals of situational adaptability and constancy were both pursued by authors in the realm of post-traditional Africanised ethics. But at the present stage of development there were not yet, as far as could be gathered from the sources explored in the present study, any fully-formed attempts to specify in detail the way in which pragmatism should or should not be articulated, in such a way, for example, as to rule out the disappearance of human rights during periods of political instability in post-colonial Africa. While only two of the post-colonial thinkers in this study - Nkrumah and Kaunda - both openly proclaimed dictatorial policies and attempted to address religious issues simultaneously (many other African politicians with similar policies were not included in the study owing to the non-religious nature of their work) - there was a noticeable silence or absence of detail in the data concerning the correct response to such dictatorial tendencies in Africanised thought and politics, a silence which has been remarked on several times in the course of this report.

4.3 EXPRESSIONS OF AFRICAN LIFE

The previous paragraphs dealt with the precarious African cultural heritage in so far as it was to be found in laws and abiding attitudes to life. But there were also references in the data to cultural features which were less constant, which allowed more room for personally inspired variation,

and which were threatened in many ways by the intrusion of the West. These included pre-technological adjustment to life, the traditional orally transmitted African knowledge-base, the indigenous art of Africa and the rituals of Africa. It was already mentioned in the first paragraph of this chapter that in post-traditional thought these features were starting to slip away into history, and become more a memory than a living reality.

4.3.1 THE EMOTIONAL LIFE OF RELIGIOUS AFRICANS

Since colonial times (Bailey 1964: 107) it had been noticed that traditional African culture laid emphasis on the emotional side of life, without a Western-like tendency to let the rational approach to life wholly suppress emotion. There were some references to this side of African thought in the data, including Senghor's opinion that emotion was black, in the same way as reason was Hellenic (Senghor 1964: 24). References to emotional life in the data dealt with both positive or constructive emotion, and negative or destructive emotion.

CONSTRUCTIVE EMOTION

The racial theories of Leonard Jeffries (3.5.3) tended to imply that African culture had a monopoly on constructive emotion: but references to love were few in the data and tended to be racially polarised. Somé (1994: 2) criticised the Western God as a God of wrath, and Barashango (1991: 159) criticised white civilisation as a civilisation of hate. But apart from this, there was no attempt to reflect in detail on the nature of 'love'. Ideas of constructive emotion were more likely to be expressed not so much in terms of 'love' as in terms of 'peace', or the absence of fear: the Voodoo commandments illustrated this general attitude (4.2.2), and references to the 'relaxed' and non-frenetic life of the African, lived at nature's pace, could be found in the data (cf. Mutwa s.a.: 32). Kamalu (1990: 117) said that "Life should be lived at nature's pace: it should not be a race to out run [sic] time itself." Somé (1994: 256) spoke of the value of 'the power of quiet' tapped in silent meditation:

"The power of quiet is great. it generates the same feelings in everything it encounters. It vibrates with the cosmic rhythm of oneness. It is everywhere, available to anyone at any time, the force within that makes us stable, trusting and loving. It is contemplation contemplating us. Peace is letting go, returning to the silence because it is too pure to be contained in words. This is why the tree, the stone, the river and the mountain are quiet."

Mystical union or adjustment with nature seemed to lie behind most ideas of constructive emotion in the data. Nevertheless, especially when investigating sources relating to the Voodoo worldview, it was difficult to avoid the impression that the Africanised 'peace', presupposed in certain sources, was an uneasy truce arranged with the violent and hostile forces of the universe. For Kamalu (1990: 15), the apparent harmony of nature was a resultant of mutually opposing forces that waged a bitter conflict behind an appearance of placidity (cf. Kamalu 1990: 15). The uneasiness of such an Africanised idea of peace admittedly was open to a more positive evaluation, i.e. as an element of non-utopian realism in one's adjustment to a world in conflict (cf. Neimark 1993: 36-38).

DESTRUCTIVE EMOTION AND ITS MANAGEMENT

VIOLENCE IN AFRICAN RELIGIOUS LIFE

When it came to the themes of violence and martially oriented virtue, the data was more explicit. Bailey (1964: 113) blamed the whites for inciting to violence, by their oppression, the naturally peace-loving African. But other indications in the data revealed this to be an oversimplification. What Uka (1991d: 181) pointed out, that every society had to have some means of dealing with violent behaviour, indicated that no society could ever be naturally immune to the problems of violence. Indications of martial values and an traditional ethic of violence and warfare were not lacking in the data (Mutwa s.a.: 185; cf. 2.5.2). In a modern context these values were not necessarily abandoned entirely in the name of civilisation, but rather continued in the form of a

support (albeit qualified by teleological considerations) for post-colonial revolutionary violence, linked in the philosophy of consciencism to an awareness of conflict as a basic reality in nature (cf. Kamalu 1990: 15, 141-142). Violence also entered African worldviews in the form of unseen powers dangerous to humankind. De Rosny (1985: 224ff, 248-249) related his own experience of initiation by an African claimant of *ndimisi* or paranormal consciousness, and stated that the principal effect of the ceremony was to open one's eyes to the hidden violence and conflict that raged on in nature, unknown to most humans.

MANAGEMENT OF VIOLENCE

The African universe, as perceived in tradition and assimilated in post-traditional thought, appeared, from the indications of the data, to be not so much a universe of peace as a universe of violence, opposition and conflict. But there was a positive feature to this: in a universe where violence was a present reality, violence had to be managed or dealt with. Thus there were some attempts in the data to find ways to face violence. Chief among these were the cultivation of the virtue of fortitude (4.2.3 etc.) and the refusal to harbour fear. Post-traditional African religion, as manifested in Neimark and other West-African-related authors of the study, sought a religion without the Western sense of fear - not because danger and violence in the universe was denied (cf. Neimark 1993: 80), but because religious resources such as belief in personal immortality (Mutwa s.a.: 185), initiation (De Rosny 1985: 248-249) and the experience of ritual sacrifice (Neimark 1993: 36-38) offered ways to concretely deal with these problems.

4.3.2 THE KNOWLEDGE-BASE OF INDIGENOUS CULTURE

In a more peaceful fashion, the oral tradition of Africa offered a response to the tensions of life in the form of proverbs, myths, and traditional wisdom. While the alphabetic knowledge-base of sub-Saharan African culture made it more difficult to access the resources of this culture than if it were written down (cf. B'Nasseem 1992: 29-30) it was emphasised by many authors that the

unwritten nature of the tradition was a positive quality: various authors indicated that it was a less exploitative form of cultural transmission than writing (Jahn 1981: 186), that it bore witness to a mystical state of consciousness that transcended the letter (Frye 1988: 39) and that it embodied wisdom (Gyekye 1987:11, 13ff) and even revelation (Uka 1991b: 156ff) albeit more of a traditional/experiential/cultural than a scriptural nature.

THE WISDOM AND PHILOSOPHY OF AFRICA

It was frequently repeated that non-literacy was not a barrier to philosophy, cultural richness or rationality. African proverbs were treated as vehicles of wisdom by some sources, especially in the context of Ifa divination (cf. Neimark 1993: 16 etc.), and Mutwa's vast repertoire of what he claimed to be the orally-transmitted traditional history of his people, transcribed in his books, was, according to him, of guaranteed authenticity because ancestral reverence prevented Zulus from lying about their history (Mutwa s.a.: 111). Odera-Oruka (1991) sought for evidence of philosophical sagacity among the representatives of oral wisdom in Africa, and Gyekye (1987) devoted a book to proving that non-literacy did not prevent the Akan people from having their own philosophy of life - although this required a broad understanding of 'philosophy', analogous to James' understanding of philosophy as 'accepted belief' or 'belief worthy of acceptance' (James 1954: 158). For those who, against the standpoint of Osabutey-Aguedze (1980: 80), might require some evidence of civilisation and literacy as proof of philosophical achievement, it was always possible to appeal to the ancestral wisdom of the Africans of Ancient Egypt, following Barashango (1991: 206).

MYTHOLOGY

The role of myths in Africanised cosmology related to the Dogon worldview and similar beliefs has already been commented on. It was frequently pointed out by the sources that myths were not simply a form of mistaken belief about the origin of the world, but were vehicles of symbolic

truth (cf. Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 8, 10, 11, 12) or else of philosophy (Moore 1988: 238; James 1954: 75). Not all authors agreed in equating myth with philosophy (Odera-Oruka 1990: 2; Jahn 1981: 110), however much the two might be related in African thought. Barashango (1981: 18-19) distinguished between aesthetic myths (animal stories), heroic myths, and explanatory myths embodying cosmological truth. Kamalu (1990: 49) quoted a very moving passage by Wade Nobles which viewed myth as a vehicle of truth transcending the medium of the letter and even serving to provide guidance for effecting a link between the seen and unseen world:

"The importance of mythology is of course that it is a form of documentation which transcends the human record in as much as it states truth rather than fact. Myth can be considered as a form of reason and record keeping which goes beyond reason and record keeping by providing an implicit guide for bringing about the fulfilment of the truth it proclaims. Myth connects the invisible order with the visible order. Myth is therefore the form in which the experience of a people has become conscious and as such should be viewed as a carefully constructed symbolic cloak for their abstract thought."

Nobles' explanation of the cognitive import of mythology as a guide to realising in reality what was mythically related blended into an understanding of myths as tools of power, a theme which will be touched on in Chapter 5.

THE DEFENCE OF ANALPHABETISM

THE PROBLEM OF RATIONALISATION

The traditional knowledge base, despite the claims of philosophical potential that were made for it, seemed to be based primarily on cultural reason rather than on critical reason: even though Odera-Oruka (1981: 119, 126, 128) tried to look for critical African viewpoints, most Africanised and Afrocentric approaches in the data refused to confront their tradition in a sceptical or critical

fashion. In the case of African non-literacy, as in the case of polygamy, it was not easy to tell whether any innovative post-traditional thinker would be defending analphabetism, if it were not already a part of African culture, something which could not be subtracted without disfiguring the whole, and yet a source of an embarrassment if unrationalised before the contemporary world. How much of the insights in the data about the advantages of analphabetism were reasonings, and how much were rationalisations? Was it a case of the tailless fox in Aesop's fable telling the other foxes how much better it was to be without a tail?

LOGOCENTRIC MOTIVES FOR ANALPHABETISM

The question of the motives for defending analphabetism which it was difficult to settle purely on the evidence of the sources. To some extent views like that of Frye were based on mystical perspectives, in the Gnostic or Hermetic tradition, that exalted the word above the letter, not because of an attempt to rationalise illiteracy, but because of a conviction that the letter somehow killed the spirit, or diminished religious vitality through formalism. According to Goosen (1994: 83), who used a narrower definition of logocentrism than that given by Beard and Cerf in 3.5.1, logocentrism in any philosophy tended to exalt the living word above the dead letter, this being its distinctive feature. Concern for the living word was certainly a predominant feature in many forms of post-traditional African religiosity (3.3, 5.4.3). Goosen explained the priorities of logocentrism generally in terms of an outlook that gave priority to the internal immediate aspects of reality rather than lifeless external facts. If for 'internal' one substituted 'divinely immanent' or 'participative' it seemed that this Western explanation of logocentrism could be applied also to the context of the knowledge-base of some key trends in post-traditional African logocentrism - particularly those appealing to the Dogon heritage.

Thus it was possible, on the basis of the evidence available, to argue that the analphabetic interest of post-traditional thinkers was not necessarily the rationalisation of a cultural feature that would otherwise be embarrassing: it could be regarded as manifesting an opposition to formalism

in religion and thought, in favour of the living and spoken word. It could even be argued that the integration of indigenously or traditionally inspired alphabetic conceptions of the African knowledge-base with the Hermetic/Gnostic preference for word over letter was an important creative step in the integration of African thought with traditions outside the continent.

4.3.3 ARTISTIC AND RITUAL SELF-EXPRESSION

In addition to prosaic material such as myths and oral tradition, the data contained references to African ritual, music and art. Traditional and modern ideas on the significance of these phenomena tended to blend, and the transitory and inconstant character of these phenomena and their meaning was shown by some sources. Drewal (1992: 8, 9) in particular gave some indications of the influence of modernity on Yoruba ritual - referring to such things as the degree of permission or restriction of the use of cars in travelling to rituals, the use of modern offerings like Gordon's Gin and Beefeaters in the veneration of the ancestors, and the need for Africans travelling abroad to invoke the spirit of the founder of London and so forth, as would have been done when visiting cities on the mainland of Africa. Mutwa's criticism of Christian ritual on account of its formalism (Mutwa s.a.: 250-251), echoed by Neimark's rejection of formalism in general (Neimark 1993: 13) suggested a viewpoint that saw no value in the pure retention of external practices as such. As far as internal orientation is concerned, Mbiti (1975: 2-3 etc.) has provided evidence suggesting that traditional African ritual, though emphasising communal representation by authority-figures, includes some attempt by them to personally contact divine reality (cf. 5.3.3).

RITUALS

A significant portion of the authors in the data who dealt with rituals did so in the context of traditional African religion and its description, and belonged in Class A or B of the classes of literature described in 1.6. Among the Class C authors detailed references to indigenous sub-Saharan African ritual were more difficult to find: Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 44ff, 78, 97, 197ff)

discussed African ritual in detail and even suggested that the Western sacraments were all derived from Africa: he emphasised the role of ritual as a vehicle for meaningful symbolism. Kamalu (1990: 89, 90, 92, 95) likewise referred to ritual in terms of symbolism, this time the aesthetic symbolism of the paradoxical union of noumenal and phenomenal, expressed in such things as the masks which represented ancestors in African ritual. Barashango (1991: 22-24) discussed rituals mainly in the context of the inculturation of Christian ritual (using a black Jesus instead of a white Jesus, for example), but included a reference to the primarily symbolic significance of ritual, and the need not to be tied down by traditional symbolisms but rather to use symbols creatively. This was a further example of post-traditional treatment of rituals as logocentric forms of communication (by Goosen's definition in 4.3.2) rather than as things to be done or performed rather than understood or interpreted, this being a more traditional conception (De Rosny 1985: 197). Such a lack of attachment to externals seemed to suggest a readiness to manipulate or change ancient rituals, perhaps beyond the recognition of less post-traditional Africans.

MAGIC AND RITUAL

The rituals which tended to be treated as living options for the Africanised person by the authors studied were those which had a magical aspect, such as possession rituals, initiation ceremonies, various rites connected with traditional medicine, and ceremonial chanting in the rites of Afro-Caribbean and Yoruba-related religions in the Western hemisphere. (By 'magic' here is meant anything reminiscent of occultism, or tending to grant the individual the use of power for his/her personal ends). Gonzalez Wippler (1973: 147-171) painstakingly recorded every last syllable of several Santeria chants and spells in her discussion of Santeria from a Western occult perspective. There were also some references to sub-Saharan African traditional medicine, ranging from Somé's (1994: 7, 8-9 etc.) and Mutwa's (1960: 497) allusions of the power of such rites, to Chavunduka's (1994: 59, 76-80) detailed description of the types of rite used in Zimbabwean traditional medicine.

