INTELLIGENT DESIGN
AND THE AFRICAN ONTOLOGICAL
& EPISTEMOLOGICAL AESTHETICS

A Legal Philosophical Discourse

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Intelligent Design

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DEDICATION

"To the Soul and Spirit of Africa"

About the Book

The intention of this book is to affirm the exixtence of an African God (if there is any thing like that); God the maker of a dynamaic universe. In this book, I analyse the mtyhs of various African peoples who relate that after setting the world in motion, the Supreme Being withdrew and remains "remote" from the concerns of human life or better perhaps set his paradigms in which (we call mankind) could reach him through different metaphors, call them different religions.

The elementary concepts of British justice are a part of the essentials of civilization that we bring to Africa along with vaccinations and drains and literacy and God (Emphasis added)

This book focuses on how the idea of God(s) permeated the legal ideology of the Africa's nascent states. During the colonial period, it debated the best way to instil the principles of English justice in "savage" and "barbarous" peoples.

Africa, the Gold-land compressed within itself-the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of self-conscious history, is enveloped in the dark nature of night. This book also begs the need to better understand the origins of the continent. For example, where did the name Africa originate from? This question has attracted various schools of thought in the quest to establish how the name Africa came to be.

A certain school of thought argues that the name Africa never originated from within the people and her people were never associated with the name. In fact, this school argues that Africa was initially named Alkebulan and was widely referred to as Alkebulan before the name Africa was conjured.

In Kemetic History of Afrika, Dr cheikh Anah Diop writes, "The ancient name of Africa was Alkebulan. Alkebu-lan "mother of mankind" or "garden of Eden"." Alkebulan is the oldest and the only word of indigenous origin. It was used by the Moors, Nubians, Numidians, Khart-Haddans (Carthagenians), and Ethiopians. Africa, the current misnomer adopted by almost everyone today, was given to this continent by the ancient Greeks and Romans."

He further postulates in sync with historians in this school that the continent was also called, by many names aside Alkebulan. These names include Ortigia, Corphye, Libya, and Ethiopia.

In Kemetic History of Afrika Dr Diop also connects the revolution of the present west African countries to have originated from ancient Kemet that is today's Eygpt, West African states like Nigeria, Togo, Benin, Ghana, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Sudan among others. However, many theories have tried to dispute the fact that West Africa states were initially named Africa and had no prior relationship being part of the ancient Kemet which was under the name of Alkebulan during the days of the old. Yet, the argument that west African states originated from Kemet has also been historically backed by Samuel Johnson a Nigerian scholar, who studied the origin of Yorubas in Nigerian for the past 20 years till present. According to Samuel in his Manuscript "The history of the Yorubas from the earliest times to the beginning of the British protectorate," Samuel argues that some Yoruba historians have led the Yoruba people to believe they originated from Mecca instead of Egypt in North-east Africa. He also asserts that the ancestors of the Yorubas were Coptic Christians from Eygpt. More so, both places share the same traditional beliefs, like the gods they worship and the beliefs of the afterlife

According to another school of thought, the name Africa has always been in existence before the Romans invaded the land. According to Motosoko Pheko, an African history scholar he writes that, "The name Africa 'Alkebulan' has been interpreted as, meaning mother of Nations or mother of mankind, but Africa is also one of the oldest name of names of this continent." He further argues that the thought that claims that the name Africa never originated from the people and was created by the Romans is totally false. He buttresses his point by indicating that the Greeks occupied Africa in 332 BC, followed by the Romans in 30 BC. The Greeks according to him, already knew Africa with the name Africa. He adds that the name Africa had various pronunciation due to Africa's diversity in language. It is estimated that there are over 6,000 languages in the world and over 3,000 of them are from Africa. In his essay, he writes "Greeks had earlier called Africa 'Aphrike' as they could not pronounce the existing name Af-Rui-ka".

According to another sect of history scholars, the name Africa came into existence in the late 17th century. The name was only initially used only to refer to the Northern parts of Africa. During this period colonialism was in practice, the Europeans roamed Africa and ruled over her people as slave masters. This influenced the change of name from Alkebulan to Africa. The word Africa was initiated by the Europeans and came into Western use through the Romans after the three Punic battles (264 BC to 146 BC) led by Publius Cornelius Scipio and the people of Carthage which is present-day Tunisia. Various theories suggest that the word Africa is derived from both a greek and Latin origin. The Greek word "Phrike" meaning cold and horror, and the Latin word "Aprica" meaning sunny.

Clearly, the history of the continent is known but the true name and its origin still raise controversies to date. This book attempts to give a perspective of answering this question; at least to establish Africa's stand on the existence of a supreme being.

The pain of us all human beings always trying to fill the spiritual man and death exacerbates the problem, for none has returned of those that left us in our life time. As such all our people are on a quest and receive revelations differently, therefore all that we may call what leads to GOD becomes vehicle metaphors that only help us understand and relate to our One God. So then, who is God or what is God, to the Hindu it's a cow, to the Christian it's the Christ, to the Moslem it's Mohammed, to the Chinesee its Confucuius, all simply metaphors that lead us to a true God.

Karl marx said that religion is for those who have already satisfied their human basic needs... who knew that Indians would throw away their gods for not savng them in times of a new covid-19 out-break.

"Your greatness is measured by your kindness, your education and intellect by your modesty: your ignorance is betrayed by your suspicions and prejudices, and your caliber is measured by the considerations and tolerance you have for others" William J.H Boetcker,In my book Obuntu Bulamu and the law: An extra texual aid statutory interpretation tool (Lubogo2020) I make an argument that Ubuntu (Humanness) is an ancient African worldview characterized by community cohesion, group solidarity, mutual existence, and other associated values. It is a value of great importance in African communities and espouses some religious, cultural, and philosophical importance for Africans (Kroeze, 2012). Ubuntu is thus a fundamental ontological and epistemological category in the African thought including the Bantu-speaking people and indeed lies at the root of African philosophy (Ramose, 1999; Pieterse, 2007). The value of the concept to African communities is manifested by the moral, religious, cultural, and philosophical norms it espouses in African communities (Kroeze, 2012). Not surprising, therefore, it is considered the foundation of African law (M'Baye, 1974:141; Ramose, 2002:81; Keevy, 2009: 22).

African law, variously known as—Bantu law, African customary law, African indigenous law, living customary law, or unofficial customary law, is often contrasted with the codified version of African law known as codified customary law or official customary law (Mutwa, 1998; Bhengu, 2006; Keevy, 2009). Extant literature regards African law as the unwritten and uncodified living law, that is, living African indigenous or customary law representing the oral tradition (M'Baye, 1974:141; Ojwang, 1995:45; Keevy, 2009:22). As an unwritten law, therefore, African law represents African oral culture—a scrupulously preserved tradition that was highly guarded and passed on from generation to generation.

The African saying goes 'when the gods want to kill you, they first make you mad" but this time these gods have given you an opputunity to know them as metorphors of the most Intelleigent Designer.

Scholary Remarks

In my book Obuntu Bulamu And The Law: An Extra Texual Statutory Interpretation Tool (Lubogo 2020) I relate to some scholars who contend that law is deeply plural in terms of ethos and qualities (Enrlich 1962; Davies 2005, cited in Gabaye 2019: 3). They consider that the law that effectively operates in society is the living law, which is embedded in knowledge and observation of life and, which is also the primary source of law of the state (Gurvitch 1973, cited in Gabeye 2019: 3). The proponents of legal centrialism, which symbolizes legal theory (in the school of legal positivism) define laws' normativity and coerciveness in relation to the state. They contend that the law should be of the state, uniform for all persons, exclusive of other law and administered by a single set of institutions (Ibid.). The other lesser orderings such as the church and the family ought to be hierarchically subordinate to the law and institution of the state. This view acknowledges legal pluralism and considers the supremacy of the state law. In practical terms, several ethnic groups which compose states are regulated by their customary laws. The existence and application of, for example, customary and sharia laws implies that power is also asserted by religious and traditional authorities over their subjects (Gabaye 2019: 3).

Introduction

The question of defining science and religion has political importance for many in the debate over Intelligent Design. If Intelligent Design can be defined as 'religion' then it can be argued that it should remain outside public schools. However, it is argued that if it is 'science', then it can be taught. On the side of ID, Calvert argues that naturalism is clearly a religion, since it includes a fairly comprehensive worldview about human origins and our place in the world. In response, it seems to me that naturalism has only a few of the religion-making characteristics described in Alston's definition, whereas traditional religions have many. However, the minimalistic idea of ID also has only few religion-making characteristics, though its proponents typically follow some religion. In any case, the legal debate is outside the scope of this study. The take-home lesson from this discussion is simply that when we discuss the relationship of 'science' and 'religion' or 'science'and 'theology' we should try to keep the existence of different forms of each in mind.

Indeed, in Uganda, court decided in the case of *Dimanche Sharon And Ors V Makererere University (constitutional cause 2003/1) [2003] UGSC 6 24th September 2003* that the Makerere university policies and regulations of scheduling lectures, mandatory tests and examinations on the sabath day, were not inconsistent with and not in contravention of Articles 20, 29 (1) (c), 30 and 37 of the consitituion in case of petitioners who practice (sic) the seventh Day Adventist Christian Faith. Similarly, the U.K case where the House of Lords examined the issue in a secondary school context in the case of *R (on the application of Begum (by her litigation friend, Rahman)) V. Headteacher and Gorvenors of Denbigh High School (the Begum case) [2006] UKHL 15, 2 W.L.R. 719*. Also, in the American case of Jane Roe versus Henry Wade 410 U.S. 959(1973) and 113(more) 93 S.Ct. 705, 35 L. Ed. 2d 147; 1973 U.S. LEXIS 159 and the argument of State Versus Religion.

Synopsis

This book introduces the controversy over Intelligent Design; introducing some closely related views, such as creationism, theistic evolutionism and naturalistic evolutionism. It deals with the relationship of African jurisprudence and the natural sciences as a complex and controversial issue, it introduces many basic concepts used in the African context and African science -discussion, and shows how my own approach of the Intelligent Design debate builds on these. It analyses the basic ideas and logic of design arguments, as well as setting the stage for further analysis and explores the philosophical and Africanised questions raised by the previous authors, with particular focus on analysing critiques of "designer of the gaps" and "naturalism of the gaps -arguments." It focuses further on the tensions between ID and African theistic evolutionism and further analyses the discussion surrounding the problem of natural evil and design arguments it summarizes the philosophical basis of the fine-tuning argument or the problem of natural evil. However, my purpose is not to provide the deepest analysis of fine-tuning or the problem of natural evil to date, but rather to provide an analysis of the Intelligent Design movement´s particular design arguments and the structure of thought which underlies them in the african way. For this purpose, it is necessary to examine this design argument from a variety of angles, this will make it possible to see new connections and tensions that have not been clear in previous researchers. Furthermore, since the issues are linked advancing the discussion requires understanding all of the central issues surrounding design arguments.

The breadth of this book is also necessary to demonstrate how philosophical and African innate ideas influence the discussion on ID and what their role is in relation to the empirical arguments.

Based on my analysis of the arguments used in this book, I have reached the overarching conclusion that there is no philosophical or Africanized jurisprudential silver bullet that could by itself settle the discussion either for or against ID's design arguments, though philosophical and Africanized reasons can and do influence our beliefs regarding the history of life, evolution and design, such considerations cannot allow us to wholly bypass discussion of the empirical evidence.

Opinions iabout ithe idesignedness (and undesignedness) of ithe icosmos iare iin ipractice formed iin ia icomplex iinterplay iof imany iinfluences, iincluding iempirical, iphilosophical, theological iand ipsychological ifactors, iamong iothers. (The theological and philosophical side of Intelligent Design is also very important for the movement itself, even though this side of the movement is not mentioned in the CSC's definition. It is possible that the omission is made for the strategic reason that emphasizing the theological side of ID's project could make it more difficult to get a hearing for ID's empirical arguments in the secular media and public schools.)

The discussion ion ID often impinges on fundamental theological and philosophical questions regarding the relationship of science and religion, the ultimate character of reality and how beliefs are justified. There are many interesting philosophical issues to analyse in design arguments, and the argument's logical structure needs to be clarified.

The evaluation of the current state of natural science is not necessary for this kind of philosophical work, Philosophical and theological differences strongly influence the different views about the rationality of design arguments, and not acknowledging their important role on all sides would lead to a misleading representation of the debate.

C H A P T E R   O N E

The (in)Existence of a God

The existence of God has made for a great debate in the philosophy of religion and popular culture. In religion, there is a proposition that there is a supreme supernatural or preternatural being that is the creator or sustainer or ruler of the universe and all things in it, including human beings. In many religions God is also conceived as perfect and unfathomable by humans, as all-powerful and all-knowing (oamnipotent and omniscient), and as the source and ultimate ground of morality.

Belief in the existence of God (or gods) is definitional of theism and characteristic of many (though not all) religious traditions. For much of its history, Christianity in particular has been concerned with the question of whether God's existence can be established rationally (i.e., by reason alone or by reason informed by sense experience) or through religious experience or revelation or instead must be accepted as a matter of faith.

A wide variety of arguments for and against the existence of God can be categorized as metaphysical, logical, empirical, subjective or scientific. Arguments for the existence of God are usually classified as either a priori or a posteriori—that is, based on the idea of God itself or based on experience. An example of the latter is the cosmological argument, which appeals to the notion of causation to conclude either that there is a first cause or that there is a necessary being from whom all contingent beings derive their existence. Other versions of this approach include the appeal to contingency—to the fact that whatever exists might not have existed and therefore calls for explanation—and the appeal to the principle of sufficient reason, which claims that for anything that exists there must be a sufficient reason why it exists.[1]

In philosophical terms, the question of the existence of God involves the disciplines of epistemology (the nature and scope of knowledge) and ontology (study of the nature of being, existence, or reality) and the theory of value (since some definitions of God include "perfection").

The Western tradition of philosophical discussion of the existence of God began with Plato and Aristotle, who made arguments that would now be categorized as cosmological. Other arguments for the existence of God have been proposed by St. Anselm, who formulated the first ontological argument; Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and Thomas Aquinas, who presented their own versions of the cosmological argument (the kalam argument and the first way, respectively); René Descartes, who said that the existence of a benevolent God is logically necessary for the evidence of the senses to be meaningful. John Calvin argued for a *sensus divinitatis*, which gives each human a knowledge of God's existence. Atheists view arguments for the existence of God as insufficient, mistaken or outweighed by arguments against it,

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1   Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2020, June 18). Existence of God. Encyclopedia Britannica.
     https://www.britannica.com/topic/existence-of-God

whereas some religions, such as Jainism, reject the possibility of a creator deity. Philosophers who have provided arguments against the existence of God include Friedrich Nietzsche and Bertrand Russell.

Positions on the existence of God can be divided along numerous axes, producing a variety of orthogonal classifications. Theism and atheism are positions of belief (or lack of it), while gnosticism and agnosticism are positions of knowledge (or the lack of it). Ignosticism concerns belief about God's conceptual coherence. Apatheism concerns belief about the practical importance of whether God exists.

For the purposes of discussion, Richard Dawkins[2] described seven "milestones" on his spectrum of theistic probability:

1. Strong theist. 100% probability that God exists. In the words of C.G. Jung: "I do not believe, I know."

2. De facto theist. Very high probability but short of 100%. "I don't know for certain, but I strongly believe in God and live my life on the assumption that he is there."

3. Leaning towards theism. Higher than 50% but not very high. "I am very uncertain, but I am inclined to believe in God."

4. Completely impartial. Exactly 50%. "God's existence and nonexistence are exactly equiprobable."

5. Leaning towards atheism. Lower than 50% but not very low. "I do not know whether God exists but I'm inclined to be sceptical."

6. De facto atheist. Very low probability, but short of zero. "I don't know for certain but I think God is very improbable, and I live my life on the assumption that he is not there."

7. Strong atheist. "I know there is no God, with the same conviction as Jung knows there is one."

THEISM

In classical theism, God is characterized as the metaphysically ultimate being (the first, timeless, absolutely simple, and sovereign being, who is devoid of any anthropomorphic qualities), in distinction to other conceptions such as theistic personalism, open theism, and process theism. Classical theists do not believe that God can be completely defined. They believe that this would contradict the transcendent nature of God for mere humans to define him. Robert Barron explains by analogy that it seems impossible for a two-dimensional object to conceive of three-dimensional humans.[3]

By contrast, much of Eastern religious thought (chiefly pantheism) posits God as a force

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2   Dawkins, Richard (2006). The God Delusion. Bantam Books. p. 50. ISBN 978-0-618-68000-9.
3   Vatican Council I, Dei Filius 2; quoted in Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd edition (New York: Doubleday, 1995) n. 36, p. 20.

contained in every imaginable phenomenon. For example, Baruch Spinoza and his followers use the term God in a particular philosophical sense to mean the essential substance/ principles of nature.

In modern Western societies, the concepts of God typically entail a monotheistic, supreme, ultimate, and personal being, as found in the Islamic, Christian and Jewish traditions. In monotheisms outside the Abrahamic traditions, the existence of God is discussed in similar terms. In the Advaita Vedanta school of Hinduism, reality is ultimately seen as a single, qualityless, changeless nirguna Brahman. Advaitin philosophy introduces the concept of saguna Brahman or Ishvara as a way of talking about Brahman to people. Ishvara, in turn, is ascribed such qualities as omniscience, omnipotence, and benevolence.[4]

Many Islamic scholars have used philosophical and rational arguments to prove the existence of God. For example, Ibn Rushd, a 12th-century Islamic scholar, philosopher, and physician, states there are only two arguments worthy of adherence, both of which are found in what he calls the "Precious Book" (The Qur'an). Rushd cites "providence" and "invention" in using the Qur'an's parables to claim the existence of God. Rushd argues that the Earth's weather patterns are conditioned to support human life; thus, if the planet is so finely-tuned to maintain life, then it suggests a fine tuner - God. The Sun and the Moon are not just random objects floating in the Milky Way, rather they serve us day and night, and the way nature works and how life is formed, humankind benefits from it. Rushd essentially comes to a conclusion that there has to be a higher being who has made everything perfectly to serve the needs of human beings.

Moses ben Maimon, widely known as Maimonides, was a Jewish scholar who tried to logically prove the existence of God. Maimonides offered proofs for the existence of God, but he did not begin with defining God first, like many others do. Rather, he used the description of the earth and the universe to prove the existence of God. He talked about the Heavenly bodies and how they are committed to eternal motion. Maimonides argued that because every physical object is finite, it can only contain a finite amount of power. If everything in the universe, which includes all the planets and the stars, is finite, then there has to be an infinite power to push forth the motion of everything in the universe. Narrowing down to an infinite being, the only thing that can explain the motion is an infinite being (meaning God) which is neither a body nor a force in the body. Maimonides believed that this argument gives us a ground to believe that God is, not an idea of what God is. He believed that God cannot be understood or be compared.

In Christian faith, theologians and philosophers make a distinction between: (a) preambles of faith and (b) articles of faith. The preambles include alleged truths contained in revelation which are nevertheless demonstrable by reason, e.g., the immortality of the soul, the existence of God. The articles of faith, on the other hand, contain truths that cannot be proven or reached by reason alone and presuppose the truths of the preambles, e.g., the Holy Trinity, is not demonstrable and presupposes the existence of God.

The argument that the existence of God can be known to all, even prior to exposure to any divine revelation, predates Christianity. Paul the Apostle made this argument when he said that pagans were without excuse because "since the creation of the world God's invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that

4   Barron, Robert (2011). Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith. The Doubleday Religious
         Publishing Group. ISBN 9780307720511

have been made".[5] In this, Paul alludes to the proofs for a creator, later enunciated by Thomas Aquinas and others, but that had also been explored by the Greek philosophers.

Another apologetical school of thought, including Dutch and American Reformed thinkers (such as Abraham Kuyper, Benjamin Warfield, Herman Dooyeweerd), emerged in the late 1920s. This school was instituted by Cornelius Van Til, and came to be popularly called presuppositional apologetics (though Van Til himself felt "transcendental" would be a more accurate title). The main distinction between this approach and the more classical evidentialist approach is that the presuppositionalist denies any common ground between the believer and the non-believer, except that which the non-believer denies, namely, the assumption of the truth of the theistic worldview. In other words, presuppositionalists do not believe that the existence of God can be proven by appeal to raw, uninterpreted, or "brute" facts, which have the same (theoretical) meaning to people with fundamentally different worldviews, because they deny that such a condition is even possible. They claim that the only possible proof for the existence of God is that the very same belief is the necessary condition to the intelligibility of all other human experience and action. They attempt to prove the existence of God by means of appeal to the transcendental necessity of the belief—indirectly (by appeal to the unavowed presuppositions of the non-believer's worldview) rather than directly (by appeal to some form of common factuality). In practice this school utilizes what have come to be known as transcendental arguments. In these arguments they claim to demonstrate that all human experience and action (even the condition of unbelief, itself) is a proof for the existence of God, because God's existence is the necessary condition of their intelligibility.

Alvin Plantinga presents an argument for the existence of God using modal logic.[6] Others have said that the logical and philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God miss the point. The word God has a meaning in human culture and history that does not correspond to the beings whose existence is supported by such arguments, assuming they are valid. The real question is not whether a "most perfect being" or an "uncaused first cause" exist. The real question is whether Jehovah, Zeus, Ra, Krishna, or any gods of any religion exist, and if so, which gods? On the other hand, many theists equate all monotheistic or henotheistic "most perfect Beings", no matter what name is assigned to them/him, as the one monotheistic God (one example would be understanding the Muslim Allah, Christian YHWH, and Chinese Shangdi as different names for the same Being). Most of these arguments do not resolve the issue of which of these figures is more likely to exist. These arguments fail to make the distinction between immanent gods and a Transcendent God.

Some Christians note that the Christian faith teaches "salvation is by faith",[7] and that faith is reliance upon the faithfulness of God. The most extreme example of this position is called fideism, which holds that faith is simply the will to believe, and argues that if God's existence were rationally demonstrable, faith in its existence would become superfluous. Søren Kierkegaard argued that objective knowledge, such as 1+1=2, is unimportant to existence. If God could rationally be proven, his existence would be unimportant to humans. It is because God cannot rationally be proven that his existence is important to us. In The Justification of Knowledge, the Calvinist theologian Robert L. Reymond argues that believers should not attempt to prove the existence of God. Since he believes all such proofs are fundamentally unsound, believers should not place their confidence in them, much less resort to them

5   Romans 1:20 of the Holy Bible
6   Plantinga, Alvin (1974). The Nature of Necessity. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 63.
7   2 Timothy 3:14-15 NIV

in discussions with non-believers; rather, they should accept the content of revelation by faith. Reymond's position is similar to that of his mentor Gordon Clark, which holds that all worldviews are based on certain unprovable first premises (or, axioms), and therefore are ultimately unprovable. The Christian theist therefore must simply choose to start with Christianity rather than anything else, by a "leap of faith". This position is also sometimes called presuppositional apologetics, but should not be confused with the Van Tillian variety.

ATHEISM

The atheistic conclusion is that the arguments and evidence both indicate there is insufficient reason to believe that any gods exist, and that personal subjective religious experiences say something about the human experience rather than the nature of reality itself; therefore, one has no reason to believe that a god exists.

Arguments for atheism range from philosophical to social and historical approaches. Rationales for not believing in deities include the lack of empirical evidence, the problem of evil, the argument from inconsistent revelations, the rejection of concepts that cannot be falsified, and the argument from non-belief. Nonbelievers contend that atheism is a more parsimonious position than theism and that everyone is born without beliefs in deities;[8] therefore, they argue that the burden of proof lies not on the atheist to disprove the existence of gods but on the theist to provide a rationale for theism. Although some atheists have adopted secular philosophies (for example secular humanism), there is no ideology or code of conduct to which all atheists adhere.

Since conceptions of atheism vary, accurate estimations of current numbers of atheists are difficult.[9] According to global Win-Gallup International studies, 13% of respondents were "convinced atheists" in 2012, 11% were "convinced atheists" in 2015, and in 2017, 9% were "convinced atheists". However, other researchers have advised caution with WIN/Gallup figures since other surveys which have used the same wording for decades and have a bigger sample size have consistently reached lower figures.[10] An older survey by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in 2004 recorded atheists as comprising 8% of the world's population. Other older estimates have indicated that atheists comprise 2% of the world's population,

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8   Harvey, Van A. Agnosticism and Atheism, in Flynn 2007, p. 35: "The terms ATHEISM and AGNOSTICISM lend themselves to two different definitions. The first takes the privative a both before the Greek theos (divinity) and gnosis (to know) to mean that atheism is simply the absence of belief in the gods and agnosticism is simply lack of knowledge of some specified subject matter. The second definition takes atheism to mean the explicit denial of the existence of gods and agnosticism as the position of someone who, because the existence of gods is unknowable, suspends judgment regarding them … The first is the more inclusive and recognizes only two alternatives: Either one believes in the gods or one does not. Consequently, there is no third alternative, as those who call themselves agnostics sometimes claim. Insofar as they lack belief, they are really atheists. Moreover, since the absence of belief is the cognitive position in which everyone is born, the burden of proof falls on those who advocate religious belief. The proponents of the second definition, by contrast, regard the first definition as too broad because it includes uninformed children along with aggressive and explicit atheists. Consequently, it is unlikely that the public will adopt it."

9   Zuckerman, Phil (2007). Martin, Michael T (ed.). The Cambridge Companion to Atheism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 56. ISBN 978-0-521-60367-6. OL 22379448M

10   Keysar, Ariela; Navarro-Rivera, Juhem (2017). "36. A World of Atheism: Global Demographics". In Bullivant, Stephen; Ruse, Michael (eds.). The Oxford Handbook of Atheism. Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-964465-0.

while the irreligious add a further 12%. According to these polls, Europe and East Asia are the regions with the highest rates of atheism. In 2015, 61% of people in China reported that they were atheists. The figures for a 2010 Eurobarometer survey in the European Union (EU) reported that 20% of the EU population claimed not to believe in "any sort of spirit, God or life force", with France (40%) and Sweden (34%) representing the highest values.

Positive atheism (also called "strong atheism" and "hard atheism") is a form of atheism that asserts that no deities exist. The strong atheist explicitly asserts the non-existence of gods. On the other hand, Negative atheism (also called "weak atheism" and "soft atheism") is any type of atheism other than positive, wherein a person does not believe in the existence of any deities, but does not explicitly assert there to be none.

There is another concept that is related to atheism known as Agnosticism. Agnosticism is the view that the existence of God, of the divine or the supernatural is not certainly known. If the question is "Does God exist?", yes would imply theism, no would imply atheism, and "I'm not sure" would imply agnosticism; that God possibly can or cannot exist.[11] Another definition provided is the view that "human reason is incapable of providing sufficient rational grounds to justify either the belief that God exists or the belief that God does not exist."[12]

The English biologist Thomas Henry Huxley coined the word agnostic in 1869, and said "It simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for professing to know or believe." Earlier thinkers, however, had written works that promoted agnostic points of view, such as Sanjaya Belatthaputta, a 5th-century BCE Indian philosopher who expressed agnosticism about any afterlife;[13] and Protagoras, a 5th-century BCE Greek philosopher who expressed agnosticism about the existence of "the gods".[14]

Like atheism, Strong agnosticism is the belief that it is impossible for humans to know whether or not any deities exist and weak agnosticism is the belief that the existence or nonexistence of deities is unknown but not necessarily unknowable.

The God(s) of Africa!!

Arrow of God is a reflection of the whole idea of a god in Africa. It represents all modes of worship in the African context, the spirits of ulu, nwanyieke an old female deity, idemili, ezu,

11   Draper, Paul (2017), Zalta, Edward N. (ed.), "Atheism and Agnosticism", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2017 ed.), Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University

12   Rowe, William L. (1998). "Agnosticism". In Edward Craig (ed.). Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Taylor & Francis. ISBN 978-0-415-07310-3. In the popular sense, an agnostic is someone who neither believes nor disbelieves in God, whereas an atheist disbelieves in God. In the strict sense, however, agnosticism is the view that human reason is incapable of providing sufficient rational grounds to justify either the belief that God exists or the belief that God does not exist. In so far as one holds that our beliefs are rational only if they are sufficiently supported by human reason, the person who accepts the philosophical position of agnosticism will hold that neither the belief that God exists nor the belief that God does not exist is rational.

13   Lloyd Ridgeon (March 13, 2003). Major World Religions: From Their Origins To The Present. Taylor & Francis. pp. 63–. ISBN 978-0-203-42313-4.

14   Trevor Treharne (2012). How to Prove God Does Not Exist: The Complete Guide to Validating Atheism. Universal-Publishers. pp. 34 ff. ISBN 978-1-61233-118-8.

ogwugwu, udo as deities and the high god of chukwu. The deities are majorly a creation of the people according to their apparent need or immergence, as was the case in Umuaro, in the *Arrow of God*.

In the novel; soldiers used to strike every night and take men, women and children into slavery. The soldiers decided to make a solution. Medicine men to install a common deity (ULU) and Ezeulu became the chief priest of ULU for the six villages (Umuaro). In the midst of colonial destruction ezeulu takes various decisions which tantamount to work against him. Everyone takes note of his decisions but he, ezeulu has no sense of public opinion in making them. He says in Chapter 12 that; **"being alone causes no anxiety, it is as familiar to me now as dead bodies to the earth."** It comes after the chief priest had caused bitterness toward him for refusing to announce the new yam festival as was the custom, he does this out of personal revenge against the elders of Umuaro who had incited war against okperi, a sister village, over a piece of land. Contrary to this certainty, he does come to a point when at least he is alone, and its then that he feels abandoned by his deity.

Ezeulu sank to the ground in utter amazement (p. 230) his self-assurance had been founded on a sense of a close relationship to his deity to the extent that his awareness of their separate identities sometimes become blurred. It is this sense, rather than any specific thing that beats the drum to which ezeulu dances. The blurring of identities is a serious gap in knowledge and probably leads to self-delusion.

Ezeulu alone had understood he felt obliged to offer his advice even though often times it was ignored. In the beginning chapter, Ezeulu warns his son for not crafting gods for people but he disobeys and goes on with arguments like; he crafts masks not gods.

At the end of the novel Ezeulu is disappointed when his sweet son Obika suddenly drops dead after participating in the rituals of the dead at the burial. This follows the tragedies caused by hunger, to which Ezeulu exercised godly powers to mend his wounded pride when he was arrested by captain Winter Bottom, and he took it upon his people who had shown the white man the way to Umuaro. And in that spirit refuses to announce the new moon which led to ultimate destruction of Umuaro and it is at this time that he cries out feeling regretful at what he had done, but too strong to allow any cracks be seen by others.

The first cock had not crowed. Ezeulu was in his obi. The fire still glowed on the logs but the flame had long gone out. Were those footsteps he was hearing? He listened carefully. Yes, they were getting louder, and the voices too. He felt for his matchet. What could this be?

'Who?' He called.

'Ozumba'

'Eh'

'What brings you out at this time?'

'An abomination has overtaken us. Goat has eaten palm leaves from my head'

7

At this point Ezeulu is only being introduced to the developments of his last calamity.

'Come in and let me hear what you are saying'

As soon as he saw Obika's body coming in under the low eaves he sprang to his feet and took up his matchet.

'What happened to him? Who did this? I said who?

Ozumba began to explain but Ezeulu did not hear. The matchet fell from his hand and he slumped down on both knees beside the body.

'My son,' he cried. 'Ulu, were you there when this happened to me?' he hid his face on Obika's chest.

Ezeulu this was as though he had died, ulu his deity whom he served so consistently and devotedly had forsaken him.

"Ezeulu sank to the ground in utter amazement. It was not simply the blow of Obika's death, great though it was. Men had taken greater blows: that was what made a man a man. For did they not say that a man is like a funeral ram which must take whatever beating comes to it without opening its mouth; that the silent tremor of pain down its body alone must tell of its suffering?

At another time Ezeulu would have been more than a match to his grief. He would have been equal to any pain not compounded with humiliation. But why, he asked himself again and again, why had Ulu chosen to deal thus with him, to strike him down and then cover him with mud? What was his offence? Had he not divined the gods will and obeyed it? When was it ever heard that a child was scalded by the piece of yam its own mother put in its palm? What man would send his son with a potsherd to bring fire from a neighborshut and then unleash rain on him? Whoever sent his son up the palm together nuts and then took an axe and felled the tree? But today such thing had happened before the eyes of all. What could it point to but the collapse and ruin of all things? Then a god, finding himself powerless, might take flight and in one final, backward glance at his abandoned worshipper's cry:

If the rat cannot flee fast enough

Let him make way for the tortoise!

Perhaps it was the constant, futile throbbing of these thoughts that finally left a crack in Ezeulu's mind. Or perhaps his implacable assailant having stood over him for a little while stepped on him as an insect and crushed him under the heel in the dust. But this final act of malevolence proved merciful. It allowed ezeulu, in his last days to live in the haughty splendor of a demented high priest and spared him knowledge of the final outcome."

In the African traditional cosmology, there are deities, spirits, and divinities. However, the hierarchy of these differ in accordance to people. Some believe the deities are higher in position while others it's the ancestors. Though it's not a closed theological system, like some

Christianity and Islamic. For the pat some Africans believe that ancestors are equal to deities, but overall ancestors are higher.

While some African cosmologies have a clear idea of a supreme being, other cosmologies do not. The Yoruba, however, do have a concept of a supreme being, called Olorun or Olodumare, and this creator god of the universe is empowered by the various orisa [deities] to create the earth and carry out all its related functions, including receiving the prayers and supplications of the Yoruba people.

In Uganda, people are becoming more open about their blending of traditional African religious practices with other religions, including Christianity and Islam, to maintain a connection to their ancestors. Decades ago, foreign missionaries branded the local beliefs as pagan, but some Ugandans have found a way to combine all their beliefs.

The Baganda for example, believed in a spirit world beyond the one they could see, and this belief featured strongly in their lives, both at the personal level as well as in matters of state. The occupants of the spirit world can be considered to be on three levels.

At the top is a supreme creator, *Katonda*. The name, meaning creator of all things and Lord of Creation indicates that he was recognized to be superior to all, and was referred to as 'the father of the gods'. There were three main shrines dedicated to Katonda at Namakwa, Buzu and Bukule, all in Kyaggwe. His priests came from the Njovu (Elephant) clan. However, little was known of this supreme god and he was not expected to intervene routinely in human affairs.

At the second level is *Lubaale* of whom there are more than two dozen. Lubaales were of major significance to the nation and the day-to-day life of the people. The word Lubaale was translated as "god" by early writers in English on Buganda but the histories of the Lubaales, which were well known to the Baganda, all tell of them having been humans who, having shown exceptional powers when alive, were venerated after death and whose spirits were expected to intercede favourably in national affairs when asked. They are thus more like the Saints of Christian belief than "gods". They can also be termed as guardians.

The Guardians were the focus of the organized religious activity of the nation, being recognized and venerated by all. Even more important, they were the one institution which the King, otherwise almost an absolute ruler, could not ignore or disrespect. Before all major national events, such as coronations and wars, the oracles at the major temples were consulted and offerings were made. For a King to ignore the pronouncements of the oracle or to desecrate a temple was a sure invitation to disaster. Each shrine (ekiggwa) was headed by a priest or priestess, the *Mandwa*, who, when the Guardian Spirit was upon him or her, also functioned as the oracle. Generally, the office of Mandwa for a perticular temple was assigned to one clan, which would supply the priests and priestesses. Each Guardian had at least one temple, in which was kept a set of sacred drums and other ceremonial objects. The building and upkeep of the temples were governed by very elaborate and exacting rituals.

The most popular Guardian was *Mukasa*, Guardian of the Lake. He had temples in his honor all over the country but the chief temple was on Bubembe island in Lake Victoria. To this temple the King would send an annual offering of cows and a request for prosperity and good harvests. Next to his temple was one to his wife, Nalwanga, to whom women would pray for fertility. The other nationally renowned Guardian was Kibuuka of Mbaale. His legend tells that he was a general of such great prowess that it was said of him that he could fly like

a bird over the battlefield. Killed in action in the time of Kabaka Nakibinge, his remains were enshrined at Mbaale (now known as Mpigi) and he became the Guardian of War. His temple was desecrated by the British and the contents, including his jawbone, were put on display in a museum in Cambridge.

Of more immediate importance to the ordinary folk were the innumerable lesser spirits. These were mostly the departed ancestors (mizimu), but also included spirits that peopled mountains, rivers and forests, mostly benevolent but some known to be viciously harmful if not kept happy (misambwa). Rituals aimed at ensuring the goodwill of these spirits were part of everyday life. Every household contained a shrine to the family's ancestors, usually a small basket to which small offerings of money and coffee beans were made regularly. Major enterprises, such as the building of a house or the clearing of a piece of land, required a greater offering, maybe of a chicken or a goat. Again, this was usually a family effort with no outside help from any form of clergy. Prayers or offerings involving the shrine of a Lubaale generally indicated some extraordinary need, such as the start of a military campaign. The Muganda praying for help always clearly understood that the assistance of the spirits was but an aid to personal effort, or as the Baganda put it, "Lubaale mbeera, nga n'embiro kw'otadde" (pray for deliverance from danger, but start running too).

Every village recognised the presence of numerous local spirits, usually associated with a particular part of the local scenery, perhaps a forest, a stream or a python. These, as a rule, were unfriendly spirits, and the only duty one owed them was to avoid displeasing them. This might require a small offering of food to be left at a particulr spot from time to time but generally simply meant keeping out f their way by obeying certain taboos. Wood and stream spirits, known as Misambwa, were known to bathe at certain times, no one would venture to the well at those hours. Similarly, some tracts were off limits to gatheres of firewood. Lurid tales of the fate that befell transgressors are still told to this day.

The ancient Baganda were thus like the followers of major modern religions in honoring their gods and praying for their help. They differed, however in the relationship they saw between the gods and the rules governing ordinary behavior and morals. To the philosophical question "Is murder wrong because God forbade it or did God forbid murder because it is wrong?" the Muganda would emphatically answer "the latter". The nation had an elaborate and carefully observed code of conduct governing personal and family relationships, cleanliness, the crafts, warfare and government, a code which was observed not because the gods ordained it but because it was the right thing to do. To this day the Muganda considers the statement "eyo ssi mpisa yaffe (that is not our custom)" a major censure.

A communal rather than divine basis for good behavior was useful in preserving the moral foundation of Buganda society, especially in the 19th century when the prestige and influence of the Guardians waned as that of the Kabaka grew. Thus, by the end the reign of Mutesa I in 1884 the formal influence of the Guardians in national matters was gone, within another generation Christianity and Islam would have totally supplanted them. Traditional mores were more resilient, and only began to change significantly after 1945, especially in areas of family relationship. In the last generation the new order represented by imported religions and political systems has been found to be wanting, not only in the poor cohesiveness and function of the state but even in the personal conduct of religious and political leaders. Thus, the traditional ways are once again treated with respect, even to the extent that the

traditional terms for such things as a shrine (ekiggwa) or a prayer (okusamira) are now being used to describe Christian churches and services. Previously they were terms of abuse used to describe "pagans". What the final equilibrium will be between tradition and the now dominant Christianity and Islam only time will tell.

The Impersonal (Mystical) Powers

Is dominant and pervasive in traditional African religious thought. The whole creation, nature and all things and objects are consumed with this empirical power. What Edwin smith called mysterium tremenum. It has also been given life force and dynamism. The source is not always known but always attributed to the activities of the "higher" mysterious powers. Whether impersonal or personal that either generate or deposits such powers in things or objects.

These powers manifest through natural objects plants and animals for medicine, magic charms and amulets. They can be contagious with objects carrying or mediating such powers. Traditional belief in spirit beings' African concepts of reality and destiny are deeply rooted in the spirit world. The activities andactions govern all social and spiritual phenomena.

The spirit world is divided into two, non-human spirits and the spirits of the dead. Non-human spirits are regarded in hierarchical order in accordance with their kind and importance, depending upon their power and the role they play in anthologicalorder in the spirit world (OJI, 1988; 17)

Creator, deities, object embodied spirits, ancestors' spirits and others comprising of good and harmless spirits and evil spirits. Man stands between this array of spiritual hosts in the spirit world and the world of nature (ikenga- metuh, 1987; 125-144) [15]

The spirit world in the ATRS is constituted (Kato 1975; 36-41). First the whole world is full of spirits, their abodes are silk cotton, trees, sycamore tree, burial grounds, lake, rivers, forests, animals, mountains, and caves as their medium of communication. The idea of the ATR and belief and practice of exorcism and spirit possession move hand in hand.