SACRIFICE

The ritual of sacrifice or animal slaughter played a significant part in the traditional religion of sub-Saharan Africa, as certain authors indicated (Senghor 1964: 73 etc). Explicit post-traditional references to sacrifice tended to be concentrated in Afro-Caribbean and related movements: the Umbandista religion had discontinued the practice of sacrifice (Ortiz 1989: 94) but other movements with more reverence for the older traditions retained the practice. Neimark (1993: 16, 32-39) gave a detailed defence of the permissibility and necessity of offering animal sacrifice, appealing to the sacrificial motifs of the Cross and so forth in non-African religion, defending the practice against ecological objections (4.1.1), and pointing out that pragmatic considerations or personal need would lead many people to practice sacrifice in emergencies even if they professed not to believe in the practice. Gonzalez-Wippler (1973: 51) and Neimark (1993: 2-3, 37) related how they personally came, in the course of ritual experience, to inwardly adjust and habituate themselves to the violent element of sacrifice. It seemed that where sacrificial ritual was still practised, its significance was not purely symbolic but, like De Rosny's initiation and other strategies of violence-management (4.3.1), the ritual of sacrifice allowed one to face and deal with the concrete phenomena of violence and death, in addition to possessing significance as a form of communion with nature (Senghor 1964: 73).

EGYPTIAN RITUAL

References to the Egyptian rituals tended to concentrate on magical or esoteric rites: the rite most frequently referred to was the Egyptian practice of initiation. Details of Egyptian ritual were not discussed comprehensively, but discussions of the laws of magic which might be thought to underlie them could be found in the data (James 1954: 103 etc.). The use of the Ptah-principle in meditation and creative thought was discussed in detail by Barashango (1991: 166-181, 190), and the practice of praise as a form of positive thinking was mentioned an instance of application of the laws of visualisation, which were related the use of the Ptah principle.

MUSIC, DANCE AND ART

MUSIC AND DANCE

Music and dance were mentioned by certain authors as a significant part of Africa's unique cultural contribution to the world (Senghor 1964: 36; Jahn 1961: 164-169). Trends in indigenous African tradition seemed to view music as an important part of life, as was indicated by its role in the mythology of the Dogon of Mali (Griaule 1965: 68) and in the Zulu myth concerning the origin of the Marimba related by Mutwa (s.a.: 21ff). In less traditional religions one could also point to the role of music in Rastafarian ceremonies (Hood 1990: 94) and even references to the important role of music in Egyptian education (James 1954: 133 etc.). The role of the drum as an instrument not only of communication (Jahn 1961: 188, Kamalu 1990: 97-98) but even of magic was referred to more than once: Mutwa (s.a.: 30-31) called the drum a healing instrument while Somé (1994: 229) said it could be used to facilitate shamanistic journeys in the spirit world.

ART

Treatment of the significance of African art (cf. 2.3.1) was also frequently magical or mystical in nature: Jahn (1961: 157-158, 178) referred to the magical or logocentric elements involved in the creation of an image for magical purposes, and Krüger (1995: 326ff) compared Bushman symbolic paintings with Eastern mandalas. The power inherent in the constructions of images (2.3.1) as well as their significance as recorders of history (cf. Mutwa s.a.: 113) and concretisations of the spiritual world (Kamalu 1990: 90, 92 cf. 4.3.2) was alluded to. Senghor (1964: 279) stated that African art was productive, functional, united, for and by all, and social. A significant problem with African art, though, was the possibility of certain important forms thereof becoming obsolescent or the relic of a dead past, or at least losing its former character, under the impact of religious opposition to idolatry, and also of modernisation (cf. Jahn 1961: 176-177, 177ff, 181ff; Krüger 1995: 330).

4.4 HUMAN ONENESS WITH LIFE

The contribution of the tradition of sub-Saharan Africa to our modern world could be found in the total impact of this tradition, as embodying an ideal of oneness with life or nature, which the West had lost. Mbiti (1991: 20-25) by identifying African religion with a wide variety of phenomena, and locating it in all aspects of life, provides indications of this underlying oneness (cf. 4.1). This indeed seemed to be more likely to survive than the individual forms of tradition ritual and art. Certain references could be found to an ideal of harmony with nature associated with Africa, that went beyond even the contributions of known indigenous tradition: Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 31-32) argued that the Egyptians had the secret of longevity, and Mutwa (s.a.: 7) referred to an ideal of natural harmony practiced by an ancient and extinct people who were the precursors of his (and our) own race. At any rate, a common factor of union of humanity with nature seemed to be alluded to by authors as the key to happiness and well-being offered by the African tradition.

4.5 CONCLUSION

The heritage claimed by the post-traditional African tendencies of the present study, retained by thinkers on the inside in the form of memories and ideas, if not always on the outside in the form of surviving practices and culture, seemed to combine any and every strand of belief and practice that could be accepted as part of Africa. The authors of the study explored sub-Saharan traditions, Egyptian traditions, Afro-Caribbean traditions, and modern forms of thought based on Afrocentric consciousness in the modern context.

Common or widely-instantiated factors in the immediate contextual conditions (in terms of the modified paradigm of 1.4.2) acting on various forms of post-traditional African religious life were an appreciation of the ideal of the integration of religion and life (4.1), of oneness with nature (4.4), of the sacredness of land (4.1.1), of the need for moral ideals especially in the realm of family values (4.1.3, 4.2), of the desirability of peace and justice (cf. 4.2.3, 4.3.1), of the need to

positively value the non-literate tradition of Africa (4.3.2), and of the positive contribution to be expected from music and art with an African background (4.3.3). Logocentrism, defined as a concern for the predominance of the living word over the dead letter, was presupposed in many anti-formalist approaches to ritual and art (4.3.3).

Realms of divergence and disagreement in the data could be indicated as follows:

- Firstly, there was some disagreement over the significance of mythology and ritual (4.3.2, 4.3.3), which was linked to varying understandings of the role of symbolism in the African tradition. It was debated by some authors in what sense African myth could be understood or reinterpreted (if at all) as a vehicle for philosophy - if indeed there was such a thing in African tradition at all (cf. 4.3.2), and the degree to which ritual was to be changed in the name of modernity was a complex question.
- Secondly, the construction of an African moral system had a different series of emphases according to whether an author chose a sub-Saharan African model, an Afro-Caribbean model or an Egyptological model for the construction of an African ethic (4.2.1-3). The theme of a 'system' sometimes existed in tension with a more pragmatic approach to moral guidelines (4.1.1, 4.2.4). This tendency was more noticeable in non-Egyptological sources, and gave rise to the possibility of an uneasy integration of rigid norms with insecure or non-absolute moral foundations. In addition to the tension between absolute norms and relative situations, the theme of violence, tension and conflict as such, present in certain expressions of the African tradition, posed a challenge for those who perceived African tradition as essentially peace-loving (4.3.1).
- Thirdly, the problem of individualism versus socialism came up whenever African authors in the study tried to assimilate or reclaim in the name of Africa what they deemed to be good in the democracy of the West (4.1.2).

- Fourthly, the areas of disagreement were strongest where sensitive political issues were being dealt with in the data, in the interaction of African tradition with Western ideals. Such issues included how far to stress the racial and national attachment implied in 'Afrocentrism' (4.1.1), whether to follow an African-centered or a racially neutral model of government, and how to understand the role of a monarchic leader in governing African society according to traditional guidelines or ideals (4.1.4).

A frequently recurring problem was the tendency to absolutise the relative in the moral sphere, elevating norms originally based on pragmatic adjustment into rigid rules that could in certain circumstances become dictatorial, being founded on uncertain or unstable foundations, and at the same time unquestionable (4.1.1). This tension seemed related to the problem of what to conserve in the religious sphere, and what on the other hand to adapt and/or allow to grow. Both of these corresponded to features to be found in African traditional culture that were viewed positively, namely the concern for upholding domestic and other values without compromise (4.1), and the ability to resolve, cope with and adapt to the tensions of life (4.3.1), thus managing conflict and allowing for the concrete involvement of one's day-to-day problems in religion.

The challenge arguably facing certain post-traditional African thinkers about ethics was to prevent pragmatic or situational considerations from compromising democratic, social, domestic and other values, and at the same time not to attribute absoluteness to non-ultimate things like political struggles, political figures and pragmatic traditions which had outlived their usefulness. As an example of such a tradition, the average Westerner might cite polygamy. As practiced in Africa, polygamy seems to deprive women of full possession of rights to the body of their husband, but not vice versa, and thus has a sexist element which could be viewed as unsuitable for a non-sexist society.

Influential areas in the above disagreements on African values, especially in the political sphere, were the respective significance, in the context of Africa, of individual intelligence and individual

freedom. Many aspects of African tradition tended to apparently militate against these ideals in so far as indigenous traditional society was non-literate and emphasised the community over the individual. Postcolonial African philosophies of government which vilified Western culture, rejected Western logic and ignored the Western concern with freedom and individual initiative, in accordance with African precedents, seemed to confirm that there were trends in traditionally-inspired African thinking which did indeed militate against the culture of learning and freedom (cf. Wright 1971: 20, 21, 23). But there were expounders of post-traditional thought about Africa that were not content to be thought of as heirs to a tradition of stupidity and oppression, as if this were all that Africa had to offer. They sought to present the signs of intelligent thought, philosophy, democracy and positive moral ideals which were to be found in the African and Egyptian traditions, and so ensure that Africa would be remembered by posterity not as a source of savagery but as a contributor to enlightenment.

5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN LIFE

A considerable and distinctive part of post-traditional religion, by definition (1.3.2), was the attempt to introduce innovation into the framework of traditional African religion. These were the strategies in terms of which authors reacted ideologically to, *inter alia*, the given ideological context and the conditions imposed by historical awareness, cosmology, and a desire to fulfil the ideals of fulfilment offered by their tradition. The present study uncovered many indications of innovation in post-traditional African thought, in the realms of intellectuality, mysticism and concepts of magic, which introduced an element of greater complexity and sophistication into the sub-Saharan African or Afro-Caribbean background of the authors, often expanding this background to include ancient Egyptian precedents.

Generally, innovation or development is accepted in contemporary society as a good or positive thing. But the innovations of post-traditional African religiosity indicated by the present study seemed to show innovation as something, at the very least, two-sided. Innovation was a sign of growth, development, sophistication and the broadening of horizons: but it also meant that there were new forms of distraction from concrete reality, that there was more space for rationally indefensible ideas to proliferate, and that there was more room for traditional values to be overthrown for the sake of overthrowing. Since, as has been already indicated, cultural reason tended to prevail over critical reason in the exposition of African religion by post-traditional sources in this study (3.5.1), it followed that there was a tendency not to question the place of such things as magic and witchcraft in the life of traditional culture.

One could certainly argue that the elimination of magic, witchcraft and occultism from post-traditional Africanised thought would kill quite a lot of innovative systematisation and render African thought more dependent on non-African thought for creative resources. Yet, on the other hand, if one retained the magical worldview, then the errors, the distractions, and the aura of

moral suspicion inherent in such a worldview would remain ineradicable so long as the world at large remained as it was.

5.1 INNOVATIVE RESOURCES OF TRADITIONAL CULTURE

The discussion of Africanised intellectual and mystical concern may begin with an exploration of the view hinted at above: that the strategies of intellectual concern and mystical concern in post-traditional Africanised thought, although not apparently developed with as much complexity in sub-Saharan African tradition, were not wholly without precedent in the alphabetic culture of the African continent. Indications did exist that more modern, and undeniably innovative, mysticism and magic in the thought of post-traditional Africanised persons studied seemed to be related in function and content, often explicitly, to the themes of traditional medicine and witchcraft (cf. Kamalu 1990: 75).

5.1.1 TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE AND INTELLECTUAL SPECIALISATION

The practice of traditional medicine seemed to be a possible area of innovative thought in Africa. The formation of a quasi-church of traditional healers in Zimbabwe by Chavunduka (1994: vii, 23) under the name of ZINATHA (Zimbabwean National Association of Traditional Healers) and the attempt to address the question of the relationship of traditional healing with modern medicine (Chavunduka 1994: 41), seemed to indicate a particularly significant complexification of previous African tradition, comparable perhaps to the foundation of a new church in the Christian tradition: and there seemed to be indications that the accepted role of a traditional healer involved in some areas access to useful and privileged knowledge, making the profession of traditional healer, at least in theory, a form of intellectual specialisation (cf. Thorpe 1991: 59). In particular the phenomenon of initial illness, eccentricity, or inexplicable discontent with one's present ordinary

state of life, as the sign of a call to the profession of traditional healer (Thorpe 1983: 105-106), suggested that there might be a connection between the profession of traditional medicine in indigenous African culture, and the state of discontent with the status quo that was an impetus to intellectual development or innovation. Accordingly, it was suspected that traditional medicine was a possible perceived resource for innovative thought in indigenous African tradition.

Yet despite the superior knowledge expected of traditional healers, and especially the new standards of competence expected of them by virtue of membership in ZINATHA, Chavunduka (1994: 23, 32), though maintaining an overall favourable attitude towards traditional healing as head of ZINATHA, indicated that there were problems posed by the anecdotal and, by Western standards, non-scientific fashion in which traditional healers used recipes that mixed true information with irrelevant data.

THE PROBLEM OF ANTI-PROGRESSIVE TENDENCIES

TRADITIONAL VS. MODERN EXPERTISE

Chavunduka (1994: 41) stated that the integration of traditional healing with Western medicine was impossible, owing to the culturally irrelevant, psychologically uninterested and overly analytic approach of Western medicine to patient care which could hamper the efficacy of traditional practice; and in addition the problem existed of who would be subordinate to whom if traditional healers were to collaborate with Western doctors. This view was echoed in a broader context by other authors who, despite interdisciplinary preferences, argued that Western science in general was in some ways unsuited to African culture (Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 185) or implied that it had no absolute claim on African culture for reasons of cultural relativity, as in the definition of science given by Wade Nobles (Kamalu 1990: 28) who said that science "is the formal reconstruction or representation of a people's shared set of systematic and cumulative ideas, beliefs and knowledge (i.e. common sense) stemming from their culture." The point of such

perspectives seemed to be not a blanket hostility to true science but rather a call for an 'appropriate technology' suited to the values and pace of African life, the resources of traditional culture in the sphere of medicine, and the spiritual and religious sensitivity of African tradition. But as De Montellano (1991: 48, 48) indicated, even this sort of stance could cause problems by violating the constitutional separation of religion from public education, by making science and pseudoscience difficult to distinguish, and/or by rendering a pupil less competent to learn or practice science as it was understood in the West.

THE AUTHORITATIVE STATUS OF THE TRADITIONAL HEALER

A possible problem that could be suspected in the rehabilitation of traditional medicine was the fact that it was - or at least appeared to be - transmitted in an authoritarian rather than a scientific way. Recipes or rites were handed down, and there was, in the eyes of the casual Western onlooker, no indication of any attempt to verify or improve much of them. Hence an image of the traditional medicine as a purveyor of superstition arose, which many post-traditional African thinkers attempted to combat by portraying traditional medicine or magical beliefs as an area where Africa was broader of view than the science of the West. Despite the traditional healer Mutwa's protestations that African tradition was immutable (Mutwa s.a.: 249), there still seemed to be a widespread opinion in the data that African traditional medicine was a sphere where African culture knew more than the scientists of the West, which arguably implied that this was perceived as a sphere of superior quasi-scientific progress or competence (cf. Mutwa s.a.: 177-178; Iwuagwu 1991: 281). Nevertheless no well-known source detailing a fully scientific explanatory overview of all aspects of the practice of traditional medicine seemed to be available at the time of the present research, a sign of how far traditional medicine, as presently practised by the traditional healers, still had to go in order to achieve intellectual recognition in contemporary society.