Belief in Many Divinities

ATRs in some parts of Africa have an elaborate pantheon of divinities but their exceptions to this general observation. Especially in South Africa and some parts of West Africa. In Nigeria, the Yoruba are known for having several hundreds of divinities.

Idowu 1962, mbiti 1975[16], have changed the definition of African divinities. Some no longer accept the term polytheism and prefer the term divinities or deities but not gods.

Now, the debate is whether Africa divinities were worshiped as gods or as intermediaries and mediators. Some have argued that Africando not worship their divinities nor their ancestors, but God. A view is being held in this argument that sacrifice, offerings and prayer offered are directed at the divinities or ancestorsas themselves, but are directed directly to god. The

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15   Comparative studies of African traditional religions, by emefie ikenga metuh
16   John Samuel mbiti(1931- 2019) Kenyan born Christian philosopher and writer

African divinities are many and each has its specific area of influence and control.

Divinities were originally mythological figures while some were tribal heroes and heroines. Divinities covering different aspects of society life and community were established. Such as divinities of the sea or water (Mayanja in Buganda), rain, thunder, fertility, health or sickness, planting or harvesting, tribal clan or family deities. African divinities took the forms of mountains, rivers, forest, earth, sun, the moon and the starts.

The plurality of the divinities with their varying powers, influence, hierarchy, territoriality, even with in one ethnic group or community, says a lot about African religions, worship, beliefs and practices. This leaves an open door for religious accommodation with in the traditional African religion thought.

Belief in Supreme Being (God)

Scholars for the past 3 decades have established the fact that Africans have a concept of a universal god, the creator (Idowu 1962 mbiti 19755). Most Africans are in agreement that the traditional African do not actively worship this Supreme Being.

The aspect of the high over all powerful GOD in the novel Arrow of GOD is seen when during a waging war between Umuaro and okperi when the elders sent Akukalia to deliver a message of war or reach an understanding with them. But in the course of event, he loses he temper and demands audience with the elders of okperi immediately.

"Our message can't wait"

"I have not yet heard of a message that could not wait. Or have you brought us news that CHUKWU the high God, is about to remove the foot that holds the world?"

It serves to emphasize the existence of god as a high power in the African societies, Idowu calls the Yoruba religion diffused monotheism, this means that the Yoruba had originally a monotheistic religion. But as religions evolved, divinities gradually overshadowed the earlier monotheistic beliefs. Furthermore, in the ATS, the Supreme Being was not actively involved in the everyday religious practices of the people but the divinities, the gods, and the spirits were.

The God Of Africa In The Theological Point Of View.

In the structure of the African traditional religions, there is the creator god almighty and powerful. The Africans believed that the creator god is the high god and the Supreme Being. The creator god and Supreme Being had o equal. The creator god and Supreme Being is not subjected to any power, but controls the entire cosmos.

 In every religion, god invites human beings to seek him and at the same time god goes out constantly in search for beings. In the search for god in ATRs, there is belief among the people of Africa in the existence of the Supreme Being. The people of Africa had already \

always believed that god is present in the world in and through creation. There is found among the people of Africa a certain awareness of a hidden power, which lies behind the course of the nature and the events of human life.

In the traditional religions still, when we are speaking about god, as a supreme being, we are not calling on abstract name but expressing our faith in the one god who created the universe. The ATR recognizes the deeper role that the naming of god plays in transmitting the values of revelations. The African understood the concept of Supreme Being quite broadly. In general sense, the Supreme Being refers to the creator god. Still the people of African AT have relatively concrete views of the Supreme Being, each group in Africa has name for the supreme god, and each has its own ideas about him. Some tribes see god as related to the sun, (for example, the Rubasa, Berom, Chamba) and some to the rain, (e.g. Igede). Although they have the same name for sun and god, they don't think the sun is god. The sun is like a manifestation of god. Some see god as a husband with the earth as his wife, resulting to fruitfulness. The search often takes vastly different forms of expressions for people in different cultural backgrounds.

In the process of the search for god, the Supreme Being in African traditional religions, the people of African become conscious of their spirituality, which relates them to that being in a very particular manner.

Therefore, the god of Africa is undeniably there, the difference is the African religions are not only religions but a worldview and a way of life!

Indigenous African Religions Today

Indigenous African spirituality today is increasingly falling out of favour. The number of devotees to indigenous practices has dwindled as Islam and Christianity have both spread and gained influence throughout the continent.
According to all the major surveys, Christianity and Islam each represent approximately 40 percent of the African population. Christianity is more dominant in the south, while Islam is more dominant in the north. Indigenous African practices tend to be strongest in the central states of Africa, but some form of their practices and beliefs can be found almost anywhere in Africa.
Nevertheless, since 1900, Christians in Africa have grown from approximately 7 million to over 450 million today. Islam has experienced a similar rapid growth. Yet consider that in 1900 most Africans in sub-Saharan Africa practiced a form of indigenous African religions.
The bottom line then is that Africans who still wholly practice African indigenous religions are only about 10 percent of the African population, a fraction of what it used to be only a century ago, when indigenous religions dominated most of the continent. I should add that without claiming to be full members of indigenous traditions, there are many professed Christians and Muslims who participate in one form of indigenous religious rituals and practices or another. That testifies to the enduring power of indigenous religion and its ability to domesticate Christianity and Islam in modern Africa.
The success of Christianity and Islam on the African continent in the last 100 years has been

extraordinary, but it has been, unfortunately, at the expense of African indigenous religions. This notwithstanding, due to the slave trade starting in the 15th century — indigenous African religions have spread and taken root all over the world, including in the United States and Europe. Some of these African diaspora religions include Cuban Regla de Ocha, Haitian Vodou, and Brazilian Candomble. There is even a community deep in the American Bible Belt in Beaufort County, S.C., called Oyotunji Village that practices a type of African indigenous religion, which is a mixture of Yoruba and Ewe-Fon spiritual practices.

One of the things these diaspora African religions testify to is the beauty of African religions to engage a devotee on many spiritual levels. A follower of African diaspora religions has many choices in terms of seeking spiritual help or succour. For example, followers can seek spiritual direction and relief from healers, medicine men and women, charms [adornments often worn to incur good luck], amulets [adornments often used to ward off evil], and diviners [spiritual advisers].

It should also be stated that there are signs of the revival of African indigenous practices in many parts of Africa. Modernity has not put a total stop to its influence. Ritual sacrifices and witchcraft beliefs are still common. Moreover, the religions developed in the Americas impact Africa in that devotees of the African diaspora have significant influence on practices in Africa. Some African diasporans are returning to the continent to reconnect with their ancestral traditions, and they are encouraging and organizing the local African communities to reclaim this heritage.

The pluralistic nature of African-tradition religion is one of the reasons for its success in the diaspora. African spirituality has always been able to adapt to change and allow itself to absorb the wisdom and views of other religions, much more than, for example, Christianity and Islam. While Islam and Christianity tend to be overtly resistant to adopting traditional African religious ideas or practices, indigenous African religions have always accommodated other beliefs. For example, an African amulet might have inside of it a written verse from either the Koran or Christian Bible. The idea is that the traditional African practitioner who constructed that amulet believes in the efficacy of other faiths and religions; there is no conflict in his mind between his traditional African spirituality and another faith. They are not mutually exclusive. He sees the "other faith" as complementing and even adding spiritual potency to his own spiritual practice of constructing effective amulets. Indigenous African religions are pragmatic. It's about getting tangible results.

One of the basic reasons for this inclusiveness and accommodation is that indigenous African spiritual beliefs are not bound by a written text, like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Indigenous African religion is primarily an oral tradition and has never been fully codified; thus, it allows itself to more easily be amended and influenced by other religious ideas, religious wisdom, and by modern development. Holding or maintaining to a uniform doctrine is not the essence of indigenous African religions.

If the religions from the west overtake the indigenous African religions, we would lose a worldview that has collectively sustained, enriched, and given meaning to a continent and numerous other societies for centuries through its epistemology, metaphysics, history, and practices.

For instance, if we were to lose indigenous African religions in Africa, then diviners would disappear, and if diviners disappeared, we would not only lose an important spiritual

specialist for many Africans, but also an institution that for centuries has been the repository of African history, wisdom, and knowledge. Diviners — who go through a long educational and apprenticeship program — hold the history, culture, and spiritual traditions of the African people. Consequently, if we were to lose Africa's diviners, we would also lose one of Africa's best keepers and sources of African history and culture. That would be a serious loss not only for Africans, but also for academics, researchers, writers, and general seekers of wisdom the world over.

If we lose traditional African religions, we would also lose or continue to seriously undermine the African practice of rites of passage such as the much-cherished age-grade initiations, which have for so long integrated and bought Africans together under a common understanding, or worldview. These initiation rituals are already not as common in Africa as they were only 50 years ago, yet age-grade initiations have always helped young Africans feel connected to their community and their past. They have also fostered a greater feeling of individual self-worth by acknowledging important milestones in one's life, including becoming an adult or an elder.

In lieu of these traditional African ways of defining oneself, Christianity and Islam are gradually creating a social identity in Africa that cuts across these indigenous African religious and social identities. They do this by having Africans increasingly identify themselves as either Muslim or Christian, thus denying their unique African worldview that has always viewed as evidenced in their creation myths; everything as unified and connected to the land, the place was one's clan, lineage, and people were cosmically birthed. Foreign religions simply don't have that same connection to the African continent.

C H A P T E R   T W O

The Philosophy of Religions

A religion involves a communal, transmittable body of teachings and prescribed practices about an ultimate, sacred reality or state of being that calls for reverence or awe, a body which guides its practitioners into what it describes as a saving, illuminating or emancipatory relationship to this reality through a personally transformative life of prayer, ritualized meditation, and/or moral practices like repentance and personal regeneration. [17]

This definition does not involve some obvious shortcomings such as only counting a tradition as religious if it involves belief in God or gods, as some recognized religions such as Buddhism (in its main forms) does not involve a belief in God or gods. Although controversial, the definition provides some reason for thinking Scientology and the Cargo cults[18] are proto-religious insofar as these movements do not have a robust communal, transmittable body of teachings and meet the other conditions for being a religion.[19]

The roots of what we call philosophy of religion stretch back to the earliest forms of philosophy. From the outset, philosophers in Asia, the Near and Middle East, North Africa, and Europe reflected on the gods or God, duties to the divine, the origin and nature of the cosmos, an afterlife, the nature of happiness and obligations, whether there are sacred duties to family or rulers, and so on. As with each of what would come to be considered sub-fields of philosophy today (like philosophy of science, philosophy of art), philosophers in the ancient world addressed religiously significant themes (just as they took up reflections on what we call science and art) in the course of their overall practice of philosophy.[20]

While from time to time in the Medieval era, some Jewish, Christian, and Islamic philosophers sought to demarcate philosophy from theology or religion, the evident role of philosophy of religion as a distinct field of philosophy does not seem apparent until the mid-twentieth century.

A case can be made, however, that there is some hint of the emergence of philosophy of religion in the seventeenth century philosophical movement Cambridge Platonism. Ralph Cudworth (1617–1688), Henry More (1614–1687), and other members of this movement were the first philosophers to practice philosophy in English; they introduced in English many of the terms that are frequently employed in philosophy of religion today, including the term "philosophy of religion", as well as "theism", "consciousness", and "materialism".

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17   This is a slightly modified definition of the one for "Religion" in the Dictionary of Philosophy of Religion, Taliaferro & Marty 2010: 196–197; 2018, 240.

18   So, while both examples are not decisively ruled out as religions, it is perhaps understandable that in Germany, Scientology is labeled a "sect", whereas in France it is classified as "a cult"

19   Taliaferro, Charles, "Philosophy of Religion", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL= https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2019/entries/philosophy-religion/

20   Ibid

The Cambridge Platonists provided the first English versions of the cosmological, ontological, and teleological arguments, reflections on the relationship of faith and reason, and the case for tolerating different religions. While the Cambridge Platonists might have been the first explicit philosophers of religion, for the most part, their contemporaries and successors addressed religion as part of their overall work. There is reason, therefore, to believe that philosophy of religion only gradually emerged as a distinct sub-field of philosophy in the mid-twentieth century.[21]

Today, philosophy of religion is one of the most vibrant areas of philosophy. Articles in philosophy of religion appear in virtually all the main philosophical journals, while some journals (such as the International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, Religious Studies, Sophia, Faith and Philosophy, and others) are dedicated especially to philosophy of religion.

Philosophy of religion is in evidence at institutional meetings of philosophers (such as the meetings of the American Philosophical Association and of the Royal Society of Philosophy). There are societies dedicated to the field such as the Society for Philosophy of Religion (USA) and the British Society for Philosophy of Religion and the field is supported by multiple centres such as the Centre for Philosophy of Religion at the University of Notre Dame, the Rutgers Centre for Philosophy of Religion, the Centre for the Philosophy of Religion at Glasgow University, The John Hick Centre for Philosophy of Religion at the University of Birmingham, and other sites (such as the University of Roehampton and Nottingham University). Oxford University Press published in 2009 *The History of Western Philosophy of Religion* in five volumes involving over 100 contributors (Oppy & Trakakis 2009), and the *Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Religion* in five volumes, with over 350 contributors from around the world, is scheduled for publication by 2021. There are four possible reasons for such vibrancy.

First: The religious nature of the world population. Most social research on religion supports the view that the majority of the world's population is either part of a religion or influenced by religion. To engage in philosophy of religion is therefore to engage in a subject that affects actual people, rather than only tangentially touching on matters of present social concern. Perhaps one of the reasons why philosophy of religion is often the first topic in textbook introductions to philosophy is that this is one way to propose to readers that philosophical study can impact what large numbers of people actually think about life and value. The role of philosophy of religion in engaging real life beliefs (and doubts) about religion is perhaps also evidenced by the current popularity of books for and against theism in the UK and USA.

One other aspect of religious populations that may motivate philosophy of religion is that philosophy is a tool that may be used when persons compare different religious traditions. Philosophy of religion can play an important role in helping persons understand and evaluate different religious traditions and their alternatives.

Second: Philosophy of religion as a field may be popular because of the overlapping interests found in both religious and philosophical traditions. Both religious and philosophical thinking raise many of the same, fascinating questions and possibilities about the nature of reality,

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21   For an earlier date, see James Collins' stress on Hume, Kant and Hegel in The Emergence of
      Philosophy of Religion, 1967.

the limits of reason, the meaning of life, and so on. Are there good reasons for believing in God? What is good and evil? What is the nature and scope of human knowledge? In *Hinduism; A Contemporary Philosophical Investigation (2018)*, Shyam Ranganathan argues that in Asian thought philosophy and religion are almost inseparable such that interest in the one supports an interest in the other.

Third, studying the history of philosophy provides ample reasons to have some expertise in philosophy of religion. In the West, the majority of ancient, medieval, and modern philosophers philosophically reflected on matters of religious significance. Among these modern philosophers, it would be impossible to comprehensively engage their work without looking at their philosophical work on religious beliefs: René Descartes (1596–1650), Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), Anne Conway (1631–1679), Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677), Margaret Cavendish (1623–1673), Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716), John Locke (1632–1704), George Berkeley (1685–1753), David Hume (1711–1776), Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), and G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831) (the list is partial). And in the twentieth century, one should make note of the important philosophical work by Continental philosophers on matters of religious significance: Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980), Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986), Albert Camus (1913–1960), Gabriel Marcel (1889–1973), Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929), Martin Buber (1878–1956), Emmanuel Levinas (1906–1995), Simone Weil (1909–1943) and, more recently Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), Michel Foucault (1926–1984), and Luce Irigary (1930–). Evidence of philosophers taking religious matters seriously can also be found in cases of when thinkers who would not (normally) be classified as philosophers of religion have addressed religion, including A.N. Whitehead (1861–1947), Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), G.E. Moore (1873–1958), John Rawls (1921–2002), Bernard Williams (1929–2003), Hilary Putnam (1926–2016), Derek Parfit (1942–2017), Thomas Nagel (1937–), Jürgen Habermas (1929–), and others.

In Chinese and Indian philosophy there is an even greater challenge than in the West to distinguish important philosophical and religious sources of philosophy of religion. It would be difficult to classify Nagarjuna (150–250 CE) or Adi Shankara (788–820 CE) as exclusively philosophical or religious thinkers. Their work seems as equally important philosophically as it is religiously (see Ranganathan 2018).

Fourth, a comprehensive study of theology or religious studies also provides good reasons to have expertise in philosophy of religion. As just observed, Asian philosophy and religious thought are intertwined and so the questions engaged in philosophy of religion seem relevant: what is space and time? Are there many things or one reality? Might our empirically observable world be an illusion? Could the world be governed by Karma? Is reincarnation possible? In terms of the West, there is reason to think that even the sacred texts of the Abrahamic faith involve strong philosophical elements: In Judaism, Job is perhaps the most explicitly philosophical text in the Hebrew Bible. The wisdom tradition of each Abrahamic faith may reflect broader philosophical ways of thinking; the Christian New Testament seems to include or address Platonic themes (the Logos, the soul and body relationship). Much of Islamic thought includes critical reflection on Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, as well as independent philosophical work.

History Of Religion

The earliest archaeological evidence of religious ideas dates back several hundred thousand years, to the Middle and Lower Palaeolithic periods. Archaeologists believe that the apparently intentional burial of early Homo sapiens and Neanderthals as early as 300,000 years ago is proof that religious ideas already existed. Other evidence of religious ideas includes symbolic artifacts from Middle Stone Age sites in Africa. However, the interpretation of early palaeolithic artifacts, with regard to how they relate to religious ideas, remains controversial. Archaeological evidence from more recent periods is less controversial. Scientists generally interpret a number of artifacts from the Upper Palaeolithic (50,000-13,000 BCE) as representing religious ideas. Examples of Upper Palaeolithic remains associated with religious beliefs include the lion man, the Venus figurines, cave paintings from Chauvet Cave and the elaborate ritual burial from Sungir.

In the 19th century, researchers proposed various theories regarding the origin of religion, challenging earlier claims of a Christianity-like urreligion. Early theorists such as Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917) and Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) emphasised the concept of animism, while archaeologist John Lubbock (1834-1913) used the term "fetishism". Meanwhile, the religious scholar Max Müller (1823-1900) theorized that religion began in hedonism and the folklorist Wilhelm Mannhardt (1831-1880) suggested that religion began in "naturalism" – by which he meant mythological explanations for natural events. All of these theories have been widely criticized since then; there is no broad consensus regarding the origin of religion.

Pre-pottery Neolithic A (PPNA) Göbekli Tepe, the oldest religious site yet discovered anywhere includes circles of erected massive T-shaped stone pillars, the world's oldest known megaliths decorated with abstract, enigmatic pictograms and carved-animal reliefs. The site, near the home place of original wild wheat, was built before the so-called Neolithic Revolution, i.e., the beginning of agriculture and animal husbandry around 9000 BCE. But the construction of Göbekli Tepe implies organization of an advanced order not hitherto associated with Paleolithic, PPNA, or PPNB societies. The site, abandoned around the time the first agricultural societies started, is still being excavated and analyzed, and thus might shed light on the significance it had had for the religions of older, foraging communities, as well as for the general history of religions.

The Pyramid Texts from ancient Egypt, the oldest known religious texts in the world, date to between 2400-2300 BCE. The earliest records of Indian religion are the Vedas, composed ca. 1500-1200 Hinduism during the Vedic Period.

Progression of Religion

Historians have labelled the period from 900 to 200 BCE as the "axial age", a term coined by German-Swiss philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883-1969). According to Jaspers, in this era of history "the spiritual foundations of humanity were laid simultaneously and independently... And these are the foundations upon which humanity still subsists today." Intellectual historian Peter Watson has summarized this period as the foundation time of many of humanity's most influential philosophical traditions, including monotheism in Persia and Canaan, Platonism in

Greece, Buddhism and Jainism in India, and Confucianism and Taoism in China. These ideas would become institutionalized in time – note for example Ashoka's role in the spread of Buddhism, or the role of platonic philosophy in Christianity at its foundation.

World religions of the present day established themselves throughout Eurasia during the Middle Ages by; Christianization of the Western world; Buddhist missions to East Asia; the decline of Buddhism in the Indian subcontinent; and the spread of Islam throughout the Middle East, Central Asia, North Africa and parts of Europe and India

During the Middle Ages, Muslims came into conflict with Zoroastrians during the Islamic conquest of Persia (633-654); Christians fought against Muslims during the Byzantine-Arab Wars (7th to 11th centuries), the Crusades (1095 onward), the Reconquista (718-1492), the Ottoman wars in Europe (13th century onwards) and the Inquisition; Shamanism was in conflict with Buddhists, Taoists, Muslims and Christians during the Mongol invasions (1206-1337); and Muslims clashed with Hindus and Sikhs during the Muslim conquest of the Indian subcontinent (8th to 16th centuries).

Many medieval religious movements emphasized mysticism, such as the Cathars and related movements in the West, the Jews in Spain, the Bhakti movement in India and Sufism in Islam. Monotheism reached definite forms in Christian Christology and in Islamic Tawhid. Hindu monotheist notions of Brahman likewise reached their classical form with the teaching of Adi Shankara (788-820).

From the 15th to the 19th century, European colonisation resulted in the spread of Christianity to Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Americas, Australia and the Philippines. The invention of the printing press in the 15th century played a major role in the rapid spread of the Protestant Reformation under leaders such as Martin Luther (1483-1546) and John Calvin (1509-1564). Wars of religion broke out, culminating in the Thirty Years War which ravaged Central Europe between 1618 and 1648. The 18th century saw the beginning of secularisation in Europe, a trend which gained momentum after the French Revolution broke out in 1789. By the late 20th century, religion had declined in most of Europe.

By 2001, people began to use the internet in order to discover or adhere to their religious beliefs. In January 2000, the website beliefnet was established, and by the following year, it had over 1.7 million visitors every month.

The African Philosophical Jurisprudence of Religion

"African traditional religion … is part of the religious heritage of humankind. Born out of the experience and deep reflection of our African forebears, it provides answers to the stirring of the human spirit and elaborates on the profundity of the experience of the divine-human encounter based on the resources of Africa's own cultural heritage and insight."

(Opoku 1993:67)

I have strong reason to believe that the Supreme Being has a strong place in the African ontology. He is regarded as an un created, self existent, unchanging, and reliable Being

whose power transcends all powers. He is seen as the Creator, Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent Being who is immortal and directs human affairs. In Africa, He is worshiped in most places without a temple and without an image attributed to Him because He is beyond human understanding and is unique showing that there is none like Him. This Supreme Being according to African ontology has so many deputies who work with Him in the unitary theocratic governance of the universe. These deputies are regarded as divinities. They are functionaries and ministers whose duties are to carry out the full instructions of the Supreme Being. They do not have absolute power or existence[22].

This is because their lives and existence are derived from the Supreme Being. They are created beings and so are subordinate to the Supreme Being in all matters. They can also be regarded as manifestations of the attributes of the Supreme Being. Africans have temples and shrines dedicated to these divinities even though they are seen as intermediaries between men and the Supreme Being. There are also the spirits who are either created as a race of their own or as the ultimate end of men who died on earth. Some of these spirits cause havoc on humans and so man uses many methods or tools to wade them off. The belief in guardian-spirit is also prominent in Africa. We are therefore of the view that in African traditional religious ontology, God-Supreme Being, divinities and spirits exist and plays a crucial role in that mode of existence which they belong and on humans on earth.[23] Arguments however on the omnipotence of God make it difficult to define him, they limit him. Scenarios of Moses and the burning bush experience and Elijah insinuate that God cannot be animated as a personality regardless of his existence and actions. His power lies in his uncertainty.

However, western thought has influenced the way that religion is understood. Western philosophy supported the separation between the sacred and the profane. Modernism, focusing on human rationality, reduced religion to a set of correctly formulated dogmas and doctrines. Western thought, dominated by Christianity, created a hierarchical structure of world religions through a theology of religions. Can an African understanding of religion make a contribution to the understanding of what religion is? Such a question requires an African understanding of religion, as well as an understanding of African religion. From an African perspective, religion emphasizes the human effort to systematize, in society, the continuation of a religious experience relevant to a specific context. Tradition, expressed in rituals and ethics, becomes the social expression of these religious experiences. African religion tends not to differentiate the transcendental from the earthly. African scholars do not present one unified understanding of religion. Some scholars would even argue that an African understanding is nothing more than an internalized form of Western perspectives. To characterize African Traditional Religion as a separate type of religion minimizes the contribution that an African understanding can make to religion.[24]

For starters, the word "religion" is problematic for many Africans, because it suggests that religion is separate from the other aspects of one's culture, society, or environment. But for

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22   What is Religion? An African Understanding by Jaco Beyers
23   God, Divinities and Spirits in African Traditional Oncology Rev. Emeka C. Ekeke1 and Dr. Chike A. Ekeopara2 1Lecturer, Department of Religious Studies, University of Calabar, Pmb1115 Calabar, Crossriver State, Nigeria, Email revekekemekus@yahoo.com 2Senior Lecturer, Department of Religious Studies, University of Calabar, Pmb1115 Calabar, Crossriver State, Nigeria.
24   What is Religion? An African Understanding by Jaco Beyers

many Africans, religion can never be separated from all these. It is a way of life, and it can never be separated from the public sphere. Religion informs everything in traditional African society, including political art, marriage, health, diet, dress, economics, and death.

This is not to say that indigenous African spirituality represents a form of theocracy or religious totalitarianism — not at all. African spirituality simply acknowledges that beliefs and practices touch on and inform every facet of human life, and therefore African religion cannot be separated from the everyday or mundane. African spirituality is truly holistic. For example, sickness in the indigenous African worldview is not only an imbalance of the body, but also an imbalance in one's social life, which can be linked to a breakdown in one's kinship and family relations or even to one's relationship with one's ancestors.

Over the centuries there have been attempts to define the phenomenon of religion. These attempts have come from various perspectives, ranging from the psychological, sociological and anthropological to the philosophical and theological[25] and, most recently, they have come from a biological perspective.[26] Not only can these attempts be arranged according to perspectives, but also according to theories (Crosby 1981:5), providing definitions for the groups of definitions. Although varied, the theories and definitions became fixed in stereotypical forms. As a result of the confusion caused by the plethora of definitions there have even been suggestions to discard the mostly dominant Western term 'religion' altogether.[27]

The majority of definitions of, and theories on, religion have originated from a Western background. Even the whole existence of the term 'religion' is seen as a 'eurozentrischen' (Eurocentric) term (Figl 2003:73). Sundermeier (1999:11) points out that the mere question about what religion is betrays a Western background. Thus, a whole world of Western-determined references is implied when talking about religion, but such a so-called Western understanding of religion is not necessarily homogenous.

The dominant religion of the West has been Christianity. The result is that a Christian (Western) understanding of religion dominated the scholarly field. There are those who now believe that there are no proper equivalents to the term 'religion' in other cultures (Figl 2003:73). A Christian theology of religions led Western scholars to arrange religions in a hierarchical structure, implying that some religions were inferior to others (Momen 1999:69).

The typology of religion as a result of Western scholarship led to a categorisation of religion according to levels of development. The discovery of new cultures and continents during the 17th and 18th centuries created a dilemma concerning the relation between religions. Western thought on this led to the creation of a category named 'primal' or 'traditional' religions. This category was used to group religions together that showed similarities in structure. The premise for this categorisation was the acceptance of the evolutionistic development of religions. The earliest religion in 'original' form could be discovered by studying religious practices of contemporary tribal societies (Thorpe 1992:5). The assumption was that some

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25   (Momen 1999:52–73)
26   (Hammer 2005).
27   (Asad, cited in Figl 2003:71).

religions progressed in development and others did not. The underdeveloped religions were pejoratively referred to as primal, traditional or primitive, or even tribal, religions[28] even in efforts to try to understand African religions, scholars have 'abstracted African religions from their cultural and historical contexts'.[29] Scholars of religion, as well as anthropologists, 'had a tendency to "Westernize" African religions'.[30]

Magesa (2002) points out that Western scholars defined African religion in terms of Western philosophy. 'If there was such a thing approximating religion at all in Africa, they [Western scholars] argued, it was "animism" or "fetishism", a multiplicity of ritual actions with natural objects as deities.[31] The purpose of missionaries in such conditions was to 'do away with' this religion based on superstition and convert Africans to the God known by Europeans.

However, I want to point out that unlike the European's fragmentation of an **"African God"** and African sorcery in the favour of themselves, one can't define God in a corner and these religions are only metaphors that lead us to God besides the devil is the same personality globally, why then should God be different? Most African writers decorate God differently as Europeans decorate the devil quite differently too, we shall allude to one of the earliest famous works of English writer William Shakespeare at (Macbeth) and how whites practice witchcraft. This will also answer whether it is true that we import and export God juxtaposing African works thereby. Below is a synopsis that will animate the analysis there from.

Macbeth, set primarily in Scotland, mixes witchcraft, prophecy, and murder. Three "Weird Sisters" appear to Macbeth and his comrade Banquo after a battle and prophesy that Macbeth will be king and that the descendants of Banquo will also reign. When Macbeth arrives at his castle, he and Lady Macbeth plot to assassinate King Duncan, soon to be their guest, so that Macbeth can become king.

After Macbeth murders Duncan, the king's two sons flee, and Macbeth is crowned. Fearing that Banquo's descendants will, according to the Weird Sisters' predictions, take over the kingdom, Macbeth has Banquo killed. At a royal banquet that evening, Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost appear covered in blood. Macbeth determines to consult the Weird Sisters again. They comfort him with ambiguous promises.

Another nobleman, Macduff, rides to England to join Duncan's older son, Malcolm. Macbeth has Macduff's wife and children murdered. Malcolm and Macduff lead an army against Macbeth, as Lady Macbeth goes mad and commits suicide.

Macbeth confronts Malcolm's army, trusting in the Weird Sisters' comforting promises. He learns that the promises are tricks, but continues to fight. Macduff kills Macbeth and Malcolm becomes Scotland's king.

In exploring Shakespeare's use of religious imagery in act 2 of Macbeth, Shakespeare uses religious imagery throughout the play to emphasize how morally wrong Macbeth and

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28   (Sundermeier 1999:31).
29   (Westerlund 1993:59).
30   (Westerlund 1993:59).
31   (Magesa 2002:14–15).

his wife's actions were and to project how prominent religion was in this era and how its traditions are influential and affect individual characters. In scene 1 Shakespeare introduces the religious imagery by referring to the stars:

'There's husbandry in heaven, their candles are all out'.

By using personification to imply that there is someone managing heaven as the stars are all shining that brightly tonight, Shakespeare presents the idea that the world has a director who is in control of not only natural things, but is morally conscious also and will punish those who do wrong. Furthermore. **'Merciful powers'** implies that Banquo is calling on supernatural beings, specifically angels, to protect himself from **'demons'**, yet we are aware that later on in the play, when he is killed by Macbeth his life is vulnerable, whether he had asked for divine protection or not. This gives an impression to the audience that religion is an ironic aspect of the play as those who are dependent on it are often let down and Shakespeare seems to be questioning his own belief in a **'higher power'**. This is shown again act 2 scene 2 when the guards who were supposed to be protecting Duncan, having been made unconscious by drink given to them by Lady Macbeth, upon waking again **'did say their prayers'**. This is satirical as these guards then have Duncan's death blamed on them by the Macbeths and are murdered, despite having just asked God for forgiveness of their sins. Additionally, in Act 2 Scene 1, Macbeth, having murdered Duncan, says **'it is a knell that summons thee to heaven or to hell'.** This suggests that although the audience has had little interference that Duncan has done anything which would warrant the extremity of hell, there is a possibility that he could have been deserving of such a punishment.

Alternatively, Shakespeare could potentially be emphasizing Macbeth's desperation to try and justify the crime he has just committed. By highlighting the theme of judgment- 'to heaven or to hell'- when Macbeth first begins his catastrophic quest for power, Shakespeare is foreseeing the difficulty Macbeth and lady Macbeth begin to have later in the play when it comes to evaluating their own characters and ways, they have achieved their supremacy. Moreover, in Act 2 scene 2, the audience bear witness to Macbeth trying to come to terms with his crimes when the guards were praying, and struggling to ask for forgiveness from God. Through Macbeth's inability to forgive himself for what he has done, we are shown that he is starting to struggle with the concept of being unable to hide his deceit from God:

'I could not say "Amen" ...but wherefore could I not pronounce "Amen"? I had most need of blessing, and "Amen/ stuck in my throat.'

Macbeth is aware that if he still wants to go to heaven once he is dead, he must have God's forgiveness, and yet he is so overwhelmed by guilt that he cannot bring himself to as for it. Similarly, Lady Macbeth says to her husband in Act 2 scene 3: **'Go get some water/and wash this filthy witness from your hand'.** This is a direct reference to Pontius Pilate, who after he has been pressured by the crowd to order the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, "washes his hands" of the deed to demonstrate that he is not entirely guilty. Macbeth's crime to that of Pilates, as both were responsible for the death of an innocent man but were not willing to accept the full onus. This is repeated later in scene when Lady Macbeth says again 'A little water clears us of this deed.' This could also be a reference to baptism and the importance in the church of

being cleansed by all sins. Macbeth could be compared to another religious character when Lady Macbeth says 'fear a painted devil'. Thereby the belief that the western world holds no witchcraft is long dead, Shakespeare suggests that actually the practice started way back before the world became aware of it.

The traditional African religions or traditional beliefs and practices of African people are set of highly diverse beliefs that include various ethnic religions. Generally, these traditions are oral rather than scriptural and passed down from one generation to another through folk tales, songs and festivals, they include belief in an amount of a higher or lower god, sometimes including a supreme creator or force, belief in spirits, veneration of the dead, use of magic and traditional African medicine. Most religions can be described as animistic with various polytheistic and pantheistic aspects. The role of humanity is generally seen as one of harmonizing nature with the supernatural. Christianity came first to the continent of Africa in the 1st or early 2nd century AD. Oral tradition says the first Muslims appeared while the prophet Mohammed was still alive (he died in 632). Thus, both religions have been on the African continent for over 1300 years. A critical Analysis on African Traditional Religion and the Trinity by JS Mangany 2013 cited by 32- It is also known that in ancient times some of the kings were elevated to the position of a god, it seems therefore that Africans don't question the reality of God, because it is a given. Traditional African beliefs and practices report interactive database side by side with their high levels of commitment to Christianity and Islam, many people in the countries surveyed retain beliefs and rituals that are characteristic of traditional African religions. In four countries for instance, half or more of the population believes that sacrifices to ancestors or spirits can protect them from harm. In addition, roughly a quarter or more of the population in 11 countries say they believe in the protective power of juju (charms or amulets), shrines and other sacred objects. Belief in the power of such objects is highest in Senegal (75%) and lowest in Rwanda (5%).[32]

In addition to expressing high levels of belief in the protective power of sacrificial offerings and sacred objects, upwards of one in five people in every country say they believe in the evil eye, or the ability of certain people to cast out malevolent curses or spells. In five countries (Tanzania, Cameroon, DRC, Senegal and Mali) majorities express this belief. In most countries surveyed, at least three in ten people believe in reincarnation, which may be related to traditional beliefs in ancestral spirits. The conviction that people will be reborn in this world again tends to be more common amongst Christians than Muslims. The continued influence of traditional African religion is also evident in some aspects of daily life. For example, in 14 of the 19 countries surveyed, more than three in ten people say they sometimes consult traditional healers when someone in their household is sick. This includes five countries (Cameroon, Chad, Guinea Bissau, Mali and Senegal) where more than half the population uses traditional healers. While the recourse to traditional healers may be motivated in part by economic reasons and an absence of health care alternatives, it may also be rooted in religious beliefs about the efficacy of this approach. African peoples do not consider God to be a man, but in order to express certain concepts, they employ languages and images about God as an aid to their conceptualization of him whom they have not seen and about whom they confess to know little or nothing. God is experienced as an all-pervading reality. He is

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32   Deng, Francis Mading. Africans of Two Worlds.   New Haven: Yale UP, 1978.

the constant participant in the affairs of human beings. Scholars who study religion in Africa tell us that all African societies have a belief in God.[33]

The writer Joyce Cary, preface to **"The African Witch"** wherever something stands, there also something will stand. I will try to raise famous African writers view of religion in their works, Chinua Achebe in 'Arrow of God'[34] and how he alludes to the God that is globally juxtaposed, the devil too. Arrow of God explores how Igbo spirituality and religious life dies an ignominious death when confronted by Christianity. Christianity is backed by the white man's military and political power. As a result, Christianity is also identified with the source of their power. What can be more fascinating that the work of the religious imagination, for good or evil, on men's minds and so upon history…? cited by Achebe published in 1964, Arrow of God tells the story of a priest, Ezeulu, who declines an appointment as warrant chief during the years when district officers were attempting to apply Lugard's policy of indirect rule to Eastern Nigeria. He is imprisoned for several weeks, and so is unable to announce the appearance of the new moon in his village. As a result, the feasts of the new yam is delayed, the villagers suffer from hunger as their old supplies of yams run out, and some begin to turn to the harvest festival of the Christian god as an alternative. The novels closing pages show Ezeulu isolated in his madness following the death of his favorite son. Achebe has based his novel on an actual incident. Recorded by Simon Nnolim in The History of Umuchu, in which a priest called Ezeagu rejected a chieftaincy in 1913, was imprisoned and refused to roast the sacred yams for the months missed. The subject matter in Arrow of God is the Whiteman's ability to downplay the African perspective of "God" by simply packaging God differently by "Christianity".

Achebe gives evidence to this assertion by the theme of the book that highlights conflict, between the communities of Umuaro and Okperi to have control of land, religious conflict between the villages of Ezeulu's and Ezidemili's and their priests Ezeulu and Ezidemili. With the biggest conflict being between the gods, Ulu and the White man's Christian God. As the African communities and villages fight for power amongst themselves, Christianity slowly comes in and takes over the god Ulu. One of the first conflicts in the story is the fight over land;

'He is still our protector, even though we no longer fear Abame warriors at night. But I will not see with these eyes of mine his priest making himself lord over us. My father told me many things, but he didn't tell me that Ezeulu was king in Umuaro.' (Achebe Pg. 101)

Even though Nwaka is claiming to support Ulu the higher god, by speaking against the Chief Priest Ezeulus he is in turn trying to weaken Ulu's power in Umuaro. Once again by the villages of Umuaro fighting amongst themselves over religion and going to war, they are making it easy for the white man to intervene and their Christian god to slowly take over. The bigger religious conflict in the story is between Ulu and the Christian god. Throughout, the white man is stirring up conflict amongst communities and villages, and promoting their Christian

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33   Deng, Francis Mading. Africans of Two Worlds.   New Haven: Yale UP, 1978.
34   Arrow   of God (1964) Published by the Penguin Group Penguin Books   Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, US www.penguin.com First published in the African Writers Series   1965

god. The first sign of this is when Mr. Goodcountry, a white man, urges local Christians to kill the python which symbolizes the old gods in Umuaro's religion. One of Ezeulu's son Oduche takes on the challenge and tries to kill the sacred python, but at the last minute doesn't do it. All of the villagers know what Oduche has done, however Ezeulu doesn't punish his son furthering the divide between the people.

Yams were a symbol of masculinity and being a good provider. The yams could not be harvested until Ezeulu began the feast of the yams. Ezeulu knew he was losing power and tried to get revenge on his people by delaying the hasrvest of the yams. In doing this Umuaro falls into famine and people die. The white man then makes the promise that if the people of Umuaro sacrifice to the Christian God they will be saved from the famine. As Ezeulu states;

"...the house which the stranger has been seeking to pull down has caught fire of its own free will..." (Achebe Pg. 106)

Is there one religion in Africa? Africa does not present itself as one united front of ideas and religion. The historical development of Africa allowed a multitude of influences. 'If Africa is anything, it is various and there are million ways of being an African' (Maluleke 2001:37). Religiously, as well as a culturally, there is huge diversity on the vast continent of Africa; Africa consists of 'multiple identities.'[35] It is generally accepted that there are many religious systems in Africa.[36] It therefore is impossible to talk of one type of religion as being uniquely African. There is diversity in religious concepts and practices in Africa and it will therefore not be incorrect to talk about different African religions (plural)[37]

Mbiti argues that, although the religious expressions in Africa are multiple, the philosophy underlying religious life is singular (Mbiti 1990:1). Krüger et al. (2009:35) concede to this fact: 'religions of black Africa are similar enough to talk of African Religion in a generic sense. They also share a sufficient number of characteristics.' There seems to be a coherent philosophy underlying the different expressions of religion in Africa. The expressions of thought may vary and differ, but they still remain expression of basic belief (Magesa 2002:17).