THE BASIS OF TRADITIONAL HEALING

On the exact nature of traditional healing, and the reason for its efficacy, certain of the sources of the data were silent, preferring just to allude to the recipes or rites without explaining how they worked or if they could be changed, or indeed whether any perspectives other than that of traditional medicine needed to be considered (cf. De Rosny 1985: 198). Yet there were some indications that within African tradition the practice of an individual medical practitioner could be evaluated (De Rosny 1985: 108) as better or worse, fraudulent or genuine. As far as Africanised thought and religion in the Western hemisphere was concerned, indications of an attempt to explain the efficacy of African-derived medicine, especially herbal remedies, were found in the post-traditional esotericised thought of Gonzalez-Wippler (1973: 88), who by stressing the theme of 'nature' as a source of the power in herbal remedies, implied that unity of a mystical sort with the earth or nature was the key to the efficacy of 'natural' medicine (cf. Gonzalez-Wippler 1973: 88). The theory of Barashango (1991: 32, 92, 167), that the earth was a source of knowledge for black people, seemed to echo this, by implying that knowledge, which he deemed an influence relevant to well-being, was derived from contact with nature. Several authors indicated that the laws of magic formulated by Frazer could provide a key to understanding how African magic worked (cf. Kamalu 1990: 81) - and on this basis one could argue that the 'nature-connection' theory of the efficacy of traditional medicine was an instance of the law of contagion (5.5.2).

THE PROBLEM OF THE ESOTERIC EXPLANATION OF AFRICAN MAGIC

Was the sort of mystical explanation of African magic found in esotericists like Gonzalez-Wippler proper science? Certainly an esoteric explanation of magic in terms of laws tended to simplify and streamline the concepts thereof, creating an internally consistent system which, in the eyes of the uninitiated lay-person impressed by the trappings of apparent intellectuality, could create the impression that, at last, magic was now on an equal footing with systematic science. But when one asked how the laws were deduced, their basis, as far as could be gathered from the sources

studied, appeared to have more to do with tradition and the authority of magicians and mystics than with reason and publicly repeatable experimentation. Thus, the laws of the sophisticated Africanised esotericisms in the data seemed to be hardly on firmer ground than the recipes of analphabetic traditional medicine in sub-Saharan Africa. The laws of 'patterning' found in certain African cosmologies (2.6.2) and in the esoteric treatment of Africanised thought by Gonzalez-Wippler (1973: 122) offered an element alien to contemporary Western science, reminiscent *inter alia* of the astrological reasoning, in a work published shortly after the death of Copernicus in the sixteenth century, that linked the seven openings in the head to the seven planets in the solar system (Armitage 1956: 70).

5.1.2 WITCHCRAFT

Another source of innovation in African tradition, in addition to herbal or other medicine, was related to witchcraft or belief in it. The detailed study by Geschiere (1997: 2, 7 etc.) on the relationship of witchcraft to politics made witchcraft essentially an innovative or alternative trend in the traditional religion of Africa, and thus brought all such tendencies under the definition of 'post-traditional religion' proposed in this study. And indeed, it would not be easily defensible to include Africanised Hermetism and other forms of thought influenced by Western occultism in this study without also giving some attention to indigenous forms of African occultism.

CAN ONE BELIEVE IN WITCHES?

Sources were included in the study which were sceptical of magic or witchcraft and its verifiability: Odera-Orika (1991: 126) recorded a perspective which professed disbelief in such things even from a standpoint related to indigenous traditional religion. Bodunrin (1995: 374, 376, 377, 383), apart from alluding to the lack of practical demonstrations of witchcraft (except in the subjective realm of perceived or 'virtual' reality), raised the difficulty that even if witchcraft worked, the explanation thereof by the practitioner on the basis of mystical intuition or gnosis would not

necessarily be publicly meaningful. These arguments were formulated in the context of a reply to Oluwole (1995: 360) who had, in a positive treatment of witchcraft-belief, referred *inter alia* to its virtual reality for believers. Chavunduka (1994: 93-94, 98-99, 104) also dealt with this question, pointing out that there were individuals who had confessed to being witches, some of them high-status members of the community, thus ruling out desire for higher social status as an explanation for false confession. He ended up by pointing out that the problem of witches could not be solved by denying their existence, any more than a doctor could get rid of malaria by saying that there was no such thing.

WHAT DO WITCHES BELIEVE IN?

The problem of what a witch was constituted a very difficult question. Chavunduka (1994: 87, 99-100) pointed out that many accusations of witchcraft were more about identifying disruptive social influences than making extraordinary claims, and that 'witchcraft' could involve cannibalism or the making of poisons (which were natural and verifiable activities) as well as less verifiable activities such as riding around on hyenas in the middle of the night etc. Thus 'witches' of some sort did exist, although their claims of power might be questionable. Many sources treated witches more as evil powers than as people whose beliefs were described in any detail (2.5.3) so it was difficult to find out what exactly a self-proclaimed African or Afro-Caribbean witch's personal religion would consist of. What was sought by witchcraft seemed to be, *inter alia*, the securing of one's personal ends in a pragmatic fashion, in ways not deemed normal by society at large (Gonzalez Wippler 1973: 9; Assimeng 1988: 180-188) and/or the disruption of the community by means of bad medicine (Chavunduka 1994: 99-100), or the alienation of an invisible part of a person's self (De Rosny 1985: 59 cf. Somé 1994: 223), or possession by an evil power. The common factor in the practices of witchcraft described in the data seemed to be the disruption or challenge of the surrounding expressions of order, often in 'evil' ways but sometimes in a benign but innovative fashion, as Assimeng (1988: 180ff) indicated. Not all 'witches' deliberately intended to propagate evil in the world.

5.2 AFRICAN WAYS OF KNOWLEDGE

The question of the credibility of witchcraft raised above (5.1.2) touched on an important issue, that of knowledge. Many of the sources devoted some attention to the related themes of philosophical epistemology, education and intellectual advancement, scientific activity, and mystical or religious knowledge. All of these were undeniably relevant to strategies for developing the thought of African tradition beyond its beginnings.

5.2.1 SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

EMPIRICISM AND PRAGMATISM

Most of the authors of the study accepted experience, or empirical evidence, as a valid basis for knowledge. Many indeed stressed the need for grounding even religious claims on empirical grounds, a stance which often led to the replacement of transcendental god-concepts by more immanent pantheistic or panentheistic ideas of divinity (Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 77; Krüger 1995: 135) and to pragmatism or down-to-earthness in religion and morality rather than a purely spiritual concept of religious and moral life (Kamalu 1990: 141; James 1954: 153, 162). Wiredu (1996: 43), an atheist, argued that such a material orientation was, at least in the case of the Akan, part of a spatial or quasi-material concept of being, built into the very structure of their language.

THE QUALIFICATION OF EMPIRICISM

The empiricism of the post-traditional African thinker, however, did not apparently in all cases exclude such things as extrasensory experience (De Rosny 1985: 35) or religious experience (Barashango 1991: 204). An openness to such things often went hand in hand with a rejection of Western science (cf. Somé 1994: 206-209) and rationalism (Senghor 1964: 38), and claims about

the paranormal could not be easily integrated with a rigid and critical demand for empirical evidence such as that expressed by Bodunrin (1995: 376, 380-381). Thus, there could be found in the data references to viewpoints that possessed an interest in the empirical but did not practice rigid empirical induction or critical analysis of empirical data - for example, a belief in the pragmatic efficacy of medicine, witchcraft, or the spiritual world which did not however rigidly distinguish between virtual and objective reality, carry out rigid scientific analyses of traditional medicine, etc. (cf. Somé 1994: 230, 253; Jahn 1961: 128). None of this, however, contraindicated the presence of some down-to-earth wisdom in the African worldview (4.3.2). Such wisdom has been examined in detail by Wanjohi (1997: 14, 49ff) in his work on the concept of *kihooto* (reason) in Gikuyu proverbs.

THE TRANSCENDENCE OF THE EMPIRICAL

There were some viewpoints in the data which did not restrict knowledge to the directly apprehended empirical, or the rational implications thereof. Apart of course from the appeal to the authority of the experience of the ancestors (cf. 4.3.2), there could be found sources that appealed to *a priori* intuition as a source of knowledge.

Kamalu (1990: 37-38, 50-52, 105) regarded the phenomenal world as knowable only in relation to its opposite, the noumenal world, whose negative qualities of infinity, continuity and the lack of phenomenal being were as knowable as empirical reality, and constituted its inalienable ground, and the source of philosophical ideas of transcendence. The pairing of the noumenal and phenomenal in various contexts gave rise to ideas whose conception arose simultaneously with perception and therefore were quasi-innate. Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 112-113) and Oguah (1984: 219) also professed to a belief in what amounted to 'a priori' intuitive knowledge.

KRÜGER'S COSMOLOGY AND TRANSCENDENT MEANING

THE PROPERTIES OF THE GESTALT-PERCEPTION

An interesting tendency analogous to the mixture of empirical orientation and transcendental meaning in the above African authors could be found in the cosmology of Krüger. Krüger (1995: 30) professed to reject the necessity of transcendental discourse in the name of radical empiricism; yet his concept of the universe as a meaningful Gestalt had the interesting quality of being neither a directly apprehended empirical reality - for, as he said, the Totality could not be overseen on account of human limitation (Krüger 1995: 23) - nor something induced or deduced from the apprehension of oneself or another, since he indicated that the idea of the world as a meaningful Gestalt was given to us by virtue of our being in the world, and therefore not inferred a posteriori (Krüger 1995: 151). Thus, it was not apparently an empirical idea at all, if by 'empirical' we meant that which was either directly apprehended in experience or induced or deduced from such apprehension. It had grounds in experience, in so far as we could experience ourselves as unable to reject the idea of the meaningful Gestalt or 'whole' (cf. Krüger 1995: 151), and in that sense the idea seemed justifiable: for what could not be rejected had to be accepted. But in so accepting the idea of the universe as a meaningful Gestalt Krüger appeared to have, like Kamalu and Osabutey-Aguedze, taken a leap out of the initially empirical world into the transcendental: by widening the range of discourse to include, explicitly and implicitly, not only 'experience of' but 'experience about' the truth of an idea (e.g. the experience that such-and-such a postulate, such as the idea of the world as a meaningful Gestalt, could not be rejected [Krüger 1995: 151]), Krüger's thought in effect hypothetically allowed some transcendental intuition of meaning to become part of discourse based on experience, in so far as a speculative idea could be 'experienced' as irrejectible. (By 'speculative' here is meant 'not directly apprehended in concrete experience or inferred from such apprehension': the term as used here does *not* necessarily imply, in a pejorative sense, the irrelevance or concrete unreality of what is postulated, especially when what is postulated is the actual Universe itself).

THE ATTEMPT AT TRANSCENDENTAL SILENCING

Krüger (1995: 129) did try to preserve the ideals of radical empiricism by insisting that the transcendental integration of the Totality so constructed had to be simultaneously deconstructed or unsaid: thus the impact of such transcendental meaning was offset by a simultaneous attempt to unsay this meaning, with a result that the speculation was, at least in theory, ultimately silenced. Nevertheless since the integrating process, by his own admission, could not be wholly made to cease in the course of ordinary human life, the unsaying of the ultimate integration of the Totality could never in practice become absolutely final in the lifetime of the human. The integration, having been unsaid, could not be abandoned indefinitely, so nothing seemed left for the empirically problematic Gestalt-idea, save to simply and involuntarily re-establish itself in our consciousness, defying all subsequent efforts to finally abolish it. And thus the opening for transcendental meaning in the Gestalt-idea, despite Krüger's efforts to firmly establish an empiricism opposed to transcendental description, still remained, owing to the practical impossibility of finally and definitively unsaying the given or non-inferential introspectively experienced and generated idea of an empirically unapprehended Gestalt/Totality.

One *could* reject certain modes of the Totality, certainly, by, for example, replacing a static/fixed with a dynamic cosmology: but it appeared that the basic and, in a sense, transcendental construction of 'cosmology' as such, the postulation that some all-embracing whole existed, regardless of whether we perceived it as unchanging essence or as interrelated process or whatever, could not be finally made to cease, owing to the way the human mind necessarily needed to work.

INCLUSIVENESS IN EPISTEMOLOGY

By means of the cosmological articulation outlined in the previous paragraphs, Krüger in effect ended up developing a worldview similar in certain respects to those of the African authors

Osabutey-Aguedze and Kamalu, which was empirically oriented yet had some room left for transcendental meaning: intuition as 'experience about' a belief could be seen as somehow related to the more empirical 'experience of' something. This seemed to indicate that an inclusive dimension of sorts formed in effect part of certain forms of post-traditional African epistemology, as of cosmology; and the thought of Krüger and post-traditional Africanised religion could be compared or related in terms of a shared inclusive tendency in epistemology as well as Christology or cosmology (cf. 2.2.4, 3.5.2).

5.2.2 INTELLECTUAL AND SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT

A particularly distinctive feature of post-traditional Africanised thought as manifested in the sources was the concern with intellectual advancement and development, and the roles to be played by education and science in the exploration of the traditional African religious heritage. Although this sort of intellectual development did not always presuppose Western models of science or philosophy, it had the effect in many authors of introducing an element of intellectual sophistication into the aims and methods of Africanised religion. Yet the Western goals of objectivity and scepticism were not fully accepted by all authors, particularly Kamalu (1990: 27, 75) who disagreed with the ideas that science was culturally neutral and that African magic could be shown by the same to be unworthy of serious consideration.

THE CULTURE OF LEARNING

Several authors were concerned to stress the importance of learning and knowledge for the African. Barashango (1991: 5-6) vigorously opposed the misconception that learning and knowledge were 'whitey's thing [sic]' and Diop (1980: 1) stressed the need to study history, especially from an Afrocentric point of view, in order for Africans to gain the historical self-perception necessary for the consolidation of a multinational state. Somé (1994: 5) claimed that his traditional initiation made it easy for him to assimilate his lessons, and Frye (1988: 36)

suggested that left-brained expertise was present in African thought as well as right-brained expertise, citing Diop as a left-brained expert. It seemed to be implied by these authors that Africanised ways of thought were not necessarily an obstacle to the assimilation of Western thought - although De Montellano disputed this (3.5.3) and Barashango (1991: 203) argued that the West (at least in the sphere of mystical symbolism) could never understand Africa, however much Africa was able to understand the West. Jahn's anticipation of an African Renaissance (Jahn 1961: 12, 16-17) seemed reminiscent of a general post-traditional tendency to greater sophistication in thought about Africa, manifested in the works of many of the authors studied.

EDUCATION

Many authors combined with their esteem for black involvement in intellectual activity a new program for black education. Iwuagwu (1991: 257-268) outlined a system for the education of African youth based on traditional precedents, which shared with other models in the data a desire to include paranormal phenomena and religion with science as objects of education (cf. Somé 1994: 226), a preference for Africanised history over an exclusively Western history syllabus (cf. Diop 1980: 1), and a holistic and multidimensional goal of educational development (Kamalu 1990: 158). Certain authors referred to the Trivium and Quadrivium of Greco-Roman and medieval education, comprising grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music, as an authentic Egyptian product (cf. James 1954: 131-133) and seemed to interpret these disciplines in a similar holistic-mystical fashion to the authors cited above, but this time in the context of purported ancient Egyptian precedents for education and priestly training, based on the works of Hermes Trismegistus.