In this article, reference has already been made to the African attitude to the plurality of religion (cf. Introduction): equality of religions, pluralism and parity of all religions are accepted.[38] There is salvation outside of the (Christian) church and without Christ (Turaki 1999:29). God is seen as 'the Father of not only humanity in general (individuals) but also of the religions and cultures of all peoples in the world' (Turaki 1999:29). Therefore, all religions in Africa have a right to exist and make a valuable contribution to the understanding of the divine.

Characteristics although varied in outward appearance, African religions display similarities. There have been many attempts at describing African Traditional Religion according to its main characteristics. Turaki (1999:69) lists the following main characteristics:

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35   (Maluleke 2001:37).
36   (Magesa 2002:16; Mbiti 1990:1).
37   (cf. Krüger, Lubbe & Steyn 2009:35).
38   (Turaki 1999:29).

- Belief in a Supreme Being

- Belief in spirits and divinities

- The cult of ancestors

- The use of magic, charms and spiritual forces. Krüger et al. (2009:35–39) identify the following three common traits of African religions that enable scholars to talk of African Religion (singular):

- Belief in a Supreme Being

- The realm of spirits

- A unified community. Taking the above efforts into consideration, it would be fair to describe the most common elements of African Traditional Religion under the following headings.

The belief in transcendence and the definition of religion, as understood by Sundermeier (1999), is helpful in understanding African Traditional Religion. Sundermeier (1999:27) sees religion as the communal answer given to the experience of the transcendental and its manifestation in rites and ethics. According to this definition, the existence of the transcendental is accepted a priori. This is also the case in African Traditional Religion (Magesa 1997:40). It is necessary to maintain a vague understanding of the transcendental, as it may refer to a dynamistic power and/or a personal god. Rites are part of the social structure of religion. Ethics, Sundermeier (1999:27) points out, does not have its origin in humanity and must be understood as an essential element of religion. African Traditional Religion has a specific understanding of the origin and function of ethics.

The transcendental in terms of life force African Traditional Religion is strongly based on belief in impersonal power. This dynamistic understanding of the universe influences all human behavior. Turaki (1999:78) points out how this power has been given many different names in the past: mana, life force, vital force, life essence and dynamism. Higher mysterious powers, called the mysterium tremendum by Smith (cited in Turaki 1999:78), fill objects with power that can have either a positive or negative effect on people.[39]

Magesa (1997:35) points out that the structure of African Traditional Religion is based on morality. Morality originates with God and flows into the ancestors. God is the 'Giver of Life, the Power' behind everything (Magesa 1997:35). The way of human life (tradition) originates from God (Magesa 1997:35). Tradition contains the moral code and prescriptions for an ethical life.

The transcendental is experienced as an imminent reality by way of providing the moral code for human life. The African understanding of morality is based on a cosmological understanding. The universe consists of two spheres, the one being visible and the other invisible. The visible world is creation as we perceive around us. The invisible world is the residing place of God, the ancestors and all the spirits and powers. The inhabitants of the

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39   Ekeopara, Chike Augustine. African Traditional Religion: An Introduction. Calabar: NATOS Affair, 2005.

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invisible world are called the 'forces of life' or 'vital forces' by Tempels (cited in Magesa 1997:39). The ultimate power is God, the Creator, the provider of ethics and traditions. God provides every living thing with its 'own force of life, its own power to sustain life' (Magesa 1997:46). All living beings are interconnected through this life force. All living things receive the energy for life from the same source. (This connectedness is emphasized in the discussion on community that will follow.) The whole purpose of life in African Traditional Religion is to preserve and enhance this life force that everyone has received (Magesa 1997:51). Moral behavior maintains and enhances life force, but disobedience and disloyal behavior toward the tradition passed on by the ancestors will weaken life force. The whole purpose of African life is to ensure the capacity of this life force. A close relationship with God, the ancestors and other humans will ensure life force (Magesa 1997:52).[40]

The capacity for life force is not only threatened by an immoral life, but also through the evil working of spirits (Magesa 1997:53). Spirits can be employed to bring harm to others and to tap the life force of others. The same spirits can be implored to protect one from the evil intentions of others.

African Traditional Religion, according to Magesa, is based on maintaining the balance between the two spheres of the universe (the visible and invisible world). The maintenance of this balance and harmony is humanity's greatest ethical obligation and determines the quality of life (Magesa 1997:73). Humans live through the connectedness with the life force that God, the Supreme Being, provides.

The transcendental in terms of a supreme being Fundamental to definitions of religion is the acknowledgement of the existence of the transcendental and human reaction to it. The transcendental also features in African Traditional Religion.

According to Mbiti's monumental research (1970:3) on the African perception of a deity, God takes the highest possible position. Although perceived as omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, transcendental as well as immanent, God is more accurately defined as being 'incomprehensible and mysterious' (Mbiti 1970:26). God is acknowledged as creator (Mbiti 1970:45; 1990:39, 91).[41] Although there are many different myths relating to the exact act of creation, it is seen as an activity where God is the acting subject. God (and his creation) has no beginning and no end (Opoku 1993:70, 73). He is accessible to all humankind (Opoku 1993:70–71).

Divinities in African Religious Ontology suggest that African religions partly recognize a group of being popularly known as divinities. These beings have been given various names by various writers such as 'gods', 'demigods', 'nature spirits', divinities, and the like. Mbiti explains that the term "covers personification of God's activities and manifestations, the so-called 'nature spirits', deified heroes, and mythological figures"[42]. This belief in divinities is a common phenomenon especially in West Africa, while in other parts of Africa; the concept

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40   Shorter, Aylward W. F. African Culture and the Christian Church. London: Geoffery Champman, 1978.
41   Mbiti, John S. African Religions and Philosophy. London: Heinemann, 1969. Concepts of God in Africa. London: SPCK, 1975. Introduction to African Religion. London: Heinemann, 1975.
42   Mbiti, John S. African Religions and Philosophy. London: Heinemann, 1969. Concepts of God in Africa. London: SPCK, 1975. Introduction to African Religion. London: Heinemann, 1975.

is not succinctly expressed.[43] This is what Francis O. C. Njoku means when he said, "The phenomenon of belief in divinities is not everywhere prominent in Africa" (125).[44] In West Africa where the concept is clearly expressed, there are so many of such divinities. In Yoruba pantheon, for example, Idowu explains that there are as much as 201, 401, 600, or 1700 divinities (Qtd in Njoku 127). In Edo of Nigeria, Mbiti narrates that there are as many divinities as there are human needs, activities and experiences, and the cults of these divinities are recognized as such. In his words "One [divinity] is connected with wealth, human fertility, and supply of children (Oluku); another is iron (Ogu), another of medicine (Osu), and another of death (Ogiuwu)".[45]

Divinities have been grouped into two major groups namely: the **Principal Divinities** and **Minor Divinities**. Principal divinities are regarded as part of the original order of things. Njoku sees these as being "co-eval with the coming into being of the cosmos" (126). They include such divinities as Sango or Amadioha – thunder divinities for Yoruba and Igbo; Ani or Ala – earth divinity among the Igbo, Aje in Idoma land and other solar divinities. The Dinka people of Sudan recognize Deng divinity associated with rain, fertility and others, Abak with mother role, Garang – perfect picture of father/son relationship. They also recognize Macardt – a divinity associated with death (127). Nature of Divinities: There are two major schools of thought as regards the origin of divinities in African religious ontology. The first school of thought is led by John S. Mbiti. He argues that divinities were created by the Supreme Being. He explains that divinities "have been created by God in the ontological category of the spirits. They are associated with Him, and often stand for His activities or manifestation either as personifications or as the spiritual beings in charge of these major objects or phenomena of nature."[46] By this view of Mbiti and his group, divinities are under the Supreme Being in the order of things.

They can also be seen as manifestations of the characteristics or attributes of the Supreme Being. The second school of thought, championed by E. Bolaji Idowu, argues that divinities were not created but were brought out into being. In his words, From the point of view of the theology of African traditional religion, it will not be correct to say that the divinities were created. It will be correct to say that they were brought into being, or that they came into being in the nature of things with regard to the divine ordering of the universe (169). This view of Idowu may correspond to the Christian theology about the divinity of Christ. Christians believe that Christ was not created but came out (brought forth) from the Father and so shares almost all the attributes of the Father. This is why he is called the Son of God. In the same way, Idowu applies the same theology to the divinities. He explains that Orisa-nla (the arch-divinity among the Yoruba) "is definitely a derivation partaking of the very nature and metaphysical attributes of Olodumare" (169). This is why the Yoruba people call him "Deity's son and deputy, vested with the power and authority of royal sonship "(169). In Benin of Nigeria, Olokun the arch-divinity is regarded as the son of Osanobwa, which means a son vested with power and majesty by his father.

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43   (Concept of God in Africa, 117).
44   Njoku, Francis O. C. Essays in African Philosophy, Thought & Theology. Owerri: Claretian Institute of
          Philosophy & Clacom Communication, 2002.
45   (Concepts of God in Africa, 119).
46   (African Religions and Philosophy 75, 76).

Among the Akan people of Ghana, all their divinities are regarded as sons of Onyame. Idowu therefore argues that "it is in consequence of this derivative relationship that these divine "beings" are entitled to be called divinities or deities" (169). A careful look at these two schools will show that Idowu was applying the Christian theological principle to African traditional religion by declaring that the divinities were not created just as Christians believe that Jesus Christ was not created. Chike Ekeopara lays his weight behind Idowu by declaring that the divinities were not created and adds "Divinities are brought into being to serve the will of the Supreme Being". There is an agreement among scholars that divinities are divided into two groups. One group being spirits and the other group being human beings of the distant past, who, by their heroic activities where deified. Our argument here is that if all divinities were not created, it means that those heroic human beings of the distant past who were deified were not created. This will run contrary to the general belief of Africans concerning the Supreme Being whom alone has no beginning and no ending in African religious theology. If the divinities are said to posses the same uncreated nature, then there must be equality between them in some sense.

But we have submitted in this paper that in Yoruba of Nigeria, the name Olodumare, a name given to the Supreme Being, means a king or chief who wields authority and is "unique". This uniqueness means one of his kinds. None is comparable to Him. He is unchangeable and reliable. It therefore follows that if God is unique then every other creature must be different from Him. They are regarded as divinities. Their being called divinities is because they are sometimes the personification of the natural forces or the manifestation of the Supreme Being. This researcher therefore, agrees with John S. Mbiti that divinities "have been created by God initially as spirits... [and] are largely the personifications of natural objects and forces... of the universe" (Introduction to African Religion, 66)

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIVINITIES AND SUPREME BEING

1. They are created "beings". As created beings, they are subordinate to the Supreme Being.

2. They are derivations from Deity. The divinities do not have independent existence or absolute existence, but derive their being from the Supreme Being. This means that "since divinities derive their being from the Supreme Being, their powers and authorities are meaningless apart from Him (Ekeopara 19).[47]

3. They are given functions to perform: Divinities do not perform duties against the will of the Supreme Being rather they are obedient to the command of the Supreme Being. Various communities of Africa who believe in divinities have their local names for each divinity depending on the function the divinity performs. In Yoruba Jakuta, the divinity responsible for Wrath-one who hurls or fights with stones", is known in Nupe as Sokogba – God's axe. Among the Igbo Ala or Ani – Earth, is the arch-divinity responsible for the fertility of the soil.

4. Another important relationship between the divinities and Supreme Being in Africa is that the divinities serve as "functionaries in the theocratic government of the universe" (Idowu

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47   Ekeopara, Chike Augustine. African Traditional Religion: An Introduction. Calabar: NATOS Affair, 2005.

170).[48]   This means that the various divinities have been apportioned various duties to perform in accordance with the will of the Supreme Being. This is clearly shown by Idowu in his book Olodumare … where he explained that in Dahomey, Mawu-Lisa is regarded as an arch-divinity who apportioned the kingdoms of the sky, the sea, and the earth to six of his off-springs. He made his seventh child Legba, the divine messenger and inspector-general in African pantheon (80). This also means that the divinities are ministers with different definite portfolios in the monarchial government of the Supreme Being. They therefore serve as administrative heads of various departments (Idowu, African Traditional Religion, 170).

5. Divinities are Intermediaries between man and the Supreme Being. They have therefore become channels through which sacrifices, prayers and offerings are presented to the Supreme Being. In Africa, there are no images of the Supreme Being but the divinities are represented with images temples or shrines. Idowu explains that the divinities do not prevent Africans from knowing or worshiping the Supreme Being directly as some erroneously claim, but constitute only a half-way house which is not meant to be permanent resting place for man's soul. While man may find the divinities 'sufficient' for certain needs, something continues to warn him that 'sufficiency' is only in Deity [Supreme Being] …. The divinities are only means to an end and not end in themselves. In African religious ontology, especially among the West African people, the concept of divinity is well established. Divinities are so many that their number seems not to be known. This concept has made so many scholars to believe that African religion is either pantheism or polytheism. Those who believe that African religion is pantheistic are of the view that Africans see spirit in everything including wood, tree, fire, and others. Though this may be true but Africans do not see these spirits as deserving worship. They still have a strong place for the Supreme Being whom they revere in a special way, and whom they believe is unique. On the other hand, those who see African religion as being pantheistic have failed to understand that "polytheism is a qualitative and not quantitative concept. It is not a belief in a plurality of gods but rather the lack of a unifying and transcending ultimate which determines its character" (Tillich 246).[49]

 A careful study of this definition will reveal that in Africa, though there are many gods, yet there is One Supreme God who is worshipped above all-others. This means that the One Supreme God believed in Africa becomes the unifying and transcending ultimate who therefore determines the character of every other activity, showing that polytheism cannot be the right term to describe the type of religion practiced in Africa. Edward E. Evans Pritchard recognized that Nuer religion should not be seen as either monotheistic or polytheistic. He explains that it could be regarded as both depending upon the context. In his words, it is a question of level, or situation of thought rather than of exclusive types of thought. On one level, Nuer religion may be regarded as monotheistic, at another level polytheistic; and it can also be regard as totemistic (52).[50] Francis Deng has also seen the religion of the Dinka people as monotheistic. He explains that to Dinka people, their Supreme God, Nhiali "is One" and that all other deities and spirits are identified with this "Over-All God" (51). We therefore agree with Idowu and Deng that African traditional religion is "Unitary Monotheism". This

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48   Oludumare: God in Yoruba Belief. London: Longmans, 1962.
49   Tillich, Paul. Systematic Theology, Vol. One. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1951.
50   Evans – Pritchard, Edward E. Nuer Religion. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1956

is a kind of unitary theocratic government (Idowu, African Traditional Religion ... 168).[51] A government where powers are delegated to various deities or divinities for the governance of the universe, and they bring report to the Supreme Being at intervals.

Spirits in African Religious Ontology

 In African traditional religion, the concept of spirits is well defined. This is because Africans believe in, recognize and accept the fact of the existence of spirits, who may use material objects as temporary residences and manifestations of their presence and actions through natural objects and phenomena (Idowu, African Tradition Religion ... 173).[52] This does not mean that traditional religion in Africa was an alienation in which "man felt himself unable to dominate his environment, in the grip of ghosts and demons, under the spell of the awe-inspiring phenomena of nature, a prey to imaginary magical forces or cruel and capricious spirits" (Shorter 49).

What we are stressing here is the fact that Africans, though they believe in the existence of spirits, are not being taken captive by this belief so that they do not consider other materialistic elements in the universe. When we refer to spirits in African religious ontology, we are not referring to divinities or to ancestors, but to "those apparitional entities which form separate category of beings from those described as divinities" (Idowu, African ... 173).[53] They are considered as "powers which are almost abstract, as shades or vapours which take on human shape; they are immaterial and incorporeal beings" (173, 174). As immaterial and incorporeal, it is possible for them to assume various dimensions whenever they wish to be seen. These spirits are created by God but differ from God and man. Man has in various occasions addressed these spirits anthropomorphically by attributing human characteristics such as thinking, speaking, intelligence and the possession of power which they use whenever they wish. Spirits that we are looking at in this part of the work are the "'common' spiritual beings beneath the status of divinities, and above the status of men. They are the 'common populace' of spiritual beings", (Mbiti, African Religions ... 78).

Origin of Spirits: In African religions, there are three main sources of spirits;

1. Some believe that spirits are created by the Supreme Being as a special "race" of their own. As a race of their own, they continue to reproduce their kind and increase in number until they have become myriads in number.

2. Others in Africa are different in their thinking as per the origin of spirits. This second group "believe that the spirits are what remain of human beings when they die physically" (Mbiti, Africa Religion... 79).[54] To this group, this "becomes the ultimate status of men, the point of change or development beyond which men cannot go apart from a few national heroes who might become deified" (79). This then means that the ultimate hope of man is to become a spirit when he dies.

51   Idowu, E. Bolaji. African Traditional Religion: A Definition. London: SCM, 1973.
52   Idowu, E. Bolaji. African Traditional Religion: A Definition. London: SCM, 1973.
53   Idowu, E. Bolaji. African Traditional Religion: A Definition. London: SCM, 1973.
54   Mbiti, John S. African Religions and Philosophy. London: Heinemann, 1969. Concepts of God in Africa. London: SPCK, 1975. Introduction to African Religion. London: Heinemann, 1975.

3. The third source of spirit is animals that died. In Africa, some societies believe that animals have souls and spirits which continue to live with the spirits of dead men after they died. In this way, the world of the spirit is a picture of the material world where humans and animals live.

Nature of Spirits

Spirits are nondescript, immortal and invisible entities. This is because they do not possess material body through which they could be seen but they may incarnate into any material thing in order to make themselves seen for any reason or purpose. People have however experienced their activities and many folk stories in Africa tell of spirits described in human form, activities and personalities, though sometimes, these descriptions are exaggeration created by the elders to teach special lessons. Since they are invisible, these spirits are thought to be ubiquitous, so that a person is never sure where they are or are not (Mbiti, African... 79). Spirits do not have any family or personal ties with human beings, and so cannot be regarded as the living dead. This is why people fear them, although intrinsically speaking spirits are strangers, foreigners, and outsiders in the category of things. Ontologically, spirits are a depersonalized and not a completion or maturation mode of existence. The spirit mode of existence according to Mbiti "is the withering of the individual, so that this personality evaporates, his name disappears and he becomes less and not more of a person: a thing, a spirit and not a man any more" (Africa Religion...79).

Majority of people in Africa believe that spirits dwell in the woods, bush, forest, and rivers. Others hold that spirits dwell in mountains, hills, valleys or just around the village and at road junctions. Spirits are in the same environment with men. This means that man has to try in one way or the other to protect himself from the activities of the spirits knowing that the spirits are stronger than him. He uses the various means available to him such as magical powers, sacrifices, and offerings to appease, control and change the course of their action.

Man's Relationship with Spirits

A further study of the activities of the spirits shows that they may cause terrible harm on men. This they do through causing madness or epilepsy and other terrible sickness. In some cases, they may possess people causing them to prophesy. Mbiti explains that;

"During the height of spirit possession, the individual in effect loses his own personality and acts in the content of the 'personality' of the spirit possessing him" (African Religions… 82).[55]

 The spirits may choose to drive the person away making him to live in the forest. It may give the person information for the larger society in the case of a prophet or soothsayer. When spirits possession is noticed, the traditional doctors and diviners may be called to exorcise that spirit from the person thereby setting him free from his captor. Among the disastrous spirits that rule in African society is the spirit of witches. To Africans this spirit is real, active and powerful yet very dangerous and disastrous in its actions and activities. Elsewhere, Idowu

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55   Mbiti, John S. African Religions and Philosophy. London: Heinemann, 1969. Concepts of God in Africa. London: SPCK, 1975. Introduction to African Religion. London: Heinemann, 1975.

explains, concerning the concept of witchcraft thus:

"African concept about witchcraft consist in the believe that the spirits of living human beings can be sent out of the body on errands of doing havoc to other persons in body, mind or estate; that witches have guilds or operate singly, and that the spirits sent out of the human body in this way can act either invisibly or through a lower creature an animal or a bird" (African Traditional Religion… 175,176).[56]

This concept does not require laboratory test for scientist to believe. This is because the realm of spirits is a realm that transcends scientific scrutiny. It is believed among Africans and that is all that matters. The guild of witches meets regularly for their ceremonies in forests, on trees or under trees, in open places or at the junction of the roads in the middle of the night. This meeting is done at the soul or spirit level meaning that the spirits leave the body of the witches in form of a particular bird or animal. Idowu reiterates the purpose of this meeting as to work havoc on other human beings; and the operation is the operation of spirits upon spirits, that is, it is the ethereal bodies of the victims that are attacked, extracted, and devoured; and this is what is meant when it is said that witches have sucked the entire blood of the victim. Thus, in the case of witches or their victims, spirits meet spirits, spirits operate upon spirits, while the actual human bodies lie 'asleep' in their homes (African Traditional Religion 176).   Another concept of spirit that is prevalent in Africa is that of the guardian – spirit or man's double.