SCIENCE

HUMANISTIC REDEFINITION

As has already been mentioned (5.1.1) many authors sought to redefine science in interdisciplinary terms, in such a way as to Africanise it and/or integrate it with Africanised thought about magic and religion. The resultant African definitions of science, especially when viewed as the content of education, tended to have a definite bias in favour of psychology and humanistic disciplines, the opposite of the apparent bias in Western high-school curricula in favour of physics and the natural sciences. This was reminiscent of Mutwa's view that Westerners were more familiar than Africans with physics and technology, but less acquainted with psychology, especially in the paranormal sphere (Mutwa s.a.: 173, 177ff). Both Mutwa (1960: 496) and Somé (1994: 9) were confident that the African tradition, if fully used, could lead to superior human accomplishment that rivalled the achievements to date of Western science. Somé went so far as to suggest that African occult traditions, if put to use, could help make the science fiction of the West into a concrete reality.

USE OF WESTERN SCIENCE

A lot of this was very difficult for the casual observer to harmonise with Western science at least as popularly understood. Yet many African authors were quite happy to assimilate and discuss various aspects of the Western scientific heritage. Barashango (1991: xii) did not see religious creation and evolution as contradictory, and Kamalu (1990: 59-61) was happy to discuss philosophical issues involved in Western mathematics (though not going as far as explicitly accepting numerology, like some authors [Mutwa 1960: 549ff; cf. Gonzalez-Wippler 1973: 40ff]). Frye (1988: 58-59, 61, 67-69) devoted some attention to the mystical implications of quantum physics. Western psychology and psychotherapy were alluded to in the use of the Jungian concept of archetypes (cf. 2.3.3), and in the use, in the discussion of African medicine, of the

concept of the placebo (cf. Kamalu 1990: 82). If 'psychology' were interpreted in a broad sense to include the popular psychology of self-help literature, one could also point to the themes of positive thinking and visualisation in Barashango (1991: 168, 190). Post-traditional Africanised science did not apparently have to exclude from itself absolutely everything that the West had to offer.

DISCOVERY VS. CREATION

Geschiere (1987: 229) related African witchcraft-belief to the practice of social science, indicating that both involved a special model of discourse whose links to reality were debatable. A related problem to the one raised by Geschiere was the degree to which scientific research tended to virtually create its own objects rather than discovering them; the quality of 'creating one's own reality' was a feature present in much of the Africanised science and thought explored in this study. The reality discovered by science was in cosmological terms conceived by Barashango (1991: 138ff) as a reality generated by the *Logos*, via a process into which our own thought and visualisation could enter. Among other authors, the worlds created by art or the imagination were not always rigidly separated from the realm of objective reality where science could be presumed to operate (cf. Somé 1994: 8, 230, 253, Senghor 1964: 280). An African form of science which included magic, offered theoretically the means of re-creating the universe rather than simply describing it; and the prioritisation of life-transformation over the achievement of objectivity - although the latter goal of science was not absolutely ignored (cf. Barashango 1991: xiii) - was possibly a major area of difference between the post-traditional Africanised science explored in this study and the objectively oriented science of the West. Whether what was offered in theory could be achieved in practice was of course a totally different question altogether, which lay outside the scope of the present research (1.4.2).

5.3 THE GAINING OF MYSTICAL KNOWLEDGE

The Africanised ideas of science and knowledge found in the data, linked as they frequently were with religion, magic and mysticism, were not necessarily restricted to the ordinary five senses of Western thought; authors frequently made some room for extraordinary or extrasensory states of consciousness. De Rosny (1985: 224ff, 248) described his own attempts to make sense of the concept of *ndimsi* by, inter alia, undergoing a special traditional ceremony which would 'open' his 'eyes'. Keita (1984: 80) stressed the value which Egyptians placed on the intuitive faculty of the 'Nous'. The Rastafarians (Legesse 1984: 331-332) appealed to an intuitive experience of the God within. The melanin scholars (De Montellano 1992: 163) appealed to the superior forms of consciousness made available by melanin. In various ways, belief in a form of knowledge transcending ordinary consciousness was articulated by the post-traditional African authors studied in the present research.

5.3.1 ALTERNATIVE STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

METHODS FOR ACHIEVING EXTRAORDINARY MODES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Various modes of accessing this extraordinary mode of consciousness were proposed. Concerning the physiological basis of this consciousness there was no single answer. One author appealed to the melanin of the pineal gland (Barashango 1991: 6, 170 cf. De Montellano 1992: 163), another author to the powers of the brain, particularly the right brain and the 'reptile brain' (Frye 1988: 7, 37-39, 42), another to the rhythmic activity of the body which could be expected to holistically affect one's state of consciousness (Krüger 1995: 317ff, 321-322). As to the means of activating this consciousness, commonly proposed methods included: the strategy of looking for this awareness in one's inner self, through meditation (Somé 1994: 256, 287, Barashango 1991: 166, 170); the induction of trance-states or altered states of consciousness through dances (Krüger 1995: 321), music (Somé 1994: 229), possession-ceremonies (Ortiz 1989: 95), and

herbal medicine (Rosny 1985: 244); the strengthening of one's unity with nature (Gonzalez-Wippler 1973: 146; Kaboha 1992: 70); the loosening of the body's attachments to the ordinary world (Somé 1994: 226); and the choosing of a new way of seeing the world, generally one more non-rational or surrealistic (Senghor 1984: 24, 70-71, 280; Jahn 1961: 140) and less 'scientific' (Somé 1994: 208-209) than the form of consciousness preferred by the West. De Rosny (1985: 243) seemed to regard *ndimsi* as a new way of seeing the world, which sensitised one to the conflicts in nature that raged on under the superficial appearance of placidity or peace. These means of consciousness raising were not necessarily mutually exclusive and often more than one of them was recommended by the same author. They seemed to have in common the characteristic of trying to alter or tamper with the ordinary relation of consciousness to nature, whether by mental exercises, or by the ingestion of natural substances (De Rosny 1985: 244 cf. Gonzalez-Wippler 1973: 88), or by ceremonially generated experiences.

EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCE VS. SCIENCE

Did such experiences place the occult, or the practice of Africanised magic, on a scientific footing that could be assured of worldwide recognition? The arguments of Bodunrin (5.1.2) suggested that they did not: the experiences were perhaps virtually real to those who had them, but their transformative impact and publicly repeatable verifiability as yet fell short of what the average Western person had learnt to expect from science. Where such experiences could contribute to the development of thought, was basically in challenging the monopoly over knowledge claimed by certain types of science, since, while conventional science seemingly could not make sense of, or derive tangible and verifiable benefits from, claims of paranormal experience, for the same reasons it could not explain it fully as a feature of human life. There were things outside the alleged omniscience of science, and the idea of Tibetan Buddhism that 'a philosophy comprehensive enough to embrace the whole of knowledge is indispensable' (Schumacher 1977: 8), while possibly leading to a philosophical reductionism that not all religions would agree with, nevertheless pointed out the dangers of a quantitative-scientific reductionism, and to that extent

supported the anti-quantitativist and anti-natural-scientific tendencies of the new 'African science' proposed by certain post-traditional Africanised authors.

5.3.2 ESOTERIC TRAINING

Where could one learn to achieve altered states of consciousness? Many authors mentioned that ceremonial participation (especially in traditional initiation ceremonies) was an important source of knowledge about such things (Somé 1994: 228 etc.): the traditional initiation was treated by Senghor (1964:271) as a means of facilitating adjustment to society, following the precedent of Western anthropology, but most authors, especially exponents of post-traditional Africanised mysticism, treated initiation as primarily a means of transmitting secret knowledge. More Egyptologically inclined authors referred to the mystical initiations of ancient Egypt - which even Jesus underwent, according to Barashango (1991: 168) - and to the esotericism of the Hermetic tradition. Another source of occult knowledge was mythology: according to Neimark (1993: 98) African myths had to be taken literally whenever they described the existence of an occult power: and Nobles (Kamalu 1990: 49) seemed to imply that mythology, by bypassing the state of ordinary knowledge, expressed the content of a supernormal state of consciousness and provided a guide for effecting the realities which it referred to. The common element in all these sources was tradition: it was in the African (or Egyptian) tradition, however conceived or demarcated, that one had to look for answers to mystical questions.

5.3.3 THE POSSESSORS OF MYSTICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

THE SHAMAN AND THE MAGUS

Two of the authors (Frye 1988: xiii, 44; Gonzalez-Wippler 1973: 4) referred to the work of Carlos Castaneda, who was known for his quasi-anthropological accounts - of debated authenticity (Chandler 1988: 116) - concerning his own instruction by a Yaqui sorcerer, Don Juan Matus, who

taught him how to achieve paranormal consciousness through hallucinogens and other methods. Don Juan Matus represented the motif, widespread in primal religion, of the Shaman, a specially appointed practitioner of rituals or other processes involving extraordinary consciousness - the custodian, so to speak, of a tradition involving such consciousness such as was mentioned in 5.3.2. According to Steyn (1994: 67-68) the motif of Shaman was related to that of the Magus, who was in effect the Shaman's civilised counterpart. The data contained instances both of a theme related to the Shaman motif, in the form of the Traditional Healer (5.1.1 cf. Thorpe 1993: ix), and a theme related to the Magus motif, in the form of the African Priest who has received special training. Such a priesthood could be found mentioned in connection with both Yoruba religion and Egyptian religion (cf. James 1954: 131ff; Neimark 1993: 21-22 etc.).

OTHER FORMS OF RELIGIOUS PERSONAGE

Other motifs which seemed to occupy an intermediary position between the shaman and the mystically initiated priest were the ordinary or traditional African priest, performing the function of intermediary between the spirit world and the physical world (Senghor 1964: 73), the Rastafarian prophet who spoke by means of an internal demo-charismatic intuition (Legesse 1994: 338ff) and the role of 'Master of Spiritualism' assigned to Jesus by the Umbandista religion (McGregor 1966: 177). The role of Jesus in Umbanda could be alternatively conceived as a Messianic theme totally different from the concepts of shaman, magus, or anything between them, although in a pantheistic or panentheistic worldview magical personages and divinely indwelt persons could not be sharply separated. The common factor linking quasi-shamans and quasi-magi with the other categories of religious personage mentioned in this paragraph appeared to be that of personal contact with a world beyond ordinary experience, and association with a tradition of such contact. Supernormal consciousness or contact seemed to imply in the post-traditional African thought of the sources of this study, as elsewhere, the presence or possibility of individuals who were experts in the use of such consciousness. This underlined the fact that occult knowledge, in an

African context and elsewhere, tended to rely on tradition and authority rather than critical investigation or experimentation.

5.3.4 DIVINATION

There were references in the data to the possibility of knowledge through divination, particularly the Ifa system of Yoruba religion (Neimark 1993: 15). This form of knowledge did not appear at first sight to involve the induction of an unusual state of consciousness but had more the character of a quasi-science: Neimark (1993: 21) called it a spiritual representation of Einstein's theory of relativity. Nevertheless the binary structure underlying the Ifa system of divination (2.5.3) - similar to the binary patterns in the Shona hakata system (Thorpe 1993: 95) - was related to the theme of awareness of conflict which was influential in the initiatory experiences of De Rosny (1985: 248) and Mutwa (s.a.: 134). Thus it could be suspected that Ifa divination was linked with the paranormal experiences described in 5.3.1 in some way, seeking a contact with the same sort of reality, even though it did not involve an extraordinary observable state of consciousness.

5.4 MAGIC

As well as extraordinary states of consciousness, several authors dealt with the themes of magic and the paranormal, especially in the context of traditional African beliefs and rituals. Some authors rejected the term 'magic' as a description of African beliefs, Chavunduka (1994: 9) defining it as 'the art of attaining mysterious results by tricks' as when a rabbit was taken out of a hat. A source cited by De Montellano (1991: 47) rejected the term 'magic' in favour of 'psychoenergetics' as a description of African utilisation of occult power. Rastafarianism forbade 'magic' altogether (Turner 1980: 54). But apart from these sources, most authors accepted that the term 'magic' could be applied in a positive sense to the beliefs of sub-Saharan Africa and Egypt. 'Magic' was accepted by many post-traditional authors as being neither unscientific nor

inherently evil, and some sources readily accepted as valid the content of both Western and Africanised esotericism or occultism. Given that innovative or traditionally unbound thought was associated with the practice of what was called magic or witchcraft, it was perhaps understandable that many of the sources consulted in this study would deal with these themes (5.1.1, 5.1.2).

5.4.1 THE SCIENCE OF THE OCCULT

The origin of magic was, according to some vitalist (and French-speaking) authors, traceable to a life-force or the equivalent which was the source of magical efficacy (cf. Maquet 1972: 84 etc.). Related to this explanation was the Hermetic and esoteric idea that magic was an exploitation of the interconnectedness of nature itself (James 1954: 76; Gonzalez-Wippler 1973: 146). Several authors gave lists of 'laws' or principles underlying their mystical worldview: often these were more like confessional statements than explanations of the way magic worked (cf. De Montellano 1991: 47) but occasionally one found lists of actual laws purporting to systematise the working of magic. Kamalu (1990: 81-82) seemed fairly confident that magical hypotheses could in the right sort of thought-system acquire a scientific character:

"Whether one sees these principles of magic as valid or not; or as being identical, in some aspects, with Newton's laws or not, one can see from the comparisons made that they are scientific principles in as much as they leave themselves open to proof or disproof as well as being logically feasible. One could well imagine such laws being scientifically established in some alternative 'Aristotelian' system."

Certain problems, however, in the concession of a 'scientific' status to magic have already been touched on (5.1.1).

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF MAGIC

According to Eliphaz Lévi, as cited by Senghor (1964: 262), there was only one basic law of magic, namely that the visible manifested the invisible, the perfect word manifested the unseen vital force. This statement included a theme relating to *correspondence* in the reflection of the seen by the unseen, and another theme relating to *contact*, in the connection of the magic word with the force behind it. These two themes were echoed in the magical laws of Frazer, as cited and interpreted by Kamalu (1990: 81), namely the Law of Sympathy, according to which a given action would produce a similar (or equal and opposite) reaction, and the Law of Contagion, according to which objects once in contact retained their relatedness and interdependence. By means of these laws a human act could be, according to a magical worldview, empowered to have the same effect on the world as a natural cause, as in Lévi-Strauss' definition of 'magic' (Senghor 1964: 267).

LISTS OF MAGICAL LAWS

More detailed lists of laws than those mentioned above were given by Frye (1988: 58ff) and Barashango (1991: 167ff). Barashango mentioned, in his description of the workings of the Ptah principle, that the spiritual power of the African was facilitated by contact with the earth, and by the fact of his/her belonging to the 'Sun people' (whose togetherness was related to Ptah's attribute as source of Order), and required the integration of male and female powers. He also stressed that visualisation and the law of karma were influential in the use of magical power. Frye was more explicitly Hermetic in listing the laws of magic, and included in these laws the principles of mentalist vitalism, rhythm and the 'panta rhei' - as well as the well known Hermetic principle ('as above, so below'), and the laws of polarity, gender, and monistic quantum-occasionalist cause and effect. In each of these cases the laws cited could be grouped into two categories: those describing the sources of power and vitality and the forms of interrelatedness underlying magic, thereby constituting virtual explications of the Law of Contagion, and those describing

processes of emergent replication and 'equal and opposite reaction' which constituted virtual explications of the Law of Similarity. It was in fact found that most of the facts and beliefs about magic in the data could be related to this twofold scheme, and that this scheme provoked various insights concerning the idea and attempted practice of 'magic' itself in post-traditional Africa and elsewhere.

5.4.2 THE LAW OF CONTAGION: POWER SOURCES

Many sources were in agreement that magical power depended on some sort of union or contact. Union with Nature was an important source of power indicated by vitalist philosophy and implied by Hermetism in its relation of magical efficacy to the interconnectedness of the world's parts (cf. Hutin 1962: 80-61). As James (1954: 76) put it:

"The qualities or attributes of entities, human or divine, are distributed throughout their various parts, and contact with such entities releases these qualities."

The theme of union with nature was Afrocentrised by Barashango (1991: 6, 166, 167, 171) in his stress on the powers inherent in melanin, the land of Africa, and the spirit of the black people. Related to union with nature (and indeed non-different from it, if one accepted the vitalist premise) was the use of the inner self as a power source, to be accessed through silent meditation (Somé 1994: 258). Some sources related the power of the orisha to the inner self as a source of power (Gonzalez-Wippler 1973: 85; Neimark 1993: 7). Geschiere (1997: 7ff) and Barashango (1991: 171) alluded to connections between occult power and the social order, but this was only a minor theme. Since remoteness from nature and the hiddenness of the self, such as existed in the 'profane' or public world, entailed remoteness from the power source, one could offer this as an explanation both for Somé's belief that talking about power sources diminished their power (Somé 1994: 258), and of the fact that social interdependence did not figure largely in the data as a power source. The possibility of conserved sexual power (or asceticism) as a power source was

obviated in certain post-traditional African authors by the influence of the fertility ethic (2.5.2) although ascetic themes in Hermetism allowed for the concept (Hutin 1982: 82).

5.4.3 THE LAW OF SIMILARITY: UTILISING POWER

A frequent way of utilising power, found in the data, was the Word, or Logos. This could be found in more traditional Africanised ritual in the form of magical chanting and other verbal expressions (Gonzalez-Wippler 1973: 147ff; Jahn 1981: 151) and in more post-traditional thought in the form of Thought as a source of magical power, through creative visualisation and positive thinking (Barashango 1991: 177ff, 190) and meditation or experience related to meditation (Somé 1994: 256; Krüger 1995: 321-322). Both verbal and mental or imaginative expression were forms of replication, and applied the law of similarity found in Eliphaz Lévi's one dogma of High Magic.

OCCULT POWER AND SECRECY

Despite the power inherent in words (since their similarity, by the law of Contagion, united them to what they represented), the fact of expression in the public world, for Somé (1994: 256), separated the words from the heart of reality whence they drew their power, and hence arose a paradox, that verbal expression not only actualised power but at the same time depleted it. Hence, silence was essential for maintaining power. Thus for Somé (1994: 287), as for several other authors, some sort of secrecy was essential to the use and communication of occult power: although some authors seem to doubt that an 'esotericism' as such existed in traditional African mysticism (3.3.1), and Geschiere (1997: 204) pointed out that an occult power nobody knew about would not come across as very efficacious, other authors took it for granted that where there was occult power there had to be secrecy.

KNOWLEDGE AS REDEMPTION

The motifs of Word or Thought as a source of power, and the need for secrecy, combined in the phenomenon of Gnosis or a secret redemptive knowledge. Many of the authors studied, especially the Egyptological ones, accepted the Gnostic concept of salvation or empowerment as part of the African heritage. The means of African achievement of Gnosis indicated in the data varied from the mysterious experience of initiation (Somé 1994: 221ff, etc.) or sacrifice (Neimark 1993: 37) to the use of divine archetypes (cf. Barnes 1989: 3, 20) and other forms of knowledge-based meditation (Barashango 1981: 177ff etc.). Gonzalez-Wippler (1973: 65) emphasised faith and will-power as a source of empowerment, but related this to magical contact with the orishas within us, and thus was not an exception to the Gnostic trend in post-traditional thought about Africa. The quasi-Gnostic understanding of African religion was not restricted to occultic authors but could also be found in a vitalist interpretation of African religion, according to which vital forces such as lay behind magic were the principal object of philosophical knowledge (Masolo 1994: 54ff).

5.5 CONCLUSION

The religious life of the post-traditional Africanised person, as explored in this study, involved various attempted strategies of innovation adopted against the background of pre-conceptions about the universe (2), about history (3), and about the African cultural heritage itself (4). A preoccupation with knowledge, both ordinary and mystical, formed a significant part of these strategies of development.

Common or widely-shared areas of agreement in the data included: a desire to get rid of the image of traditional Africa as technologically backward; interest in traditional healing (5.1.1) and witchcraft (5.1.2) as features of African religion requiring discussion; an acceptance of empirical knowledge or experience as an important part of religion (5.2.1); a belief that Africa had the

potential to equal, if not surpass, the intellectual achievements of the West (5.2.2); the desire for a humanistic or Africanised reinterpretation or re-thinking of Western science, and a holistic and humanistic form of African education; belief in a 'science of magic' (5.4.1) with laws of contact and utilisation explicable in terms of the Frazerian laws of magic (5.4.2-3); acceptance of extrasensory experience (5.3.1) and transcendent meaning (5.2.1) as well as ordinary experience; belief in the Word or Thought as important expressions of power (5.4.3); and belief in the existence of religious personages who possessed expertise in the realm of extrasensory experience or magic (5.3.3).

Areas of disagreement or difference of emphasis in the data could be indicated as follows.

- Firstly, the actual methods of achieving mystical consciousness or magical results varied from author to author, although certain underlying principles were similar and the various methods were also integrable or mutually non-exclusive (5.4). Related to this was a difference of emphasis as to the role of race, sexuality and society in the generation of occult power (cf. 5.4.2).
- Secondly, the desirability of secrecy in occult knowledge and its impartation was an area of difference of viewpoint (5.4.3), as was the significance of the initiation ceremony (5.3.2).
- Thirdly, not all authors believed that the occult power attributed to traditional Africa was a reality (5.1.2). To some extent, this difference seemed to be an effect of the inclusion of outsider perspectives in the study (1.4.2). Yet even among believers there was no consensus on the integrability of traditional healing with Western science, some appearing to deny it, others to affirm it (5.1.1). Not all authors agreed on the meaning of the word 'magic' (5.4), and ideas of the 'magically expert' person tended to vary, especially under the influence of Egyptological concepts (5.3.3), and likewise the idea of the 'witch' had no universally agreed-on definition (5.1.2).

As in the case of post-traditional theology and cosmology, this was an area of thought where inclusive tendencies tended to be more prominent than exclusive ones - in contrast to the post-traditional discussion of history and the African cultural heritage, which sometimes gave rise to important polarisations. Most of the differences in emphasis in the realm of strategies took the form of definitional standpoints: What was 'magic'? What was science? What were 'witches'? Who were the experts in science and magic, and what was their relative status?

Most viewpoints were agreed on the significance of knowledge and mysticism as important areas of discussion, whether positive or negative, in the contemporary ideological development of the African tradition, however this was conceived; and in thought about mysticism and magic the influence of the 'perennial philosophy' concept associated with Hermetism and the New Age was discernible in Egyptological authors. The development of an interdisciplinary paradigm of thought (cf. 5.2.1) in contrast to the present model of Western science was a similarly visible concern: and the relationship of this tendency to similar trends among non-African New Age groups will be briefly explored in the next chapter, which deals *inter alia* with the ultimate goals of happiness and transformation sought by post-traditional African religion.

The problem of how to achieve public recognition of African 'magical science' by the sceptical West was as yet unsolved by the sources studied: various indications in the data existed that the paradigm of esoteric or magical knowledge in African and post-traditional African religion was based more on tradition, consensus and internal coherence of pattern-systems than on verification and tangible or replicable proof (5.1.1-2, 5.3.1). The sources studied indicated that Africanised psychotechnology had yet to achieve a track record of worldwide achievement comparable with that of more well-known Western technology, although Western quantitative science might not be able to claim an assured predominance in the sphere of scientific knowledge.

6 THE DESTINY OF AFRICAN LIFE

The post-traditional African religious life, as manifested in the data, involved several religious and moral aims. Many of these aims have already been dealt with in Chapter 3, which explored the problem of African-Western relations and racial conflict, and Chapter 4, which dealt with moral and political ideas in relation to the indigenous or Egyptological cultural heritage claimed by the authors. But still to be explored were the questions of destiny in general, life after death, earthly happiness, and the goals of mystical development. Each of these concepts related to the perceived goal to which the strategies of innovation and/or cultural preservation of various post-traditional Africanised authors were directed.

6.1 THE SURVIVAL OF THE HUMAN

The vast majority of the authors studied accepted some form of immortality or survival of death as part of Africanised belief (cf. De Montellano 1991: 47; Barashango 1991: 137, 206; Kamalu 1990: 70; Osabutey-Aguedze 1990: 56, 64; etc.). Nevertheless there were some differences in the concepts of how exactly the human being survived death, and both Egyptian and traditional sub-Saharan ideas of survival contributed to the explanations of immortality which were advanced in the data.

6.1.1 BODY AND SPIRIT

All authors, obviously, believed that humans were endowed with physical bodies, by reason of which they formed part of the physical universe. Yet when it came to ideas of the spirit, things were less clear. Certain Egyptological authors appeared to accept the conventional belief in a mortal body and immortal soul as an authentic African concept (cf. Keita 1984: 63); but according to Wiredu (1996: 43, 45, 47) the traditional concept of survival of death in Africa involved the continuation of the personality in an invisible but *quasi-material* form: while Gyekye (1987: 99ff)

argued that the individual spirit, even in sub-Saharan African thought, was distinguishable from the body. Certain authors viewed matter and spirit as mutually convertible in African belief, so that material reality could, at the approach of death or in the course of human development, be converted into a spiritual form (cf. Barashango 1991: 206; B'Nasseem 1992: 21).

THE PARTS OF THE SELF

SUB-SAHARAN TRADITIONAL CONCEPTS

Many viewpoints, related to traditional African belief, viewed the human self as a complex of many invisible parts in addition to his/her physical frame. A distinction was frequently drawn between the body and two other human components, namely a 'divine spark' which survived death, and a 'lower component' of a more earthly nature, which could function as a sort of spirit double during earthly life (cf. Gyekye 1987: 38ff; De Rosny 1935: 59), and often faded away or perished with the death of the body (cf. Wiredu 1996: 50). Additional components to these could be found in various Africanised religious orientations claiming a sub-Saharan affiliation, and Mutwa (1960: 549) isolated no less than six parts of the human self, viz. body, mind, soul, *ena* (an impersonal spirit double capable of persisting after death for finite periods), living force and adverse force.

In the sources explored in the present study, the relationship of the 'parts of the self' in African traditional belief to the spirits of the ancestors tended to be obscure. Mutwa (s.a.: 135) identified the ancestral spirit with the *ena*, which faded away after death unless sustained by means of ancestral veneration rituals. Jahn (1961: 106, 107, 108), on the other hand, seemed to identify the ancestor with the immortal self.

EGYPTOLOGICAL CONCEPTS

The picture was further complicated by the Egyptian subdivision of the human into the *ka*, the *ba*, and other components, which some authors accepted, particularly James (1954: 122-125) who treated the Egyptian scheme as the source of Aristotelian faculty-psychology. Kamalu identified the *ba* with the divine spark, which for him had no individuality after death apart from God, and treated the *ka* as an aspect of the physical self. Most of the authors regarded the *ka* as part of the human, thus differing from the view of the Egyptologist Breasted (1959: 52, 58, 81) who regarded the *ka* as a guardian spirit, not part of the human at all. Breasted's views basically reduced the Egyptian human to a composite of the body and the *ba*, the latter being quasi-material and surviving death. This interpretation had an interesting resemblance to the quasi-material concept of survival in African religion alluded to by Wiredu and Mbiti (1989: 79).

NEW AGE ANTHROPOLOGY

Barashango (1991: 180, 183, 187, 206) further complicated matters by integrating traditional African ideas with New Age concepts. He argued that since atoms were immortal physically and spiritually, human death was an illusion, and the ancestors were continued in the atoms of their children. From this he drew the conclusion, reminiscent of traditional communal and ancestriological African religion, that procreation was a means of perpetuation of the species, whereby the African people as a whole achieved immortality. As far as New Age ideas were concerned, Barashango adopted the concept of the aura, or psychically visible envelope of colours around the physical body, which he represented as an Egyptian belief. He also subdivided the human self into an ego and a higher or divine self, indicating that the individual could achieve immortality by merging his/her ego with the higher self, and becoming one with the One. In this way the individual would ultimately achieve freedom from materiality, supersede the death of the material self, and be absorbed into the pure spiritual reality of the divine mind.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF KAMALU

INDIVIDUALITY AFTER DEATH

A destiny of divine absorption of the self, resembling the one proposed by Barashango in some points was envisaged by Kamalu (1990: 70, 71, 143, 144) who went so far as to deny all individual existence apart from the body. He accepted that personal immortality could be achieved in the form of remembrance by one's descendants, and discussed the concept of reincarnation, of which he distinguished an Egyptian concept which involved a liberation of the individual from the wheel of rebirth (as in Eastern thought) and a traditionally derived African concept of reincarnation in one's descendants, in which 'the child inherits traits of a foreparent rather than the entire personality'. Both ideas had in common the theme of the ultimate absorption or loss of one's individuality in a wider sphere (the divine sphere and the collective sphere respectively).

THE PLURALITY OF INDIVIDUALS AFTER DEATH

Kamalu's anthropology distinguished between the noumenal self, which was non-different from God, and the phenomenal individuality of the person, which was wholly dependent on the physical body (cf. Kamalu 1990: 35, 38, 68, 69-70, 105); for him there was no possibility of individual consciousness apart from the physical body, the idea of a noumenal plurality based on the relationship of spirits to physical individuals being foreign to his thought. In this way Kamalu differed from Barashango (1991: 206) who stated that an individual who realised his/her nature, as a soul or intellect capable of surviving death, and the product of an evolution intended to produce mind from matter, could achieve immortality 'in and through a proper relationship between the ego and the Universal Mind', which wording seemed to imply that the individual united with God after death did not have to wholly lose his/her individuality, but could exist with God in a collaborative and divinising unity (cf. Steyn 1994: 178-179; Barashango 1991: 160).

THE POSSIBILITY OF SYNCRETISM

The predominance of an inclusive or syncretist view of divinity in the post-traditional Africanised God-concepts of the data led to the question of whether there was a similar syncretism of self-concepts derived from various religious viewpoints. In Barashango, certainly, there seemed to be some palpable New Age borrowings, despite his disparaging remarks about Western occultism (Barashango 1991: 203): concepts like the aura, or the higher self and lower self, were linked with more traditional-African-sounding ideas like perpetuation of the race through one's descendants. Nevertheless there was some reluctance in some authors to emphasise separation of spirit and body, the views of Neimark (1993: 2) and Kamalu (1990: 69-70, 105) being cases in point. The ideal of holistic integration of dimensions of the self was accepted by many authors, as will be seen (6.3.1). What then was the significance of polychotomist schemes that subdivided the human into many components?