The belief here according to Idowu is either that the essence of man's personality becomes a sort of split entity which acts as man's spiritual counterpart or double; or that the guardian-spirit is a separate entity. The Africans believe that man has a guardian spirit which if it is good, works to bring prosperity and good luck to its double but if the guardian spirit is not in good state, it will rather bring obstacle to the ways of its double. This spirit is known by many names in Africa. Yoruba people call it ori, Igbo people call it chi, while the Edo people call it ehi. It guards one's steps leading the one to his/her destiny in life. In most cases, it is this spirit that helps to wade off evil spirits that may want to derail the individual from achieving his ultimate in life. This is why most Africans will make sure they sacrifice and appease their guardian – spirit whenever they want to take any important decision or they want to go on a journey. What we are saying here is that in African traditional religion, the place of spirits is very prominent. This does not mean that Africans are Pantheist but it only means that they recognize the role spirits are playing in human life either positively or negatively and they try to keep them at bay using tools available to them such as magic, divination, exorcism, prayers, sacrifice and others.[57]

African Understanding of Religion

What insights into the nature of religion have we gained from this brief description of African Traditional Religion? Mbiti (1975:10) identifies five elements as being constitutive of all religion: beliefs, practices (ceremonies and festivals), objects and places, values and morals, and religious officials. Mbiti (1975:12) tries to analyse the nature of religion seen through an African lens along these lines. Religion, for Africans, is the normal way of looking at the world

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56   Idowu, E. Bolaji. African Traditional Religion: A Definition. London: SCM, 1973.
57   Idowu, E. Bolaji. African Traditional Religion: A Definition. London: SCM, 1973.

and experiencing it, for it is so much part of human existence that it is not seen as something separate.[58]

- **A profound unity:**

The African understanding of religion is an understanding of the connectedness of all things. This also becomes clear from an African worldview. There is a close relationship between all things. There is one reality, with no distinction between physical and spiritual. Meaning in life is derived from unity. Rituals are an expression of this unity. Morals and ethics are concerned with maintaining unity. Religion, therefore, does not keep this unity intact – it is the expression of this unity. Religion is not the method by which to create unity but the celebration of unity.

- **An African understanding of religion holds that religion is reality and reality is religion:**

There is no separation between spheres of reality. The transcendence (God(s), powers, spirits) is just as much part of reality as the visible elements in the world. Religion can never be perceived as a separate fragment focused on a different 'reality'. Magesa (1997:52) illustrates this by pointing out that, for Africans, 'the universe is perceived as an organic whole'. In African religion, 'humans maintain the bond between the visible and invisible spheres of the universe' (Magesa 1997:72).[59] The concept of the unity of body and spirit is true not only of ancient Greek philosophy and Hellenistic anthropology, but also applies to African Religion (Wernhart 2003:269).[60]

Okot p'Bitek, a staunch protector of African culture, describes African Traditional Religion as religion not concerned with metaphysics, but with the 'this-worldly' (cited in Maluleke 1998:127).[61] African Traditional Religion experiences religion as being actively part of the experienced world. Religion is not a structure created to reflect a metaphysical (virtual) world. An African understanding of religion draws no distinction between reality and virtuality (Wernhart 9003:265). p'Bitek (cited in Maluleke 1998:127) therefore argues that there is no such thing as animism. Animism creates the idea of a second, virtual, plane of existence. There is only one world, one reality, and religion is part of this reality.

A distinction between culture and religion betrays a Western understanding of religion (Sundermeier 1999:11).[62] African Traditional Religion sees religion as the foundation of all life; it is, as Thorpe (1992:3) argues 'an integral part of life itself'. There is no differentiation between the sacred and the profane (Thorpe 1992:3; Wernhart 2003:269).[63] Everything in life has to do with religion. Mbiti (1990:1) states that 'religion permeates into all the

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58   Mbiti, John S. African Religions and Philosophy. London: Heinemann, 1969. Concepts of God in Africa. London: SPCK, 1975. Introduction to African Religion. London: Heinemann, 1975.
59   Magesa, L., 2002, African religion: The moral traditions of abundant life, Orbis Books, Maryknoll.
60   Wernhart, K.R., 2003, 'Ethnische religionen [Ethnic religions]', in J. Figl (ed.), Handbuch Religionswissenschaft: Religionen und ihre zentrale Themen, Tyrolia-Verlag, Innsbruck.
61   Maluleke, T.S., 1998, 'African traditional religions in Christian mission and Christian scholarship: Re-opening a debate that never started', Religion and Theology 5(2), 121– 137.
62   Sundermeier, T., 1990, Nur gemeinsam können wir leben: Das Menschenbild schwarzafrikanischer Religionen [Only together can we live: The humanity of Black African religions], Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, Gütersloh.
63   Wernhart, K.R., 2003, 'Ethnische religionen [Ethnic religions]', in J. Figl (ed.), Handbuch Religionswissenschaft: Religionen und ihre zentrale Themen, Tyrolia-Verlag, Innsbruck.

departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it.' To this one could add Thorpe's view (1991:28) that 'all of nature is invested with a mystical, religious quality'. All of reality is one. Everything (animate and inanimate) forms part of a living community. This holistic understanding of reality holds that all elements in nature (i.e., animals, plants, rivers, mountains etc.) have religious significance and must be treated with respect. Ofcourse this creates a dilemma: the traditional African understanding of religion acknowledges the existence of an invisible spiritual world and simultaneously maintains that all things are united and interconnected (Thorpe 1992:112).[64]

Carmody (1981:73) introduces the concept of 'consubstantiality' to describe this profound unity. All creation shares a common substance; there is no real differentiation between 'rocks and plants, plants and animals, animals and human beings, human beings and gods' (Carmody 1981:73).[65] The whole cosmos is perceived as a single living system. There is no separate reality existing outside of the cosmos. This belief, known as the cosmological myth (Carmody 1981:60, 73), still underlies the African understanding of religion. It implies a core unity of all that exists. This further implies a monistic origin of all that exist; an equality of essence of all things.

The implication would be that there is no hierarchy in creation. Humans have no superiority over nature or any other element. Humans are in the world, part of the world, but transcend the world. This gives humans an extra responsibility to take care of the world. Such an understanding of religion provides the moral ground for pleading for the conservation of nature. The African worldview is described as a religious worldview (Bediako 1995:29; Mbiti 1990:15).[66] The world is perceived through a religious lens. Every activity and entity has religious significance. The elemental, spiritual and communal forces (the cultural heritage of Africa) have become not merely the locus of divine revelation to the African, but also the means of the human response to the divine disclosure (Bediako 1995:29). Humans are part of the world where spirits and gods reside. Religion is therefore not a separate entity existing to be defined apart from life. Idowu (cited in Turaki 1999:70–71)[67] describes religion as the result of humanity's spontaneous awareness of a living Power. Religion is interwoven with human (cultural) existence in the world.

According to an African understanding of religion, to be human is to be religious; to live is to be religious meaning Religion is an effort by humans to search for meaning, to understand reality and place themselves in a relationship with reality. Religion is therefore an epistemological activity. Religion is not only an intellectual, cognitive experience, as at times happens in Western culture. Religion encapsulates the whole human being. Humans stand in a holistic relationship with reality. All of life has to do with religion. Sundermeier (1991:11)[68]

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64   Thorpe, S.A., 1991, African Traditional Religions: An introduction, University of South Africa, Pretoria. Thorpe, S.A., 1992, Primal religions worldwide: An introductory descriptive review, University of South Africa, Pretoria.
65   Carmody, D.L., 1981, The oldest God: Archaic religion yesterday & today, Abingdon, Nashville.
66   Bediako, K., 1995, Christianity in Africa: The renewal of a non-Western religion, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh
67   Turaki, Y., 1999, Christianity and African gods: A method in theology, Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys, Potchefstroom.
68   Sundermeier, T., 1999, Was ist Religion? Religionswissenschaft in theologischen Kontext [What is religion? Religious studies in a theological context], Chr Kaiser Gütersloher Verlagshaus, Gütersloh

attests to this by saying that religion is the foundation of all life. Religion is 'the source of life and meaning' (Opoku 1993:79).[69]

Meaning, according to an African understanding, it is always understood in a spiritual way (Turaki 1999:124). The important questions in life revolve around the spiritual and not the physical (Turaki 1999:124). All events in life are understood as having spiritual significance. There is a close connection between meaning and morality: 'The pursuit of spiritual meaning is one of the moral laws which govern the morality and ethics of man in traditional Africa' (Turaki 1999:124).[70]

Religion becomes the way in which humans express an understanding of reality and the search for the meaning of life. The understanding of reality is religiously predetermined: 'To be is to be religious in a religious universe' (Mbiti 1990:256). According to the African understanding, an understanding of reality cannot be a mere clinical, scientific analysis of the material. There exists only one reality and part of it is invisible. Meaning in life is found this-worldly, in this reality. To ignore or neglect the existence of the transcendental will create disharmony in reality and will deprive the experience of the meaning of life. The pursuit of cosmic harmony is an ethical principle in traditional Africa (Turaki 1999:122).

- **Rituals In understanding reality and maintaining a relationship with reality:**

Humans express these experiences in the form of rites (Sundermeier 1999:11). Humans are ritualistic beings. Rituals become the symbolic actions that define the relationships in which humans stand; not only relationships with the divine, the ancestors or spiritual beings, but also societal relationships with other humans and with nature and everything therein.

Ray (cited in Turaki 1999:69–70) states that '[t]he ritual sphere is the sphere par excellence where the world as lived and the world as imagined become fused together'. Ritual, therefore, is the action of symbolically expressing human unity with the universe; a confirmation of the consubstantiality, so to speak. Symbolism flows from the belief that there is no division between the profane and the sacred. Everything, no matter how profane it seems, has sacred significance.

- **Values:**

Human existence is always existence in community. Morality is therefore not a selfish action directed at one's own benefit, even though there are scholars who hold that traditional religions are focused on humanity's selfish needs (Turaki 1999:129). All humanity's societal behaviour carries religious significance. Religion functions as a moral and ethical foundation (Turaki 1999:122). Turaki identifies moral principles in the traditional worldview as the pursuit of cosmic harmony, the pursuit of spiritual meaning, the pursuit of mystical powers and the pursuit of kinship community (1999:122). These moral principles fit into the framework of an African understanding of religion. In understanding reality and maintaining a relationship with reality, humans express the experience of the transcendental in the form of norms

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69   Opoku, K.A., 1993, 'African Traditional Religion: An enduring heritage', in J.K. Olupona & S.S. Nyang (eds.), Religious plurality in Africa: Essays in honour of John S. Mbiti, n.p., Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin.
70   Turaki, Y., 1999, Christianity and African gods: A method in theology, Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys, Potchefstroom.

(Sundermeier 1999:11).[71] Morals indeed assist humans in maintaining harmony with their entire environment (Mbiti 1975:11).[72]

Religious morals and values provide identity. In the religious way of life, people discover who they are and where they come from (Mbiti 1975:13). Morals and values provide security for a harmonious existence. Religious values and morals give direction and provide answers to life's questions. In this sense, religion becomes the roadmap for human existence (cf. Van den Heever 2001:16).[73]

This book does not want to bring about an exchange. This is not an effort to replace the existing (Western-dominated) understanding of religion with a new (predominantly African) understanding of religion. Rather, this is an effort at enhancing the understanding of religion by recognising the contribution that African thought has made to the understanding of religion. This addition of insights should bring about a broader understanding of religion.

An African understanding of religion emphasises:

• A holistic approach to understanding unity

 • The importance of the meaning that religion creates

 • Religion as the framework within which rituals should be understood

• Religion as the background against which social values should be understood. Religion is universal. Religion is expressed contextually according to local culture. The phenomenon of religion is understood differently according to different thought patterns. For a long time, religion has been understood solely according to Western thought patterns. This book pleads for a broader scope of understanding religion by including insights from an African point of view.

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71   Sundermeier, T., 1999, Was ist Religion? Religionswissenschaft in theologischen Kontext [What is religion? Religious studies in a theological context], Chr Kaiser Gütersloher Verlagshaus, Gütersloh.
72   Mbiti, J.S., 1970, Concepts of God in Africa, SPCK, London. Mbiti, J.S., 1975, Introduction to African religion, Heinemann, London. Mbiti, J.S., 1990, African religions and philosophy, 2nd edn., Heinemann Educational   Publishers, Oxford.
73   Van den Heever, G., 2001, 'On how to be or not to be: Theoretical reflection on religion and identity in Africa', Religion and Theology 8(1), 1–25.

C H A P T E R   T H R E E

Introduction to God and Law in Africa

[T)he elementary concepts of British justice are a part of the essentials of civilization that we bring to Africa along with vaccinations and drains and literacy and GOD(Emphasis added).[74]

This book focuses on how the idea of God(s) permeated the legal ideology of the Africa's nascent states. During the colonial period, it debated the best way to instil the principles of English justice in "savage" and "barbarous" peoples.

In 1822 Georg Hegel gave a series of lectures on his philosophy of history in Berlin. He traced the movement of "Spirit" from east to west through the rise and demise of the Oriental, Greek, Roman and German worlds. For Hegel, the "History of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of Freedom; a progress whose development according to the necessity of its nature it is our business to investigate." The Spirit of each world-historical people advanced the universal consciousness of humanity along a teleological path on the world's history. Only peoples capable of the rational process of realizing its Spirit's Idea could engage with the universal Spirit. The final realization of a Spirit's Idea takes the familiar form of the state.

Not all people are world-historical people. Hegel singled out Africans as having a character "difficult to comprehend, for the very reason that in reference to it, we must quite give up the principle which naturally accompanies all our ideas-the category of Universality". This continent and its people (excluding Egypt and perhaps its northern, "European" shore) lie outside time as so many particulars excluded from the historical progress of the universal. Africans are children "enveloped in the dark mantle of Night" who possess neither "God, [nor] Law". Hegel's dismissal of an entire continent's people as capable of reason, religion or law haunts the last two centuries' Africans, excluded from the universal, were merely instrumental in the grand projects of world-historical people. No process better encapsulates this spirit than the European colonization of Africa, especially the scramble that ensued 60 years after Hegel's lectures. In fact, Europeans justified this invasion in the name of bringing to Africa precisely what Hegel argued it lacked: reason, religion and the rule of law

Academic discourse on law in "British" Africa revolves around two poles that correspond to Hegel's universal-particular distinction. The "universal" discourse focuses on state law in colonial and independent countries. This discourse peaked in the early 1960s as African states enacted promise-filled constitutions while on the cusp of independence. After two decades of war and despotism, interest rose again

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[74]   Julius Lewis, "Native Courts and British Justice in Africa" (1944) 14 Afr.: J Int'l Afr. Institute 448 at 4

the 1990s when newly democratic regimes re-wrote their failed constitutions.[75] Recent scholarship has a more cynical tone, but still places constitutions-and now human rights-at the centre of analysis.[76] The second pole is "particular", focusing on the so-called "customary law" of traditional African societies. This promised boundless subjects for fruitful anthropological studies. But early anthropology inspired by a Hegelian vision saw Africa as a happy ground for "hunting down … exotic practices, primitive rituals, superceded (sic) customs."[77] Moore's concept of semi-autonomous fields of social interaction challenged the caricature of an untouched tribe awaiting discovery by an intrepid anthropologist.[78] But it was not until Chanock's Law, Custom and Social Order in 1985 that a successful attempt was made to bridge, or more accurately collapse, the Hegelian divide. His study of customary family law showed that it was in fact created by, and in opposition to, state law. Rather than separate fields of study, law and custom could only be understood by their relation to each other. Mamdani likewise rejects "abstract universalism" or "intimate particularism", proposing instead "to underline the specificity of the African experience, or at least a slice of it." To strike such a fine balance is to place one's analysis in midpoint of the two focuses of law in Africa.

Here state law and jurisprudence gives way to anthropological studies as the principal sources of knowledge about the laws of particular tribes in remote regions. The object of study in turn moves from citizens to subjects and from law to custom. Instead of contrasting the two, however, this book will stress the interdependence of a God multiplicity that exists within (and across) Uganda.(Africa). Nathaniel C. Comfort correctly notes that "one point on which anti-Darwinists and anticreationists agree is that this is a pitched battle between dogmatic religious fanatics on the `one hand, and rigorous, fair-minded scientists on the other. However, which side is which depends on who you read. (For different narratives, see Woodward 2003 and Forrest & Gross 2004. For attempts at a neutral view, see Giberson & Yerxa 2002 as well as Numbers 2006) little wonder critiques of Intelligent Design, it is often considered a repackaged version of creationism. It is argued that after the U.S. Supreme Court's 1987 decision to outlaw the teaching of "scientific creationism", some creationists sought to avoid the implications by adopting a new name, "Intelligent Design", for their position. (Comfort 2007, 3. Forrest & Gross 2004.)

As I have enunciated in this book, the aspect of religion was not seen as a separate sect of society. It formed part and parcel of the day to day lives of the Africans which made it impossible to sever it from the other aspects of life. This setting did not leave law and order out! There was a general belief that manners and ways of harmonious living were derived

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75   See e.g. Prempeh, supra note 8; Erica Bussey, "Constitutional Dialogue in Uganda" (2005) 49 J. Afr. L.1
76   Michael Nyongesa Wabwile, ''The Place of English Law in Kenya" (2003) 3 Oxford U. Commonwealth L.J. 51
77   Taiwo, supra at 3
78   Sally Falk Moore, Law as Process: An Anthropological Approach, 2nd ed. (Oxford: James Currey, 2000) at 54-8

from the gods and to live to the contrary was punishable by the same.

There are societies in Africa where the spiritual leader was charged with executing the sentences of the king passed according to the known norms of the gods. All these cherished practices however where heavily affected by the western influence and new definition of spirituality and religion.

With time, religion was separated from the state and from the law, to develop three different sects that were expected for some reason to operate together. There however grew a lot of friction between these three and it first of all acted in favour of the colonialists since they could easily rule a community divided and taken up by the different segments; but secondly, it all worked to favour the growth of the new ideology of law and of religion.

For example, Kabaka Mwanga of Buganda, who was at the time the supreme leader in the state affairs, sought to burn out the Christianity that grew in the kingdom of Buganda. However, this has proven today, many years later, that it played a great part in strengthening and watering the growth of Christianity in Uganda. People still trek to Namugongo for the national holiday of 3rd June, which was conveniently named the *Martyrs' Day*.

Kabaka Mwanga was definitely convinced that this act would serve as a lesson to the other people who were trying to join the new religion. But it would seem to have been the strong foundation for the strongholds that both catholism and Anglican churches have in Uganda today.

The notion of religion today has earned its place in society. There is no form of persecution or death that can prevail against it. it has become such a big part of our societies that it is now considered a human right and therefore has also won a place in the laws o very many states and even in international law. To portray a tendency to deny a people the opportunity to profess their religion today, is internationally viewed as oppressive and illegal.

Its content and scope are defined by international law, as is evident from the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, and the Declaration of the Elimination of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. The constitutions and other laws of many African states do similarly embody provisions that guarantee religious liberty and define the relationship of the church and the state

Separation of Religion and State.

Under the Ugandan system, and most African systems really, the church and the state are separate and independent of each other. The state does not align itself with any religion or church and considers all religions equal. It is benignly neutral toward all of them. It is secular in character. It neither meddles in church polity nor concerns itself with essentially theological issues. The Senegalese constitution for example most aptly expresses this notion when it provides that "religious institutions and communities shall have the right to develop

without hindrance. They shall not to direct supervision by the state. They shall regulate and administer their affairs autonomously."[79] The church, in turn, stays away from the realm of politics in the narrow sense and does not control the state.