THE THEME OF PARTICIPATION

A possible clue to this lay in the relationships of the self to reality that were presupposed by the distinctions between the parts. An important theme shared by various sub-Saharan African and Egyptological ideas of body and spirit was the theme of participation. Existing descriptions of traditional African religion showed manifest signs of the subdivision of invisible principles in the human according to participative relationships: for example, the Akan *ntoro* and *mogya* linked the individual to his/her father and mother (Ikenga-Metuh 1981: 36, 38), and the Igbo *obi*, *chi* and *eke* were related to participative relationships with the physical environment, God and the ancestors (Ikenga-Metuh 1991: 57). In Hermetic cosmology the human being was viewed as participating in the world of animals through his/her body, and in the world of the gods through his/her spirit (Keita 1984: 63). And at the same time, all reality was one, so that the human being linked in his/her own person visible nature and the unseen. To some extent this was also true of certain

aspects of Mutwa's anthropology: his 'life force' united the human with God, and the 'adverse principle' linked him/her with the evil in the Universe.

THE QUESTION OF HUMAN INTERMEDIARY STATUS

African authors in this study who dealt with Hermetism or Egyptology, however, did not all accept the theme of the human as intermediary between matter and spirit in the strict sense. The comments ventured by Barashango (1991: 140, 186, 206) on what he deemed to be contradictions in Genesis 1 and 2 revealed that he did not possess the idea of 'stewardship', whereby the human being was a servant of God in this world and a ruler of the earth simultaneously. He seemed, in general, not to give humanity a constant intermediary position as the personification of the link between matter and spirit. Rather, while accepting that the black human participated in God through the Ptah principle, he stressed that his/her materiality was the vestige of an animal past which he/she was destined eventually to discard. This effectively made the idea of an ongoing 'intermediary' role of the human somewhat retrogressive and an obstacle to further evolution towards the state of pure spirituality.

6.1.2 REINCARNATION

In descriptions of what happened after death, authors tended to be very vague concerning the nature of purely spiritual forms of existence, but clearer on the forms of incarnate existence possible after death. The idea of reincarnation was widely accepted in the data as an African concept, and was predictably retained in some form by authors showing signs of New Age influence, such as Neimark (1993: 7). Several forms of reincarnationism could be indicated.

ANCESTRAL REINCARNATION

A common form of reincarnationism, with roots in traditional sub-Saharan African religion, was belief in reincarnation within one's bloodline, or rebirth through one's blood relatives. According to Kamalu (1990: 143) this could not be straightforwardly described as the transfer of personality from one's own body to the body of a descendant - and indeed, according to his philosophy individuality ceased after death, making the reconstitution of numerically the same person problematic. But not all authors seemed to experience the same problem: the Rastafarian idea of ancestral reincarnation seemed to treat transmigrating souls as straightforwardly passing from body to body, as when the modern black race was viewed as the reincarnation of the ancient Israelite people of the Old Testament (Turner 1980: 53), punished for the sins of past lives by temporary subjugation to white rule. The identity of persons was blurred only in the sense that past-life identifications made one person out of what normally would have been thought of as separate individuals: for example, all the prophets were deemed in Rastafarianism to be one person repeatedly manifested (Hood 1990: 99-100), a theme which was to be found elsewhere in the data (cf. 6.3.2).

ETERNAL CYCLIC REINCARNATION

A somewhat unusual idea of reincarnation was put forward by Mutwa (s.a.: 137ff): he argued that there were seven stages of reincarnation (grass, tree, beast, human, reptile, bird and star) and that this sequence was simply repeated over and over in an eternal cyclical process. There was no possibility of liberation from the cycle, but rather, in conformity with certain trends in indigenous African religion (cf. Kaboha 1992: 70), the cycle of nature, with which reincarnation was connected, was represented as a normal and natural rhythm. Frye (1988: 45) was the only other author to explicitly refer to Mutwa's reincarnation theory, but he interpreted the stages symbolically as referring to levels of consciousness. The stages leading up to the human level

stood for ordinary human consciousness, the later stages represented a higher level of consciousness, and the reptile stage was a 'bridge' or transition point between the two.

STANDARD PYTHAGOREAN REINCARNATION

Many authors seemed to accept what Kamalu (1990: 70) identified as a more ancient 'African' idea of reincarnation, namely the concept of an individual persisting spirit transmigrating from body to body, associated with Pythagoreanism, Platonism, Hermetism and in modern times Theosophy and the New Age. Olela (1984: 87) identified Egypt as the source of Orphism and Pythagorean philosophy, and thus, by implication, of their reincarnationism, and Barashango (1991: 89, 167, 187) indicated his acceptance of the law of Karma and of belief in the repeated incarnation of the divine in the form of Hindu avatars and Messianic figures, although he integrated this with belief in the perpetuation of the ancestors in the atoms of their African descendants. Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 58) attributed this 'African' reincarnationism even to Aristotle, thus tracing his psychology as well as Plato's to an Egyptian precedent. A similar idea to this reincarnationism was found in the Umbanda religion, but this was deemed not so much an African as an adopted Western spiritualist belief: and the explanation of reincarnation involved the use of Western spiritualist concepts such as, for example, that of special missions or life-lessons applying to particular incarnations (cf. Ortiz 1990: 93). Such a concept nevertheless were not wholly without an Africanised precedent in the Yoruba-derived idea of personal destiny (cf. Neimark 1993: 7).

WHY REINCARNATION?

The preference for reincarnationist ideas rather than ideas of disembodied existence seemed to be related to a taste for immanentist rather than transcendent God-ideas: indeed, it was common to see pantheism and reincarnation accepted simultaneously by many perspectives. In both cases there seemed to be the concern to have the spiritual realities of religion close at hand: the

afterlife, like the God, had to be somehow related to life in this world. Further evidence of immanentist concern lay in the vagueness of ideas in the data concerning the nature of disembodied spiritual existence, as opposed to the relative clarity of concepts of reincarnation.

6.1.3 THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

Concerning the nature of existence between incarnations, the data were vague: Kamalu (6.1.1), as has been mentioned, did not accept the idea of an individual incorporeal existence, although he mentioned that ancient Egyptian ideas on judgement seemed to presuppose this sort of individuality, and not by means of habitation of a new body either. Diop (Moore 1986: 233) saw Egyptian beliefs on the intermediate state as being more of an asset than a problem, being yet another example of the African anticipation of Western religious ideas. Barashango (1991: 187) believed in the possibility of an afterlife beyond the earth-plane at the level of everlasting cosmic energy, and in the survival of death by the ancestors, although their degree of individuality apart from God was debatable owing to the destiny of fusion between ego and wider self (cf. 6.1.1). Mutwa (1960: 243ff) and Neimark (1993: 21ff, 24) both believed in the individual survival of the ancestors. Although Mutwa did not accept the idea of a personal divine judgement, he did accept that, as the result of an impersonal retribution, a soul could become 'damned' through exclusion from the reincarnation cycle (cf. Mutwa s.a.: 132-133; 1960: 248), or alternatively admitted into the happy netherworld of the ancestors (Mutwa 1960: 243ff).

In general, however, there were few attempts to elaborate in detail on what life was like apart from the body. More attention was given to the phenomenon of reincarnation, and also to that of the theme or symbol of the Messianic figure, whose repeated incarnation seemed to furnish a clearer goal of personal development and fulfilment in a post-traditional Africanised pattern typical of the thought found in the data than any picture of incorporeal bliss (6.3.2).

6.1.4 MUTWA ON THE END OF THE WORLD AND THE RESURRECTION

The Christian idea of bodily resurrection did not appear to fit into Africanised thought as far as could be gathered from the sources studied. Mutwa (s.a.: 243ff) believed that in the future the 'world below' would rise to the surface of the earth, and so the world as we mortals knew it would cease - but this circumstance, it appeared, would involve the generation of a new and better human race to dwell on the physical earth, rather than the cessation of the cycle of reincarnation itself. There was certainly no question of the inauguration of a quasi-eschatological resurrection, which idea Mutwa (s.a.: 244-245) stigmatised as a Western belief, foreign to African thought.

6.1.5 THE AFTERLIFE IN RELATION TO RELIGION AS A WHOLE

The connection between ancestors and the afterlife suggested that in much of the post-traditional African thought of this study the question was not so much "What happens to me after death?" as "What shall I become after death?" or "What shall I change into?" Certain post-traditional African ideas about the afterlife could be viewed as an aspect of the personal goals of those who believed in them, a dimension of religion integrable with the happiness and serenity they sought in this life as well as the next. As Barashango (1991: 206) said:

"When one makes up their mind that intellect is superior to and supersedes matter, [this] is to take the most important step of all in the living of a serene and effective life. The soul grows within even as the body decays without, and one who is able in the end to merge his/her sense of being with that of the Secret Self has perpetuated himself/herself, has achieved immortality."

The hope thus sought was apparently meant to provide consolation in this life, not merely bliss in the next. Indeed, views on the destiny of the human in the data were often linked not so much with the afterlife as on what lay in store for one during the present life.

6.2 THE ACHIEVEMENT OF GOALS

Although certain of the authors in this study accepted belief in fate or destiny of some sort, this idea did not always rule out a belief in personal freedom. Neimark (1993: 7), though adhering to an African tradition that made much of the idea of destiny, stated as one of the principles of Ifa that 'except for the day you were born and the day you are supposed to die, there is no single event in your life that cannot be forecast and, where necessary, changed.' Destiny was thus more of a goal or ideal than an irresistible fate. In line with this concept many of the authors, including some who were inspired by the Yoruba religion, stressed that personal effort and achievement were, in African belief and religious life, necessary for the realisation of happiness.

6.2.1 PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT AND REDEMPTION

HUMAN EFFORT

Many of the authors followed what might, using Christian terminology, be called a Pelagian concept of the way to happiness. Osabutey-Aguedze (1990: 92, 216) rejected the trends in Western theology based on the concept of total depravity, and thus insisted on natural effort rather than reliance on God's grace, independent of any natural activity or transformation, as a way to achieve one's ultimate goals. Kamalu (1990: 71-72) similarly regarded religious faith as useless unless it was actualised in deeds, and even then it was not an essential part of the religious life as in Christianity, since Kamalu viewed atheism and theism as equally defensible. Neimark (1993: 7, 16, 18ff) argued that sacrifice and the observance of taboos were necessary, not as absolute rules, but on pragmatic grounds, since Yoruba rituals would not work for you unless you followed the principles on which they were based. Neimark (1993: 36, 80) viewed the Universe as, in a certain sense, unforgiving and harsh, with a dark or violent side that had to be faced. The theme of retributive 'unforgiveness' also cropped up in the form of the Law of Karma,

accepted by Barashango (1991: 188), according to which the consequences of one's deeds were unavoidable and all-determining.

DIVINE HELP

Post-traditional African religion was far from lacking in certain of its trends the idea of divine influence on one's life, and the invocation of divine help. But since many of the authors accepted a worldview in which God and the self were one, divine help usually could not be obtained independently of personal effort of some sort. This effort did not have to be purely external, since meditation, visualisation and so forth could also be used to actualise the power of divinity within (cf. Somé 1994: 258). Nevertheless, as Mutwa (1980: 487) pointed out, a pantheistic or panentheistic worldview accepting the concept of creative visualisation implied that in the end it was not an external God, or an external spirit, but rather one's own mind, exercising the power within itself, that really answered one's prayers.

SALVATION

As a consequence of the above mindset, the idea of salvation by external divine aid, as in Christianity, was not accepted by any of the authors of the study, except for those who had a Christian background (cf. Mbiti 1989: 96-97): and even among authors with a Christian background the idea of salvation or redemption was reconceived in a more horizontal fashion.

KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIAL ACTION

The two most common ideas of redemption in the data, where indeed the idea of redemption arose at all, were the gnostic idea of liberation through knowledge (5.4.3) - which could take the form of an experiential inner transformation (Barashango 1991: 206), an initiation (Somé 1994: 3), a growth in knowledge of the arts and sciences with a mystical goal in mind (James 1954: 1) or a

changed understanding of history and destiny (Barashango 1991: 4-9) - and the idea of redemption through ideological and social transformation by the efforts of the black people (cf. Kamalu 1990: 8). These two ideas were not mutually exclusive: James (1954: 1, 158, 162) accepted both, and both shared the common element of an Afrocentric transformationally-oriented knowledge-base, in the sense that the wisdom of Africa and Afrocentrism played a central and foundational role in both forms of redemption. Nor did belief in social virtue necessarily rule out the ascetic or solitary dimension of religion: the idea of self-disciplined effort formed part of gnostic 'redemption' in views which borrowed their ideas of virtue and moral improvement from ancient Egypt (cf. Maybee 1999: 155; James 1954: 30ff).

THE PRIORITY OF MENTAL EMANCIPATION

There was a tendency among authors to ascribe a redemptive role to Africa primarily in the context of the propagation of the message of Afrocentrism, and only secondarily in the context of social activism. James (1954: 158, 162), for example, understood by 'philosophy of redemption' primarily the mental emancipation of the black people, although he did regard the social 'Gospel of Happiness' as a consequence of this. Similarly Barashango (1991: xii, 4-9, 167, 206), although accepting personal and social transformation as the result of the African's enlightened self-perception, claimed that the message of Afrocentrism in spirituality, rather than religious conversion, was the aim of his writing on religious issues. The aims of Afrocentric emancipation were sometimes far-reaching in scope, as in the 'mission statement' of Kaboha (1992: 76):

"It is the job of Africa now to lift this veil of blindness before it is too late for the whole world. It is the turn of Africa to play missionary to Europe, America and even Asia."

6.2.2 SOCIAL AND NATURAL TRANSFORMATION

The ideals of social achievement envisaged by the authors studied, in addition to the mental emancipation described above, were frequently coloured by the struggles for independence in their respective countries, and tended to endorse these ideals as a matter of course. Thus, original post-traditional African thought in this sphere tended to belong, in this study, to thinkers who were also political leaders, such as Nkrumah and Senghor. On the other hand, more vague but still innovative expectations of social transformation were found in authors who had been influenced by the New Age movement.

THE IDEAL SOCIETY

The only detailed plan for an ideal society in the data, along lines mostly compatible with Western democracy, yet formulated in a post-traditional mould, was that of Senghor (1984: 269ff, 282). Senghor argued that the moralising influences of traditional African society - to wit, respect for women, democratic chieftainship, all-embracing religion, initiatory age-grade societies as aids to social integration, personalism, communal ownership of property - embodied African values which modern African leaders ignored at their peril. With the possible exception of his treatment of private property as something profane, most of these values seemed to be integrable with Western democracy. A similar plan to Senghor's, to preserve African values in a modern society, was drawn up by Ezeanya (1991: 239ff), whose thought, however, seemed to be cast in a conservative Catholic mould, and thus did not, strictly speaking, belong to the non-Christianised post-traditional type of religion envisaged by this study; nor were his ideas, like Senghor's, significantly related to the mysticism of other less Christianised post-traditional authors. It appeared possible that plans for a detailed and, by Western standards, democratic specification of the social order in a post-colonial society, was somehow related to a Christian background: a less Christianised viewpoint, like Nkrumah's consciencism, would take less account of Western values, or of human rights as the West understood them.

THE NEW WORLD

CATASTROPHE AND RECOVERY

A few authors referred to a coming catastrophe, after which a new age could be expected to dawn: whether these ideas were truly of African origin was debatable. Reference has already been made to Mutwa's expectations of the rising of the ancestral netherworld (6.1.4). Another author that could be mentioned was Barashango (1991: 84), who adopted in an Africanised form the Hindu scheme of avatars, including the last avatar Kalki who was expected to usher in a new world after a future catastrophe. Apart from these extreme examples, other authors tended to view future social transformation more in terms of an Afrocentric reconstruction of society in the future, along the lines envisaged by the mental and social idea of redemption outlined in 6.2.1.

THE RESTORATION OF ANCIENT AFRICAN RELIGION

Ideas of a future social redemption of or by Africa by various authors were sometimes related to the idea of a 'fall' in the African past, leading to the decline of ancient Egyptian civilisation (2.5.3). This concept of an Egyptian 'fall' was related to the Hermetic pessimism concerning Egyptian religion, and the Hermetic prophecy that the Egyptian gods were destined to fall into disuse (cf. Bernal 1987: 129ff). Nevertheless Hermetic views on ultimate divine union demanded, and the views of several authors in this study confirmed, that the 'fall' of ancient 'African' religion and wisdom would not necessarily be accepted as permanent by Hermetic esotericists. Barashango (1991) and James (1954) could be viewed as authors who were making attempts to reverse what the Hermetic corpus had prophesied, by awakening new interest in the ancient mysticism of Africa.

THE NEW AGE

New Age authors commenting on the African tradition varied in their interpretation of its significance. Bailey (1964: 107) viewed the potential of Africa in terms of a "fundamental and pure mysticism, ranging all the way from nature worship and a primitive animism to a deep occult knowledge and an esoteric understanding which may some day make Africa the seat of the purest form of occult teaching and living. This, however, lies centuries ahead." In these words Bailey seemed to be hypothesising that the African people might some day evolve a very sophisticated form of mysticism: but, in line with the colonial mindset of her time, she indicated that this would happen only after many centuries. Needless to say, other post-traditional Africanised mystical authors in this study, particularly James and Barashango, did not share her reservations to the slightest degree, but were already proposing African forms of mysticism adapted to the concerns of the present era.

The Umbanda religion (Ortiz 1989: 90ff) had already come to terms with the fact that Africanised religion and mysticism had to move beyond their elementary beginnings. And in discussing Santería, Gonzalez-Wippler (1973: 123ff) stated that "the elements contained in santería will play a major role in the development of the new religious movement which is coming into world consciousness in order to fulfil the spiritual needs of mankind." Indeed, in her view, the 'diaspora' from Western Africa to the Americas had been providentially arranged to allow Africa to make her contribution to the imminent transformation of Western society (Gonzalez-Wippler 1973: 122-123). The New Age influence on Egyptological mystical movements, such as the one Barashango belonged to (cf. Barashango 1991: 206), was unmistakable; and the Egyptological trend was not restricted to America but of interest to certain authors on the African continent itself (cf. Kamalu 1990: 1ff, 28 etc.).

Neimark (1993: 178ff), being less enthusiastic about Western alternative religion, criticised certain New Age trends as mere trivialities, including the habit of hopping from fad to fad instead of

committing oneself to a single spiritual discipline and thereby obtaining the fulfilment and 'genuine self-rethinking' which was the reward of such commitment; nevertheless his views already contained significant parallels with central issues in New Age thought - e.g. cosmic consciousness, moral relativism, ecological concern, quasi-karmic retribution, reincarnation and the idea of success and self-fulfilment as a goal of religion (Neimark 1993: 7, 18, 30). Similarly other post-traditional authors in this study, although they were not explicitly New Age persons, adopted a mystical worldview significantly related - often via Hermetism - to the basic philosophy and outlook underlying the modern New Age movement.

6.3 THE IDEAL STATE OF HUMANITY

It has already been indicated that post-traditional Africanised authors in this study tended to view the ultimate destiny of the human in terms of "What shall I become?" rather than "What will happen to me?" (6.1.5). This did not mean, however, that circumstances of future happiness and social improvement were irrelevant; but in explicitly post-traditional perspectives in this study involving a mystical worldview, the element of personal transformation tended to hold a more prominent position than was apparent in indigenous African traditional religion itself. It was nevertheless natural that, in worldviews laying emphasis on the close union of matter and spirit (cf. 2.2.4) such things as spiritual transformation would not necessarily be viewed in isolation from the acquisition of more material benefits for oneself and society.

6.3.1 HAPPINESS

The view of happiness as something temporal rather than purely spiritual was a commonly expressed idea in the data: Nkrumah (Axelsen 1984: 233) and other authors expressed opposition to a religious pietism that sought happiness beyond this world and not on earth; Neimark (1993: 2) argued that religion did not have to imply self-denial in the material sphere. Sundermeier (1998: 9-10) confirms a concern with the material world or material life as a whole

as central to traditional African ideas of happiness. In his words: 'Anyone encountering Africans will find they are passionate lovers of life...Africans turn to this world in order to experience their wholeness' (Sundermeier 1998: 9). Uka (1991c: 169) quoted Aylward Shorter to the effect that African spirituality was horizontally oriented rather than 'inward-looking', a feature continued in post-traditional ideas on the concept of 'redemption', in so far as it involved social concern, but not wholly true of post-traditional ideas in so far as an element of gnosis or intellectual concern formed part of the salvation-concept. In general the Egyptological authors of this study tended to attempt the integration of inwardness/intellectuality and outwardness/sociality rather than opt for one or the other.

MATERIALITY WITHOUT MATERIALISM

The two-way tendency mentioned above surfaced in the way that some authors acknowledged the validity of social or temporal goals, yet in other contexts seemed to speak unfavourably of materialism or attachment to material things (cf. Barashango 1991: 32, 167; Kamalu 1990: 141). These statements were not necessarily in opposition to the basic norm of temporal happiness, but rather represented attempts to qualify the desirable form of temporal happiness as being, for example, more humanistic than materialistically anti-human (cf. Barashango 1991: 32), or based more on love of life as a whole than on certain material aspects thereof, as in the view of Kamalu (1990: 129-130):

'Happiness is a state of well-being not derived from any particular object in the world, but is experienced as a result of a total overview of one's life and its possibilities. Whereas pleasure is related to the love of worldly things, happiness can only stem from love of life as a whole.'

HOLISM

HOLISM AND THE CONCEPT OF HUMANITY

The integration of intellectual and social goals was related to an important theme in the post-traditional Africanised anthropology of many of the authors studied, namely the goal of holism, or the harmonious collaboration and integration of all parts of the human. A basis for holism existed in the fact that traditional African concepts of humanity tended to be non-Cartesian, and therefore was already disposed to consider humanity as an 'indivisible psychophysical unit of mind and matter' (cf. Krüger 1991: 95) whose material and spiritual components could not be viewed in mutual isolation. Moreover, some viewpoints accepted the consubstantiality of the material and spiritual self on a monistic basis (2.2.4); and even where the separability of body and soul (or other parts of the self) appeared to be accepted, their unity and harmonious collaboration was deemed to be a desirable ideal (cf. Keita 1984: 83, 84-85) - and the union of (separable) body and soul in the Africanised thought of the present study could be contrasted with the Western opposition of the two (cf. Neimark 1993: 2, 21ff), for in such thought the flesh and spirit, even where distinguished, tended to be two partners rather than two antagonists.

THE APPLICATION OF HOLISM

The idea of a harmonious development of all levels of the human person formed part of post-traditional educational ideas (5.2.2), and Mutwa (1960: 497) indicated that:

"...if properly linked to the soul with the mind, the brain could exploit all the powers of the soul. The ideal is in fact to weld the body, brain, mind, *Ena*, and soul into one co-ordinated whole instead of so many scattered entities. Where a person can achieve this, he will reach ultimate perfection."

The ideal of a general integration of all elements of life was important for some authors (Kaboha 1992: 71; Frye 1988: 91). Such an integration was, for them, typical of traditional African religion, as opposed to the fragmented and secularised Western perspective on life. It allowed for a point of contact between physical welfare and spiritual transformation, which in a holistic anthropology, particularly one based on Hermetic esotericism, could be viewed as connected. It seemed possible that the ideal of integrating the material and spiritual from an Egyptological perspective was not unrelated to concern with the reconciliation of various opposites in the human person, as in the Egyptological 'ideal man' of Barashango (1991: 155). Barashango said:

"The universe was created in an equilibrium and it is the subtle and complex interplay between the light and the dark that gives the universe its form and its reality. In the Deified Man, the paragon of Egyptian [Kemetan] soul science, the opposites are united and transcended."

6.3.2 FULL HUMANITY

As far as the types of personal transformation were concerned, post-traditional African authors with a mystical background admitted several types of ultimate transformation. One could simply develop one's human capacities, or one could become one of the ancestors, or one could become a hero or shamanistic figure, or one could be absorbed into the divinity itself.

THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN

The status of the human in the post-traditional sources explored in this study tended to be ambivalent. Certain sources claiming a connection with indigenous sub-Saharan religion viewed the animal as equal to or superior to the human, and these viewpoints have been discussed in 2.4.2. Other sources, however, notably ones claiming a connection with Egyptian thought, treated the human as superior to the animal. Barashango (1991: 206) and Wade Nobles (De Montellano

1992: 164) treated the human as a superior life-form evolved from the animal, and the latter claimed that the essential melanic system elevated the black person even above the whites on the evolutionary scale. James (1954: 7, 83) and Keita (1984: 63) alluded to the Hermetic teaching that the human had a divine spark whereby he/she could be allowed to participate in the super-animal world. From another philosophical point of view, Jahn (1961: 101-102) mentioned the distinction in Kagame's philosophy between MUNTU and KINTU, the linguistic class-distinction between 'persons' and 'things' in Bantu grammar seeming to imply a sort of qualitative difference between the human and the rest of creation. This conclusion seemed unaffected by the fact that most Bantu languages placed animals in a class which was etymologically related neither to the 'MUNTU' or the 'KINTU' class in Kinyarwanda: for even in this case, the fact that animals were excluded from the noun class denoting people still remained. There seemed to be a general tendency in the data to make the human superior to the animal, a tendency which was possibly related to the concern with human intellectual development and innovation in these viewpoints (cf. 5.2.2).

ANCESTRAL AND HEROIC STATUS

A very prominent theme in traditional African conceptions of survival of death, was that of the ancestors, belief in which could be pointed to as a sign that traditional African culture believed in immortality (Chavunduka 1994: 58). Whether reverence for the dead was part and parcel of Egyptian culture, as Keita (1984: 59) claimed, or a Nordic invention, as Diop (1990: 156) claimed, the fact remained that traditional sub-Saharan African religion made much of this motif (cf. Griaule 1965: 26, 27, 123, etc.). The ancestors were a source of wisdom (cf. Kaboha 1992: 70, 75 ; Barashango 1991: 206) and even of terror (Somé 1994: 34-35); their place in African religion could not be denied them, despite the fact that it was often embarrassing (cf. Wiredu 1995: 164-165). If they were not gods - and indeed the Hermetic authors of the study could not, in terms of their monism, deny this outright, though less Egyptologised authors like Uka (1991a: 47) could be

found to represent them as non-divine intermediaries - the ancestors were nevertheless ubiquitous.

RETENTION OF THE ANCESTRAL CULT

Many authors accepted that the ancestral cult in African religion was something that should not be suppressed: in fact Neimark (1993: 21-27) claimed that even whites were obliged to venerate their own ancestors if they wanted to derive maximum benefits from the religion of Ifa. He recommended that a glass of water be left to evaporate as a sort of sacrifice to be symbolically 'drunk' in this way by the ancestor: and he even urged a fellow convert to Yoruba ways - a white girl, who had become a priestess - to forgive and venerate the spirit of her dead father, despite the fact that that this ancestral veneration was foreign to white culture and religion, and that, according to her claims, her father, while he had lived, had been very unpleasant to her. Neimark was the only white author in the study to claim that whites should venerate their ancestors: but black authors were more ready to recommend and defend ancestral veneration and related practices. In fact, Somé (1994: 9-10) claimed that the white race needed some form of ancestral healing.

ANCESTORS, SURVIVAL AND HEROIC COMMEMORATION

The theme of the ancestors was often brought up in connection with debates on immortality and survival: reference has already been made to ancestral reincarnation (6.1.2) and the relationship of the ancestors to the parts of the self (6.1.1). There was a tendency in post-traditional thought to think of ancestors in the context of survival of death and the transmission of culture, rather than in the context of ancestral ritual: for Barashango (1991: 187, 206) the ancestors seemed to be not so much personages to be placated as repositories of ancient wisdom and a manifestation of racial survival in the spirit world. This made ancestral veneration something closely related to herolatry or heroic veneration, the practice of venerating the memory of persons who had made

significant cultural contributions to one's race in the past. Barashango (1991: vii) endorsed heroic veneration, even to the point of claiming that the gods and goddesses of ancient Western religions were derived from African heroes; and sentiments of heroic veneration could be found in Zulu thought, as expounded by Mutwa (s.a.: 185), and in the heroic ethic associated with the cult of Ogun (2.5.2).

MESSIANIC STATUS

A recurring feature in several post-traditional African authors was that of the Messianic figure. The respect for Messianic figures uncovered in this study seemed to be related to heroic veneration and to personify various forms of human excellence, including in some cases even wisdom or intelligence. Some of the messianic concepts were related to the Christian tradition (3.5.2) while others had a non-Christian source.

MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURES

In traditional African religion some quasi-Messianic motifs surfaced in the form of culture-heroes, such as the smith of Dogon mythology, and, from the same tradition, the mythical figure Lébé who underwent death in order to gain the secret of the Third Word from the Seventh Ancestor (cf. Griaule 1965: 56ff, 88ff). The narrative material related by Mutwa (1986: 148), on the basis of a hitherto secret Zulu tradition to which he claimed access, referred to a heroic figure Lumukanda who personified the continuity of life.

REGAL FIGURES

In more post-traditional thought, the Messianic symbolism seemed to feature more prominently, and to be connected with socio-political aspiration. Africanised Christian and Islamic movements had their divinised Messianic figures and prophets, but owing to the non-Christian slant of this

study these did not figure widely in the data actually explored. Nevertheless signs of this trend were not absent from movements which were in fact included in this study, on the grounds of being apparently based on pantheistic reincarnationism rather than a standard Semitic worldview. Rastafarianism had its Emperor Ras Tafari, identified with the divinity within (cf. Legesse 1994: 331), and Barashango (1981: 83ff, 166) recognised Jesus and the avatars of the East as Black Messiahs, personifying stages in human evolution. The tendency in post-colonial politics to rely on visionary leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah seemed to have features in common with political Messianism, in so far as the leader was viewed as beyond criticism and in that sense quasi-divine (cf. Assimeng 1999: 229). Such divinisation of leaders was also visible in the way that Rawlings, one of Nkrumah's successors as leader of Ghana, was described as 'Junior Jesus' by the Rev. Damuah, who later left the Catholic Church to initiate a reformed variety of African traditional religion (Assimeng 1988: 242).

FIGURES OF WISDOM

An interesting form of Messianic 'veneration' was the tribute which the thinker Cheikh Anta Diop received, as incarnation of the "Pharaonic Principle", a divine principle within every individual, said to be personified by the Egyptian Pharaoh (Finch 1986: 227ff). This showed two things about the post-traditional African Messianic motif uncovered in the data: firstly, it could (especially in Egyptologised thought) be applied to exemplars of wisdom as well as political heroes, and, secondly, the Messianic state could be viewed, by some schools of thought, as a goal attainable in some sense by any individual, through sufficient development towards full humanity and realisation of the divineness within. The Egyptian veneration of Thoth, who according to Bernal (1987: 144) was an ordinary sage subsequently thought of by posterity as a god, seemed to be reminiscent of the aforementioned veneration of Cheikh Anta Diop. According to James (1954: 134) the wisdom of the Egyptians allowed every sufficiently trained Egyptian priest to gain power over the forces of nature, exercised in the name of the divinity itself. This suggested that the motif of shaman or magus mentioned in the last chapter (5.3.3) could be viewed as connected with the

Egyptologised Messianic motif; for both sorts of symbolism effectively personified the attainment of a god-like or divinely related state of accomplishment while in human form, a vivid example of the ideal union of humanity with the powers behind nature.