As the best way to guarantee the pluralism of the modern religions, most African states have considered standing independent and separate from the church. Many of them, particularly the former French and Portuguese dependencies, specifically provide in their constitutions that they are secular states.[80] Others, particularly those that had established colonial churches, do not mince any words in stating that they will no longer tolerate ecclesiastical control or meddling. For example, Mozambique's constitution provides for "a secular state in which there is absolute separation between the state and religious institutions." The Constitution of Angola does similarly provide for a secular state with "complete separation of the state and religious institutions." Benin's constitution also provides that "belief or non belief, adherence or non-adherence to a religion, shall be activities belonging to each individual, toward which the Revolution of Benin shall maintain strict neutrality as long as these expressions do not impede its development."[81]

The Liberian constitution, which is patterned on the United States model, is also instructive in its elaborate articulation of the principle of separation. It prohibits hindrance of enjoyment of the freedom or religion, exclusive privilege or preference of one denomination or sect over any other, requirement of religious tests for any civil or military office or for the exercise of any civil right, and the establishment of state religion. A more recent salutory addition to the prohibitions is a provision that disqualifies any person from holding any political office while he is serving as the leader of a religious denomination or faith. A minister who aspires to a political office must make a choice as to what he wants to be: a churchman or a politician. It will be recalled that William R. Tolbert, Jr., who, between 1960 and 1980 (when he was assassinated), was vice-president and then president of Liberia, was pastor of a Baptist church, and the president of Liberia's Baptist Convention throughout this period.[82] The constitution did not forbid this. Some Liberians, however, felt that he had in fact breached the wall that separates the state and the church. A recurrence of similar breaches in the future, therefore, had to be prevented by a constitutional amendment.

However, in some instances, it is completely futile to attempt to separate the religion from the state. These situations are due to the contribution of the church or religion to the community. For example, in Uganda, there are numerous schools, hospitals, banks and other important infrastructure of the economy that have been set up and are maintained by these different religions. This immense contribution makes them undeniable in the face of the state.

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79   Article 19 of the 1983 Constitution.
80   Art. 7 of the Angolan Constitution of 1981; Art. 1 of the Benin Constitution of 1980; Art. 1 of the Burundi Constitution of 1981; Art. 1 (part 3) of the Cameroon Constitution of 1972; Art. 1 of the Cape Verde Constitution of 1981; Art. 11 of the Central African Republic Constitution of 1981; Art. 1 of the Chad Constitution of 1982; Art. 1 of the Mali Constitution of 1976; Art. 19 of the Mozambique Constitution of 1978; Art. 1 of the Constitution of Senegal of 1983; Art. 1 of the Constitution of Upper Volta of 1977; Art. 1 of the Constitution of Zaire of 1979
81   Art. 12 of the Benin Constitution of 1980. For a similar provision see Art. 39 of the 1976 Madagascar Constitution.
82   See William A. Poe, "Not Christopolis but Christ and Caesar: Baptist Leadership in Liberia," Journal of Church and State 24 (Autumn 1982):534

Therefore, in such circumstances, the two seem to work together to provide these services to the different communities where both their interests lie. matters. This cooperation, however, depends on the ideological orientation of each state. States like Botswana, which follow the liberal tradition and encourage private initiative, welcome and even expect church support in delivering social services. Thus, while addressing the Botswana Christian Council, President Quett Masire said that although his government did not side with any particular church, he expected that "fruitful cooperation between government, on the one hand, and the Christians and the Muslims on the other, will continue for the good of our country."[83] This has been the followed norm since then to date.

The convergence of interests in these matters has inevitably also been a source of conflict between church and state in some states. The nature of these religions is that they thrive on selling their ideology to as amny people as possible so as to win them over to their religion. In doing so, some African states have become war torn areas and unsafe. For example, there has been a long-standing religious battle between the moslems in the northern part of Nigeria and the Christians in the south.

Religions have also historically challenged the state and not just in Africa, but also around the world. There are renowned terrorism movements that have been known to be formed on the notion of religion and have made civilians suffer to great lengths. So afterall, this western concept of religion has not proved entirely holy.

Another limitation on the doctrine of separation of church and state is the fact that freedom of religion cannot be guaranteed in absolute terms. For reasons of "public safety, order, health or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others,"[84] international human rights law permits states to limit the freedom of religion. In general, states do not lightly exercise these powers, for to do so would be to breach unduly the wall of separation. Some have done so, however, sometimes on the most spurious grounds, banning denominations and placing restrictions on others.

In Uganda, the right to practice any religion is also not an absolute right. Article 29 of the Constitution provides that;

Every person shall have the right to freedom to practise any religion and manifest such practice which shall include the right to belong to and participate in the practices of any religious body or organisation in a manner consistent with this Constitution.

The drafting of this provision gives it a clawback clause. The catch is that for any person to prefess a religion, it must be in a manner consistent with the Constitution. This would prove limiting to certain religions.

One religious group that has suffered singular persecution on these grounds is the Jehovah's Witnesses.[85] Because of their chiliastic teachings and practices, many African states have

83   "President Calls for Continued Cooperation," Botswana Daily News, 1 May 1984, 1. Also see "BCC Launches Drought Relief Program," Botswana Daily News, 2 May 1984, 4.
84   Art. 18 (part 3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Also see Art. 1 (part 1) of the U.N. Declaration on Religious Discrimination.
85   See J. M. Assimeng, "Sectarian Allegiance & Political Authority: The Watchtower Society of Zambia, 1907-35," Journal of Modern African Studies 8 (1970):97. Bryan R. Wilson, "Jehovah's Witnesses in

considered this group to be "a danger to peace, order and good government" and have, therefore, declared it to be an unlawful society. For example, there was a time when section six of Tanzania's Societies Ordinance provided that "it shall be lawful for the President, in his absolute discretion, where he considers it to be essential in the public interest, by order to declare to be unlawful any society which in his opinion … is being used for any purpose prejudicial to, or incompatible with, the maintenance of peace, order and good government."

In 1965, in exercise of these powers, the president caused to be declared unlawful the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Jehovah's Witnesses, the International Bible Students Association, Millennial Dawnists, Standfasters, and Russellites. No reasons were given for outlawing these. Derek George Westcott, an American Jehovah's Witness missionary, was detained and charged with being a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses. He invoked the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement (applicable to Tanganyika, later on Tanzania, before independence), which guaranteed "complete freedom of conscience" and unimpeded access to the territory by missionaries who were nationals of members of the United Nations. The court quickly reminded him of the fact that this freedom was qualified by "the requirements of public order and morality" and by the government's rightful exercise of such controls as it might consider necessary for "the maintenance of peace, order and good government."

The Jehovah's Witnesses have also been outlawed in Benin, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Zaire. They were at one time outlawed in Kenya and in Uganda. Though they have not been outlawed in Mozambique or in Zambia, the Witnesses have suffered intermittent harassment and imprisonment there. For example, in Mozambique in 1975, many Witnesses were detained without trial for refusing to chant "Viva Frelimo," the slogan of the ruling party. In Zambia, many Witnesses were detained and had forty-five of their "kingdom halls" burned down for refusing to participate in the 1969 national referendum. For refusing to salute the national flag or to sing the national anthem, their children are by law excluded from Zambian government-aided schools. As many as three thousand Witness children were so excluded in 1969.[86]

It is in Malawi, however, that the plight of the Jehovah's Witnesses has been the gravest. A wave of persecution against the Witnesses started in 1967 when they refused to buy the ruling Malawi Congress party (MCP) membership cards. A party resolution in September 1967 called for the ban of the denomination because "the attitude of its adherents is not only inimical to the progress of this country, but also so negative in every way that it endangers the stability and peace and calm which is essential for the smooth running of our state." One month later the Jehovah's Witnesses were outlawed. A wave of arrests, assaults, and even mob killings of the Witnesses ensued. Hundreds of their homes were set on fire. Their property was looted or destroyed. The Witnesses, however, held on to their beliefs and refused to become members of the ruling party. Consequently, the MCP called for tougher measures against them.

The party implemented these measures to their full letter and spirit, unleashing indescribable terror against the Witnesses. Supported by President Banda, who called the Witnesses "the devil's Witnesses," party militants rampaged the towns and countryside assaulting and killing,

Kenya," Journal of Religion in Africa 5 (1973):128. Tony Hodges, Jehovah's Witnesses in Central Africa Report, No. 29 (London: Minority Rights Group, 1976)

86   Zambian High Court in Kachasu v. The Attorney General [1967] Zambia Law Reports, 145

burning down their homes, looting and destroying their property and crops, and razing whole villages to the ground. Over twenty-one thousand Witnesses fled to neighboring Zambia for safety. According to a representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "many of the refugees bore cuts and gashes apparently inflicted by pangas, the huge knives common to East Africa."

Weary, malnourished, and living under appalling conditions, many of them died at the refugee camps. Unsympathetic with their cause and finding the task of looking after them unduly burdensome, Zambia forcibly repatriated most of the Witnesses to Malawi, where the atrocities that had prompted their flight were resumed. They once again fled, this time to Mozambique. Considering them to be "agents of imperialism," the Mozambican government forcibly returned them to Malawi in 1975. Malawian authorities greeted them with more harassment, dispossession, and detention at the notorious Dezelka and other detention camps. Thousands once again fled to Zambia and to Mozambique, where they were again expelled. Unprotected by the law and hounded from country to country, Malawi Witnesses became victims of an atrocious form of religious hatred.

The separation between religion and the state in Africa has therefore left marks on the different religions depending on how much the state is willing to allow to the religion, in the enjoyment of their right. In Uganda, it is important to remember that this right is not absolute and therefore can be limited.

Indeed, in the famous case of Sharon Dimanche (supra), court observed that the right to profess religion was not infairly limited by Makerere University's policy to put exams on a Saturday; the sabbath of the Seventh Day Adventist religion.

Supremacy of Religion Over State

In certain systems, religion and politics, or the religion and the state, are indistinguishably enmeshed. The state is religiously oriented. One church occupies a privileged position in the state and is recognized as the official church of the state. Its teachings and criteria are implemented by the state in its public activities. Minority churches and their adherents suffer discrimination and other legal impediments. Such a system existed in biblical times when the high priest was also the head of state, exercising both spiritual and temporal authority over his subjects. In later years, the priest delegated his temporal powers to a civil authority. The priest nevertheless retained the power to veto or correct the civil authority in the exercise of its mandate. The apparent separation of the spiritual from the temporal was, therefore, in form only.

Some states in Africa today espouse similar tendencies on religion state relations; they are generally states in which Islam is the dominant religion. Their inspiration is the Holy Koran, which, according to the Muslims, recognizes no distinction between the spiritual and the secular. Its author, the Prophet Muhammad, ruled his people in the name of and under the divine instructions of Allah. Distinctions between the secular and the divine cannot be countenanced under such a polity. For this reason, the constitutions of the Comoros and Mauritania specifically describe those nations as Islamic. The constitutions of the Comoros,

Libya, Mauritania, and Somalia proclaim Islam as the religion of the state or of the people. Libya goes a little further. Article 2 of its Declaration of the Establishment of the Authority of the People of 1981 declares that "the Holy Koran is the constitution of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya."

However, it must be noted that no African constitution outrightly provides for the subordination of religion to the state. African states do, by and large, respect religious freedom. The cases of subordination and outright violation have been due to illiberal interpretations of the states'"public order" powers, to socio-political problems for which scapegoats must be found, or to factors steeped in the given country's colonial past.

It should also be noted that there is a close relationship between enjoyment of religious liberty and the observance of general human rights. The human rights system, of which religious liberty is a part, may be likened to a chain with each right constituting an indispensable link in the system. Break or sever one link and one renders the whole chain and its constituent links dysfunctional. Regimes that violate with impunity their citizens' right to life, to personal security, or the freedoms of speech and movement will not have the slightest respect for the freedom of religion. They will not hesitate to trample it underfoot on the flimsiest pretext, as such cases as Burundi, Ethiopia, and Uganda demonstrate.

C H A P T E R   F O U R

Did Africa have a God?

To ask such a question is to confine the Supreme Being to a geographical space. This ultimately negates the fact that the Supreme Being is transcendent and cannot be cataloged in space. Further, inquiring into whether Africa had a God is to suggest that the Supreme Being is divisible (i.e., the Africans have their Supreme Being while the other continents also have theirs); yet the Supreme Being is one and immutable. There is no being like 'the African God' except in the imagination of those who use the term, be they Africans or Europeans... there is only one God, and while there may be various concepts of God, according to each people's spiritual perception, it is wrong to limit God with an adjective formed from the name of any race.

In addition, the Supreme Being exists trans-temporal (was, is and will be). Therefore, suggesting that there was no worship of the Supreme Being before the coming of the missionaries is not only fallacious but also sacrilegious. It is fallacious because it presumes that their (the missionaries) coming meant the coming of God. In other words, they were bringing God to the African man. God stretches over and beyond the whole period of *Zamani,* so that not even human imagination can get to Him.[87] God exists beyond time. At the time of creation, the Supreme Being was present and this philosophy holds a greater part of the African Traditional Religion. The Supreme Being created the universe that is why many African languages assert that the Supreme Being is the creator. For instance, among the Baganda (God is referred to as "Katonda" an equivalent for creator) and so it is in Tooro ("Ruhanga" meaning one who creates), the Banyakole, the Bamba, and other tribes have assigned similar meaning to the essence of God.

Because spirituality and religion form a greater part of people's culture, so much has been said in that regard. In Particular, I will capture the scene of one of the most famous works, *Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe in which he tackles the aspect of a foreign religion (Christianity) coming into contact with a traditional religion (the African thought of religion). Okonkwo and his friends encounter a white man explaining his theological understanding of the Trinitarian God. He continues to make evil of the African religion and God claiming he is false, useless, and weaker compared to his. Okonkwo is quick to rebuttal and poke holes into the white man's understanding of God by which he suggests that if this god has a son, surely, he must have a wife. To this, the white man is quick to dismiss and shrug his shoulders.[88] The white man was disturbed that an individual of age could not conceptualize the Trinitarian dogma. This scene guides us to the question at hand. What is clear at this point is that our understanding of the Supreme Being does not make the Supreme Being a supreme being. We may have as many as a billion explanations of who this being really is and yet none makes a contribution or changes a thing.

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87   Mbiti, J.S., African Religions and Philosophy, Heinemann, London, 1969
88   Things Fall Apart, p.120

The coming of the white man into the African continent did not bring God to the African continent. To suggest otherwise would imply that an effect (the white man) can contain a cause (God). Yet logically there is no effect which is greater than the cause. God cannot be contained.

There are as many as hundreds of cultures and each has an understanding of God. It must not escape mention that any attempt to generalize about the nature of "African religions" risks wrongly implying that there is homogeneity among all African cultures. In fact, Africa is a vast continent encompassing both geographic variation and tremendous cultural diversity. Each of the modern countries that occupy the continent has its own particular history, and each in turn comprises numerous ethnic groups with different languages and unique cultures, customs and beliefs. African religions are as diverse as the continent is varied. That notwithstanding, generally speaking, African religions hold that there is one creator God, the maker of a dynamic universe.[89]

According to St. Anselm, God is perceived as a being than which no greater can be conceived.[90]St. Thomas refers to God as the *SummumBonum.* This is at the heart of the African Religion. Africans envisage God as the greatest of all beings, the Supreme Being. In fact, the African perceive God as the greatest and no one is equal to the Supreme Being. In Africa, the Supreme Being is unique, having no equal or none like Him and being the only One of the sort.[91]This may seemingly be rebutted with the Trinitarian dogma about the equality of the three divine persons which stipulates that the Father is equal to the Son and also to the Holy Spirit and vice versa. St. Thomas Aquinas affirms makes an affirmation of the doctrine of the ontological Trinity, which states that God exists in three persons and one essence. This is a careful way of conveying that there is only one God viz the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all God; and that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are different persons. With the possible exception of a couple technical attributes generally ascribed only to one or another person of the Godhead, and which are aspects of the way God exists in three persons, all those attributes native to God's being are shared equally by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.[92] He further notes that there is equality in the Godhead. This is not possible in the African culture and customs because Africans perceive God as so supreme and cannot be compared with. Even the concept of the devil (a being that opposes God) is empty or lacking in the mind and vocabulary of the African. No single language in Uganda or Africa at large has a direct transliteration of the word Satan. For instance, Satan in Luganda is "Sitani" which is copied from the vocabulary of the white man "satan." This shows the greatness of the Supreme Being and so cannot be compared with.

African traditional religions produced no written works, but derived their authority from oral history, custom and practice, and the power of priests, kings and others gifted in dealing with spiritual issues. This lack of scriptures led to the assumption that people in Africa were not

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89   https://www.britannica.com/topic/African-religions
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91   Emeka C. Ekeke and Chike A. EkeoparaGod, divinities and spirits in African traditional religious
        ontology
92   The "Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas Aquinas. Part I QQ XXVII-XLIX. Vol. 2

capable of "proper" religious observance.[93]There was a common perception in missionary circles that Africa had no prior religion, and hence, was a 'dark' continent. This view and the actions flowing from it were regarded by Africans as using the gospel to declare the superiority of Western value systems and using this claim to justify European conquest and exploitation of Africa.[94]

According to MbitiAfricans are notoriously religious so much so that religion permeates permanently into all departments of life so fully that it is not easy orpossible always to isolate it.[95]Further it is noted that religion is part of the fibre of society; it is deeply ingrained in social life, and it is impossible to isolate and study it as a distinct phenomenon; therefore when members of a family clan gather together in a sacrificial ritual for the ancestors that is a religious activity in honour to an ancestor or ancestors.[96]

In fact, Haile Selassie vehemently made a distinction between spirituality and religion. He noted that spirituality does not come from religion. It comes from one's soul. "The temple of the Most-High begins with the body which houses our life, the essence of our existence. Africans are in bondage today because they approach spirituality through religion provided by foreign invaders and conquerors. We must stop confusing religion and spirituality. Religion is a set of rules, regulations and rituals created by humans, which was supposed to help people grow spiritually... Spirituality is not theology or ideology. It is simply a way of life, pure and original as was given by the Most-High of creation. Spirituality is a network linking us to the Most-High, the Universe and each other."[97] It is on this accord that the life of the African man revolves around spirituality. That is why in the famous book *Things fall Apart* by Achebe, an old man ponders and wonders who would protect them if they left their god to follow the white man's god. The Africans truly believed in the protection and the providence of the Most-High. If you have read up to this point, you will truly appreciate the fact that the Africans had great reverence of the Most-High and will always have; and if you have please read it again. In all African Societies without exception, people have a notion of God as the Supreme Being. This is the most minimal and fundamental idea about God, found in all African Societies.

On the other hand, even though Africans generally have an awareness of and belief in the Supreme Being, the truth is, this Supreme Being is not known to have been exclusively worshipped by traditional Africans. Africans are aware of the existence of the Supreme Being, but being aware does not mean Africans have a relationship with God the Supreme Being.[98] A person may be aware of other political parties but this does not mean that he or she votes for those parties. Africans are aware of the Supreme Being, yet he is too remote or transcendent. According to Turaki the reason why God is remote is that human beings hadone something which offended God.

93   https://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/6chapter5.shtml
94   Goba, B., "The Hermeneutics of African Theologies, "Journalof Theology For Southern
        Africa, November, 19-35. 1998
95   Mbiti, J.S., African Religions and Philosophy, Heinemann, London, 1969
96   Mndende, N., 2006, 'Spiritual reality in South Africa', in C. du Toit& C. Mayson (eds.), Secular
        spirituality as a contextual critique of religion, pp. 153-173, UNISA, Pretoria.
97
98   Turaki, Y., 1999, Christianity and African gods, PotchefstroomseUniversiteitvirChristelikeHoërOnderwys
        (now known as North-West University), Potchefstroom.

Without the question of the reality of God, a vacuum is created. Discussions of who God is and how to relate to him are lacking. In African languages there are names for God or the Supreme Being, but there are no historical events that inform the names Africans have for God. There seems to be no revelation of God in history. But maybe Africans are not looking in the right direction. Africans perceive a distance between them and God or the Supreme Being.

According to the African Peoples, man lives in a religious universe, so that natural phenomena and objects are intimately associated with God. Man's understanding of God is strongly colored by the universe which man is himself part.[99] Further, the African ontology is firmly anthropocentric and this makes man look at God and nature from the point of a relationship with them.

However, between the Most-High and the Africans are intermediaries. The spiritual world of African peoples is very densely populated with spiritual beings, spirits and the living dead. The spirits in general belong to the ontological mode of existence between God and man.[100] There are two categories of spiritual beings: those which were created as such and those which were once human beings. They exist in a hierarchy, that is, they are ranked according to their nearness and importance to the Supreme Being. The most important spirits are the divinities or associates of God, and then next are the ordinary spirits or spirits of nature and the living dead or ancestors.

Divinities or associates of God are on the whole thought to have been created by the Supreme Being, in the ontological category of the spirits. They are associated with Him and often stand for His activities or manifestations either as personifications or as the spiritual beings in charge of these major objects or phenomena of nature. Some of them are national heroes, who have been elevated and deified, but this is rare and when it does happen, the heroes become associated with some function or form of nature.