GOD-REALISATION

Many of the authors of the study did not assign any definite terminus to the development of the human beyond death, apart from reincarnation or ancestral existence. In Mutwa's religion a soul could attain a state of damnation, in the sense of being unable to reincarnate (Mutwa 1960: 248), but otherwise the cycle seemed to just go on indefinitely. Those authors who did hold a concept of humankind's ultimate destiny tended to view it as God-realisation or the absorption of individuality into an immanentist divinity, in line with New Age or Hermetic concepts (cf. Barashango 1991: 206). Such absorption did not necessarily rule out subsequent reincarnation as a divinised or Messianic person. In fact, it was to be expected that in a synchronic creative cosmology of the sort described in 2.4.1 the process of creation, and the eternal cycles it implied, could never wholly end or be superseded: an absorption into God meant simply an identification with the ongoing synchronic creative process, and so the end in effect became once more the beginning.

6.4 CONCLUSION

The goals of post-traditional Africanised religious life, as could be gathered from the previous paragraph, were difficult to articulate when the concepts involved transcended the linear temporal frame of reference: but within the framework of earthly life (or lives) it was more easy to specify what religious goals were the object of one's spiritual and developmental strategies.

Common or recurrent themes in the data were as follows:

Firstly, some idea of immortality or survival was generally accepted (6.1), and this concept often involved the possibility of return to the physical world through reincarnation (6.1.2) although Christian-style resurrection was not widely accepted (6.1.4). The concept of an abrupt termination of the ongoing cycles of nature, as in Semitic eschatology, did not play a major role in concepts of ultimate destiny (6.3.2).

Secondly, the nature of the human tended to be conceived holistically, though usually not materialistically (6.3.1), as involving participation in various levels or aspects of life, which were occasionally expressed by means of an anthropology assigning many invisible parts to the self (6.1.1).

Thirdly, confidence was shown by many authors in the ability of the African individual to fashion his/her own destiny (6.2), and, by knowledge and social action, to effect his/her own happiness (6.2.1) especially in the temporal sphere (6.3.1). Expectations for the future of Africa were optimistic (6.2.2) and veneration for the past of Africa, in the form of ancestors and heroes, was taken for granted. Messianic motifs tended to emerge in various forms, more noticeably in an Egyptological context (6.3.2).

Areas of disagreement or differing emphasis involved the definition of humanity (6.3.2), individual spirituality (6.1.1, 6.1.3) and reincarnation (6.1.2), and it was difficult to obtain clear ideas about individuality apart from the body, much less a consensus on the same. Concepts about Messianism (6.3.2) and the future of Africa (6.2.2) also tended to have varying emphases, and this was perhaps in keeping with post-traditional ideas about the free self-determination of one's own spiritual destiny and the future of one's country.

Preference was shown in the data for ideas of the afterlife or the future of the human that made human destiny immanent in this world and/or open to participation by people in this world. Between concepts of the afterlife and God-concepts there were several significant connections, and the idea of Messianic figures - such as ordinary people, like Cheikh Anta Diop, could become - offered a personification both of divinity, of survival, of African values, and of development in knowledge or political power. Even among certain viewpoints where the Western Jesus was decentralised or even denied, the ideal of the Messiah or venerable superior human incarnation seemed to remain a powerful symbol.

7 CONCLUSION

The emergent religiosity of post-traditional Africa and Africanised thought, as uncovered in this study, may be characterised by two facets: elements of agreement and elements of debate. The former facet arguably expresses the inclusive, social and community-oriented side of the type of religion discussed in this report, while the elements of debate signify where individuality and creative thought have their contribution to make to emergent Africanised religion. The future of the religious orientations described in the previous chapters is uncertain: but the areas of agreement and disagreement in the data are possible indications of what ideas, respectively, shall remain as recurrent or popular trends post-traditional Africanised thought on the one hand, and what shall offer opportunities for innovative or creative thought about religion and Africa on the other, against the background of these popular trends.

These areas of agreement and disagreement, owing to the way in which the data of this study have been arranged, are all understandable in terms of an overarching perceived contextual matrix (consisting of perceived intervening conditions, perceived historical conditions, and perceived aspects of the immediate context) in terms of which strategies are taken with various goals in mind. Since post-traditional Africanised religion is a pluralised and non-monolithic phenomenon, this framework should be understood not as a monolithic ideology of praxis undertaken within a monolithic tradition, but as an intellectual climate of shared and debated ideas in relation to which various plans are made and proposed to various audiences, and various goals are visualised, some in a widespread fashion, others less so.

7.1 AREAS OF AGREEMENT IN POST-TRADITIONAL AFRICAN RELIGIOUS AUTHORS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO REQUIRE FURTHER EXPLORATION

Viewed from its inclusive, consensual and community-oriented aspect, the post-traditional African intellectual climate appears, on the basis of summarised areas of agreement in the data studied,

to be moving in the direction of a non-secular interdisciplinary and optimistic Africanised model of thought. The background, strategies and goals of the non-monolithic interdisciplinarity found in the sources studied, which are indicative of certain features of post-traditional African religiosity that may require further study, may be outlined as follows.

Intervening, historical and contextual conditions of ideology: The post-traditional African thought of the sources consulted in this study tended to prefer inclusive and immanentist God-concepts, and to articulate interdisciplinary cosmologies where religious and scientific ideas are not opposed to one another. These attempts were not unrelated to efforts to decolonise the African mind from its domination by Western science and religion. Within this framework of inclusiveness there were attempts to recognise the importance of Africa and its heritage, and to redefine its relationship with Western and other cultures, sometimes globally and inclusively, sometimes in a more critical fashion, especially in the light of colonial experience. The values and cultural potential of indigenous African tradition were explored in various ways, particularly in the realm of the sacredness of land and the family, and the integration of religion with life was upheld as a praiseworthy traditional achievement. Logocentric motifs (i.e. those centered on the theme of the living Word) related to African and Western beliefs tended to be valued by many of the sources of the present research, particularly those of West African derivation, as the principles of an ordered cosmology.

Strategies: There was a widespread tendency in the authors of this study to resist the idea that African culture must be backward or retrogressive. To this end beliefs in traditional medicine and witchcraft were discussed, and often evaluated positively. Frequently adopted strategies in the post-traditional Africanised thought indicated by this study were the humanistic and Africanised reinterpretation of science and education, and the adoption of a rationalisation of the mystical and magical, often according to New Age or Egyptological precedents. The themes of the Word, and of a concern for experientially based belief and religion, were important features in the post-traditional Africanised consciousness of many thinkers.

Goals: The goal of the strategies mentioned in the previous paragraph, as ideologies often found in association with social action, seemed to be in most cases a holistic ideal of satisfaction for Africans and others in the material world; and in certain post-traditional Africanised authors there were signs of increasing confidence in the ability of Africans, and of individuals in general, to fulfil goals in the material world by means of personal effort and struggle. Many thinkers were of the opinion that the goal of happiness did not have to be cut short by death, but might be looked forward to in the form of immortality and survival, particularly by means of reincarnation. Veneration of the African past (especially as represented by the ancestors), and optimism for the African future, were influential in many post-traditional visions.

7.2 DEBATED ISSUES IN POST-TRADITIONAL AFRICAN RELIGIOUS AUTHORS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO REQUIRE FURTHER EXPLORATION

Viewed from its creative, controversial, polarised and individualised aspect, on the basis of areas of disagreement in the data studied, the intellectual climate of post-traditional Africanised thought appears to involve various definitional questions, notably that of the self-definition of African people in relation to the West. Without any implication that all post-traditional Africanised viewpoints are preoccupied with the debates in question, the forms of background, strategies and goals which were found in the present study to be associated with the controversial side of post-traditional Africanised religiosity, and could probably be identified as important areas of more detailed future research in post-traditional African thought, can be outlined as follows.

Intervening, historical and contextual conditions of ideology: The themes of violence and conflict in theology, cosmology and values gave rise to differing opinions in the sources consulted in this study: for example, not all authors were agreed on whether to positively or negatively evaluate the idea of a personal God who judges the creation, and moreover the significance of patriarchal symbolism in the African tradition and the role of evil in the cosmos was found to be a debated issue. The idea of history, and its relation to the timeless and mythical cosmology of

traditional sub-Saharan Africa, was also a controverted matter. The problem, in particular, of what to make of Western history, culture and philosophy, and of the history of an 'African' Egypt, could give rise to conciliatory or critical approaches to the West, and the area of racial confrontation could involve definite polarisations of opinions ranging from support for racial equality to overt anti-white hostility. The conflict of individualism and communalism, and the problem of reconciling individual and intellectual progress with social order, could be expected to generate varying moral and political theories. The inclusiveness of Africanised worldviews was sometimes brought into a situation of confrontation with the particular demands of African historical situations, especially those of conflict and violence, and there was no one agreed-on way to articulate the ideological background of simultaneous inclusiveness and harsh struggle.

Strategies: Definitional issues were important points of controversy in the adoption of religious and intellectual responses to the ideological situation: What was 'science'? What was 'magic'? What was 'mysticism'? What was 'knowledge'? Generally most variation in ideas of strategy found among the authors of this study were of the definitional variety, authors being found to agree that what we needed was intellectual progress, growth in knowledge, or social action, or mystical insight, yet to differ in the understanding of the same. Methods of mystical achievement varied from source to source, and this disagreement could be readily separated from definitional issues about mysticism itself: how mysticism was done, and what it was, were not wholly separable issues. The post-traditional African variation of opinion in the sources studied on strategies of contextual response was not unrelated to differences in the constitution and evaluation of the context itself, by means of traditional and post-traditional ideas and moral systems. Once an idiosyncratic way of 'seeing' and 'judging' was chosen, the recommended strategy of 'acting' could be expected to follow precedents set by perceived and evaluated conditions.

Goals: Definitional issues, judging by the picture presented by the data of this report, tended to be the main focus of variation of opinion about goals as well as strategies in post-traditional Africanised thought: What was humanity, or the individual, or reincarnation? How did one

understand the ideal human or Messianic figure? And most important, what was the 'happiness' we expected for the future of Africa?

The creative or individual thrust of contemporary post-traditional Africanised thought, as far as the data of this study were representative of it, seemed to follow a common thread of self-definition and definition of strategies and goals: African self-understanding in relation to history, and the knowledge of where Africa is headed, and the significance of the individual in relation to his/her people, and the decision whether or not to take sides in a conflict, racial or otherwise, were all basically definitional questions. A search for *identity* of some sort, communal or personal, seemed to be a principal motivation behind ideas proposed for debate, or behind the adoption of differences of emphasis in the exposition of the African heritage.

7.3 SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS FACED BY POST-TRADITIONAL AFRICAN RELIGIOSITY

In the course of researching areas of agreement and disagreement among the sources used in this study, several possible problem areas in contemporary Africanised thought suggested themselves. Possible problems exist for post-traditional Africanised thought in the following areas:

Problems in Constitution of the Ideological Context: The problem of absolutising the relative is a problem surfacing both in the paradoxes/contradictions of immanentist post-traditional Africanised God-concepts, and also in value systems which can adhere rigidly in a quasi-absolute fashion to norms originally devised from a pragmatic or relativist point of view. The danger of dictatorial manipulation of negotiable God-concepts and values, and the role of objectivised democratic values and religion as a defence against the same, is not taken seriously in a post-colonial context by many authors, and Afrocentric prejudice seems to find its way into many forms of interreligious study and politics. The interaction of cultural exposition and critical reason in a post-traditional African viewpoint can on occasion take the form of a defence of African culture as an end in itself, and the deflection of critical reason outwards, towards whites and the West, thus

reinforcing anti-white prejudice. The Western individualist conceptions of intellectual development and freedom/democracy seem significantly threatened by such a process.

Problems in Strategies and Goals: The concern with rehabilitating 'African science' and decolonising the mind of the African can give rise to New-Age-like systems open to the stock criticisms generally raised against paranormal belief by Western sceptics. Significant and globally noticeable effects of 'African Science' on the West have yet to be noticed, although the ideas do have some subjective impact in the challenging of quantitative-research biases. The social and other goals of post-traditional Africanised thought, as manifested in the data, are often this-worldly to the extent of being short-term. Optimism is shown, broad strategies for transformation are articulated, and expectations are high, but detailed or specific plans of social reconstruction, apart from those originated or proposed by post-colonial leaders themselves, seem not to be put forward or implemented on a large scale by non-politicians.

The problems of post-traditional Africanised religiosity, as far as the sources of this study are representative, seem to aggregate around the themes of post-colonial dictatorial manipulation of ideology, Afrocentric bias, the uncertainty of the efficacy of proposed transformative strategies, the problem of simultaneous rigidity and lack of firm ground in values, and the fundamental philosophical problem of the absolutisation of the relative.

An important future priority for the study of post-traditional Africanised thought is therefore the degree to which rationality and freedom may be safeguarded against the influence of pro-African cultural or political attachments, and the problems which such attempts must face.

7.4 OTHER DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

Certain other aspects of post-traditional African and Africanised thought also seem likely to require further study. As was already mentioned in the introductory chapter, this present study

has concentrated on the ideology and beliefs found in literary sources bearing on post-traditional African thought. Yet there is still a need to investigate further how these beliefs relate to real life and history, to what extent they are verifiable, and how they are lived in practice by their adherents in daily life. A comprehensive history of post-traditional African thought, including all of the trends consulted in this study, including the 'melanin scholars, the Osaist religion of Osabutey-Aguedze, the philosophy of Kamalu, and the cross-fertilisation of indigenous African and Afro-American philosophies and religious viewpoints, has yet to be written at all, much less commented on. And the history of this religiosity continues as we speak.

The principal issues dealt with in the literary sources consulted have been summarised, in the above classifications of the inclusive and controversial sides of post-traditional Africanised thought, in terms of background, strategies and goals. Issues deserving of further investigation in the light of these themes include the various attempts to formulate interdisciplinary worldviews in which science, magic, mysticism and religion are all combined, and the various attempts to redefine Africa as an equal or superior, and not an inferior partner with the West. The comparative study of African and Eastern worldviews is at present a neglected one, but one which may become important in the context of the new mystical and Hermetic tendencies present in post-traditional African viewpoints, which tend to present a worldview reminiscent of certain trends in Eastern thought. The approach of such issues without undue Afrocentric distortion is imperative.

But, in a more distinctively African context, a noticeable feature of many of the post-traditional viewpoints investigated in the present research is the way in which they are attempting to combine African thought with a culture of learning and the intellect, alphabetising and modernising traditional religious orientations, yet striving not to make too many concessions to Western secularism. Whether or not one sympathises with post-traditional Africanised religion and mysticism, it is undeniable that a culture of learning and progressive development, adapted

to indigenous African ways of life, is something which the people of Africa certainly require for the attainment of their goals of individual, national and social fulfilment in the contemporary world.

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