Weather and natural phenomena are generally associated with divinities or personified as such. Major objects of nature like the sun, mountains, seas, lakes, rivers and big stones are also attributed to have or to be spiritual beings or divinities. In the pre-scientific environment, this form of logic and mentality certainly satisfies and explains many puzzles of nature and human experience. Such divinities are in effect timeless, they have always been there in the eyes of the peoples concerned.

The African Supreme Being, however, rarely plays a role in the daily activities of the people. No one would even think of knowing this being or trying to know him or her as "a personal savior. How could one have a personal relationship with God? How could God be a dictator in human life? In other respects, they are closer to men than is the Supreme Being, in the sense that they are constantly experienced in the physical life of man as thunder and lightning, rivers or lakes, sun or moon. Little wonder it is then, that men regard some of them as intermediaries or even have cults for them. In a sense these divinities are semi-physical and semi-spiritual; human beings imagine that there is a spiritual being activating what otherwise is obviously

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99   Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy.
100   ibid

physical. Most, if not all of these attribute divinities are the creation of the human beings' imagination. Thus, the myths, stories, legends, and narratives that are created by the various branches of Popular Traditional African Religion Everywhere are designed to approximate the nature of the God of Gods or, at least, to provide the necessary and attendant assistants in the process of maintaining ethics without the universe.

The African Traditional Religion has enriched Christianity rather than threatened it. In ATR God is understood to be an intangible, invisible phenomenon able to penetrate and defuse things.[101] God is extremely great and far removed from humankind and therefore divinities, spirits and ancestors act as mediators between them and God.

One of the transcendental properties of being is oneness. In his discussion of African divinity, Ogbonnaya introduces a debate about "the one and the many."[102] On the nature of the African concept of God the question is: Does African Traditional Religionconceive of the divine as an absolute, singular, personalistic God (monotheism) or as separatist (polytheistic) terms? He states that the divine in the African context is a community of gods. Whilst it is true that there are two predominant positions in the debate, Ogbonnaya opines that there is a third option. The first position deals with monotheism, the second deals with polytheism. He draws out a third which he calls a community of gods. In fact, Mbiti asserted that the Yoruba have one thousand and seven hundred divinities, this being the largest collection of divinities in a single African People.

Mbiti narrates that there are as many divinities as there are human needs, activities and experiences, and the cults of these divinities are recognized as such. He notes that one divinity may be connected with wealth, human fertility, and supply of children (Oluku); another is iron (Ogu), another of medicine (Osu), and another of death (Ogiuwu)."[103]

The fundamental difference between ATR and Christianity lies in the belief of the plurality of gods or divinities accompanied in religious practices.[104] He continues to argue that the concept of the hierarchy of beings is contrary to the biblical and Christian theology of the triune God. To approach the oneness of God as a unity in plurality may be fitting, but the question will still be the nature of the members who form that plurality.[105]

That notwithstanding, that the question of monotheism or polytheism is not an African question. It is profoundly a Western question. Most Africans believe in a Supreme God who creates the universe or causes it to be created, although it is believed that this entity may remain distant because the Supreme Deity is not a manager, but a creator.[106]Although there is a unity to African religion, there are many variations to the characteristics, rituals and ceremonies, and details of practice related to the Deity.What is believed intensely all over the continent of Africa is that there is the Supreme Being who could retreat from any direct involvement in the affairs of humans.

101   Mogoba and Mekoa, Saints, Martyrs and Ancestors: An African Reflection on the Communion of the Living and the Dead.' Paper presented at the Theological Society of South Africa in June 2007
102   Ogbannaya, A., On Communitarian Divinity: An African interpretation of the Trinity, Paragon House, New York, 1994.
103   *John S. Mbiti.Concepts of God in Africa.New York: Praeger, 1970.*
104   Turaki, Christianity and African gods, (1999)
105   http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0259-94222013000100079
106   Molefi K.A &Mazama A, Encyclopaedia of African Religion (Edited), Sage Publications, 2009p.xxiv

Be that as it may, one may also argue that because of the plurality of the divinities in the African Society, they are polytheistic. This argument is a stab on the back of the one who asserts it. This is because, it at all polytheism is an ideology in the African religion, the same can be said about Christianity. The difference only lies on what angle one analyses such teachings and dogmas. Whereas the Christians believe that there is one true God, they also believe that there is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit (the Truine nature of God). Further there are saints, priests and prophets through whom many seek intercession. These suggest that whereas there is the one true God, Christians bear a polytheistic kind of ideology in their reverence to these persons. On the other hand, the Africans have greater association with the divinities. However, these divinities are just pathways to the Most-High.

Using the African system of understanding, the nature of being one cannot conclude that there is only one divinity. Neither can one conclude that there are many creator deities. At best, one must accept that the nature of the divinity is one, but the attributes of the one are found in the numerous manifestations of the one as the many.[107] To say that the nature of the divinity is one is different from claiming that there is only one divinity, although in most African societies, there is only one aspect of the divinity that is responsible for creation. However, polytheism in the sense of several superdeities responsible for human society does not exist. Yet there is every reason to believe that there is a divinity, spirit, or ancestor that is capable of relating to every human activity.

In Africa, the world exists as a place full of energy, dynamism, and life, and the holding back of chaos by harmonizing the spirit world is the principal task of the human being in keeping with nature. In the African world, spirits exist. This is not a debatable issue in most African societies. The existence of spirits that are employed in the maintenance of balance and harmony represents the continuous search for equilibrium. Myriads of spirits are reported from every African people, but they defy description almost as much as they defy the scientist's test tubes in the laboratory. African traditional religions and though consider spirits to be elements of power, force, authority and vital energy underlying all existence. Invisible though this power may be, Africans perceive it directly. People know and believe that spirits are there; in their daily lives they point to a variety of actions that verify the existence of spirits. They also know that spirits are to be handled with care. Hence, the variety of rituals and taboos that acknowledges the existence of spirits.

Spirits may be anthropomorphically conceived, but they are more often than not thought of as powers which are almost abstract, as shades or vapours which take on human shape; they are immaterial and incorporeal beings. They are so constituted that they can assume various dimensions whenever they wish to be seen, they may be either abnormally small or abnormally tall, fat or thin. It is believed among Africans, that when spirits appear beside the natural object which is their residence, they may appear in the form or shape or dimensions of the object.

Spirits according to African belief are ubiquitous; there is no area of the earth, no object or creature, which has not a spirit of its own or which cannot be inhabited by a spirit. Thus, there are spirits of trees, that is, spirits which inhabit trees. There are special trees which are considered sacred by Africans and these are believed to be special residences of spirits.

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107   Molefi K.A &Mazama A, Encyclopaedia of African Religion (Edited), Sage Publications, 2009

The spirits of the dead are part of the spirit world. Some are ancestors and others are the spirits of the ordinary dead, that is, the dead of the community who are neither ancestors nor identified as outstanding members of the community. Africans do not worship their dead ancestors, but they do venerate and respect them. The ordinary dead are respected as well, with due ritual observations by all the members of the community. In African religious beliefs, when a person dies, his soul separates from the body and changes from being a soul to being a spirit.

In African traditional religion, the concept of spirits is well defined. This is because Africans believe in, recognize and accept the fact of the existence of spirits, who may use material objects as temporary residences and manifestations of their presence and actions through natural objects and phenomena.

Becoming a spirits is a social elevation; what was human becomes superhuman. At this point the spirit enters the state of immortality. The living are expected to take note of this development and render due respect to the departed through ritual.

The ancestors are regarded still as heads and parts of the families or communities to which they belonged while they were living human beings: for what happened in consequence of the phenomenon called death was only that the family life of this earth has been extended into the after-life or super sensible world. These all play a role in African religion.

Further still, attributes of God in Africa are quite numerous. Among the more popular attributes are the following: the moulder, the bringer of rain, the one who thunders from afar, the one who gives life, the who gives and destroys, the ancient of days, the one who humbles the great, the one who you meet everywhere, the one who brings sunshine, the one on whom we can lean and not fall, the one who is father of little babies, the high one up, the immense ocean whose circular headdress is the horizon, and the Universal Father-Mother.

Unquestionably, however, the African idea of a creator God who brings justice to the Earth is the most consistent description of the Almighty. The idea that a creator exists is also at the base of this African reality. In fact, African people have lived with the name of a Supreme Deity longer than any other people because the first humans who responded to the unknown with the announcement of awe originated on the African continent. This is not just true in the sense of oral tradition, but in historical time we know that the names of Bes, Ptah, Atum, Ra, Amen, Khnum, Set, Ausar, and Auset are among the oldest names for divinities in the world.

God is all-powerful to the followers of the Ashanti, the Yoruba, the Ngombe and the Akan.[108] To the Ngombe, the forest is full of struggle and they think God's omnipotence is linked up to the forest. They believe that 'He is the One Who clears the forest'. The Yoruba hold a practical sense about God that 'duties or challenges are easy to do as that which God performs but difficult to do as that which God enables not'. But the Zulu tribe thinks God in a political way that 'God is He Who bends down ... even majesties', and 'He Who roars so that all nations be struck with terror'. God's omnipotence also manifests in His power to this nature. God seems as all-powerful also to many other tribes in Africa, such as the Vugusu, the Teso, the Gikuyu, the Akamba, the Kiga, etc. The Gikuyu address God in their prayer for rain, the Kiga believe God 'Who makes the sun set' and some hold that 'He makes quake and flows river.

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108   Shafiul Islam and Didarul Islam, African Traditional Concept Of God: A Critical Analysis

God is the sole possessor of all highest qualities and every being including mankind is lower and limited than Him.

The spiritual African knows that the Supreme Deity cannot be contained. Thus, Lake Bosumtwe is a huge, perfect circle lake, but it does not hold the Supreme Deity. It is sacred, but even the lake cannot house the Great Nyankapon. NzambiMpungu, the Supreme Creator of the Bakongo people of the Congo, is invisible and omnipotent, but he cannot be contained. He intervenes in the creation of every person, indeed, in the creation of everything.[109]

One of the most striking questions is whether God could be known. The answer to that question depends on the nature of God. One of the most striking aspects of African traditional religions is the absence of dogmatic definitions of God and, most important, the absence of sculpture or icons representing the Supreme Being.

In most rituals, even prayers and sacrifices are often offered to the ancestors and the spirits. God is even called "the unknown" (by the Massai People), "the God of the Unknown" (by the Lunda people), "the Unexplainable" (by the Ngombe people), and "the Marvel of the marvels" (by the Bakongo people). Numerous proverbs also point to the mysterious nature of God. A Luba proverb warns whiners that God is not "our brother": "Vidyeukuhabibidi I mwanenu?" (God cannot give you twice, he is not your brother).[110]

This fact led many outsiders to conclude that Africans lack the knowledge of the Supreme Being.However, such a conclusion stems from a superficial perception of African religions. According to an Ashanti proverb, "No one shows a child the Supreme Being."[111] Knowing about God is believed to be an instinctive knowledge to the religious adherents. This proverb means that anyone born in Africa does not need to go to school to learn about the existence of the Supreme Being, but God's existence is known by all including children.

From time immemorial, atheism has not yielded support in African imagination. Contemplating the majesty of mountains such as Kilimanjaro and Nyiragongo and mighty rivers (Nile, Congo, and Niger), the beauty of the blue sky and the majesty of the stars, and experiencing the power of various spirits and interacting with the Dead through dreams, visions, or mediumship, Africans have firmly regarded the existence of God as a self-evident truth.[112]

As regards to God in African Religious Ontology, God is referred to as the living eternal Being who is the source of all living and whose life existed from the dateless past. He is self existed and is the one whose power sustains the universe. He is an all-knowing Being who knows and sees all things at the same time without any modern instrument. He even knows the end from the beginning.[113]

All that said, for one to understand the concept of God – the Supreme Being in African, he has

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109   Molefi K.A &Mazama A, Encyclopaedia of African Religion (Edited), Sage Publications, 2009
110   Molefi K.A &Mazama A, Encyclopaedia of African Religion (Edited), Sage Publications, 2009
111   Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy,
112   ibid
113   Emeka C. Ekeke and Chike A. EkeoparaGod, divinities and spirits in African traditional religious ontology

to study carefully the entirety of the culture of the people.   Africans do not perceive God as an abstract entity whose existence is in the mind. He is seen and perceived as a real personal entity whose help is sought in times of trouble and who is believed to be the protector of the people. The various names given to God in African attest to this. The fact that God is real to Africans is enshrined in the meaning of the name they call him. Though the various natural phenomena are not God from the African concept of God, they are vehicles through which God reveals Himself to people. We still maintain that God is unique and that is how Africans see the Supreme Being. Therefore, Africans had known God before the missionaries came. This Great Being has revealed Himself in many different ways, "and human beings in particular have always felt His presence and responded to Him in worship.

C H A P T E R F IVE

Intelligent Design Discourse

Introduction

Intelligent Design (ID) is a contemporary attempt to defend the idea that the order of nature bears marks of its Creator. The movement began in the U.S.A during the 1980´s and 1990´s, and its claims about ithe relationship of theology and science, and its critique of evolutionary theory have caused much controversy. This study is a theological and philosophical analysis of ID's design argument and its presuppositions. ID is contrasted with naturalistic evolutionism and theistic evolutionism, and related to the broader discussion of natural theology. The study attempts to provide a more balanced and nuanced view of both the strengths and weaknesses of ID's argumentation than much of the previous discussion. The study's main focus is on increasing understanding of the ID movement's argumentation, but some evaluation of the arguments of the discussion is also included and criticisms are developed.

African Phillosophy of Intelligent Design

In order to grasp ID in the African context one ought to full understand that African philosophy exists is manifestly obvious. There is however some confusion as to its nature; this has made the comprehension of African philosophy more problematic. To ease the problem Russell (1974:14) opined that "to understand an age or a nation, we must understand its philosophy"; conversely, he observes that the circumstances of men's lives do much to determine than philosophy.

We need to understand the history of the intellectual processes and ideas generated in Africa, the culture, and disclosure of the African as a being in the African world. Through this knowledge or disclosure of himself and his world by critical reflection, the African grasps reality that is to say attains the truth about man and the cosmos in its entirely.

In other words African philosophy is essentially an activity, a systematic and coherent inquiry into African experience and how an African conceives and interprets the world, in the words of Etuk (1993:63). It is the application of the philosophical tools of analysis, criticism and logic to the problems of Africans in all aspects of life.

These views of African philosophy to a large extent re- echo Oruka's (1990:13) claim that African philosophy is a way of thinking that is uniquely African and which radically avoids the European style of thought; it is communalistic. Unfortunately, however, researchers in the History of African philosophy will notice that while there exists a draught of literature on the history of African philosophy history and experience of the people, to appreciate

and connect to the African intellectual explanation and reality down the ages, same cannot be said of the 19th centuries and 20th existence.

African philosophy therefore is the reflection based on the experiences of ancestors. It is the intellectual development, the how and why they think in a particular way in a particular period, it is the socio-cultural and economic thoughts of the people.

African philosophy is the circumstances and environment that have shaped the lives and conditioned of the ideas of the Africans. No wonder, that Sogolo (1993:6) argued that "traditional African philosophy is communalistic... It is a body of thought attributed to the community rather than to individual".

It is taken to mean a world-view (Weltanschauung); a way of life, that is the fundamental beliefs of the African about life its origin and end, the universe and the entire reality. It is the identified way of life which is specific to the African.

African philosophy is the reflective inquiry into the marvels and problematic that confront one in the African world, in producing systematic explanation and sustained responses to them (Iroegbu, 1994:16).

Its subject matter is, African reality, African experience and how the African understand and interpret these experiences. Momoh (1998:40) states that African philosophy is: African doctrines or theories on reality (Being) and the Universe which is made up of things like God, gods, life, lif after death, reincarnation, spirit, society, man, ancestors, heaven, hell, things, institutions, beliefs, conceptions, practices, etc.

On his part Okolo (1990:10) opined that African philosophy is: a path to a systematic coherent discovery and discovery attempts made so far on writing aspects of the history of African philosophy have focused largely on the contemporary era. History of African philosophy is taught in the University of Ibadan, Department of History. The course begins with a brief introduction while covers philosophy in Traditional Africa (Jones, 2010). Amongst the African philosophical ideas are those of Ikwame Nknush, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Leopolel Senghor etc. An examination of the History of African philosophy encompasses other socio-political and economic thought of the people.

Furthermore, even published works on the history of African philosophy tend to also concentrate on the recent past. The point being made here is that a large chunk of the history of African philosophy has not been written. The vast pre-colonial era and the intellectual ferment of the period are yet to be given adequate attention by scholars. In fact the history of African philosophy in all its ramifications, even political philosophy, have received little or no attention but that does not in anyway imply that it is non-existent. Indeed it is this issue of existence that informed Makinwe's statement:

So much debate had regard over the existence or non- existence of African philosophy that one may be tempted to think that perhaps what is known as African philosophy

is nothing more than a controversy about whether or not there is indeed an African philosophy (Makinwe, 1989:89).

The philosophy of Nyerere, the Uganma and all it stands for cannot be non-existent. Uyaama is a concept from the Swahili word meaning "family-hood or brother- hood. It is essentially a rural development policy/ philo- sophy on economy, politics and the involvement of thecitizenry and their reactions to the socialist programmes. It sought to restore the egalitarian and humanistic principles of traditional African to modern Tanzania. It was with the Arusha declaration of 1967 that the United Republic of Tanzania formally set out on the path of socialism and self-reliance (Gabriel and Jaja 2000). Nyerere described his Ujamaa (communities) as a group of families who will live together in a village and will work on a common farm for their common benefits. He hoped to create village settlement where individuals would live and work collectively.

Similarly, Leopold Sada Serghor's Negritude is an African philosophy that projects the Africaness in being black. It is a self affirmation of black people or the affirmation of the values of civilization of something defined as "the black world". It is a revolt against the historical situation of French colonialism and racism (Fanor, 1991); it was derived from Latin "Niger" meaning "black". Applied to a black person it has come to be charged with all the weight of racism to the point that the insult 'Sale Negree" (dirty regret) would be almost repugnant (Casaire, 2004).

Aime Cesaire Senghor's associate confessed how angry they were too by the word. He argued...I confess that I do not always like the word Negritude even if I am the one, with the complicity of a few others, who contributed to its invention and its launching" adding that, still, it corresponds to an evident reality and in any case to a need that appears to be a deep one" (Casaire, 2004).

On his part Senghor has insisted that negritude has a philosophical content, and "the sum total of "the values of civilization of the Black world", thus implying that it is an ontology, an aesthetic, an epistemology or a politics.

Myths in Africa

Having examined some major ideas in African philosophy, l e t us briefly examine the use of myths in African understanding of ieality.

ID's design arguments are quite minimalistic, not aspiring to prove the existence of God, but merely of an unidentified intelligent designer of cosmic and biological teleology. It also emphasizes the scientific nature of its design argument. Consequently, much discussion has focused on the question of whether ID is better understood as part of the natural sciences, or as philosophical-theological idea. Though this study also considers this philosophical question, it also emphasis that it is not the central question of the debate, since good arguments are not restricted to science. So, it is

more interesting to ask why people believe or do not believe in the designedness of the cosmos and how good the arguments for each view are. The definition of natural science is a side-issue in the discussion of these questions.

Understanding the relationship of science and religion is important for understanding the debate on Intelligent Design. A central difficulty comes from the fact that there is no universal definition of either science or religion. The word "science" itself is used in many different ways. For example, in the English-speaking world, the word "science" customarily refers only to the natural sciences, while the German word "wissenschaft" also includes the humanities.[114] Even within the natural sciences, there are multiple methodologies, and the content of theories and scientific assumptions have varied widely over time.[115] Del Ratzsch, conscious of the difficulties, defines natural science broadly as "a deeply empirical project aimed most fundamentally at understanding and explaining the natural realm, typically in natural terms."[116] Science should also be understood as a "stratified phenomenon", encompassing multiple levels of reality. Science can be studied on several levels, including psychological, sociological and theoretical dimensions.[117] The nature of science is quite controversial in the discussion over Intelligent Design, and I will discuss it further in chapter three. Ratzsch's definition assumes that science only "typically" explains nature in natural terms, whereas many argue that there are no exceptions to the rule of methodological naturalism.

Religion

Defining "religion" is equally difficult. For example, a fairly typical Western definition of religion (used by Ratzsch) is "belief in a transcendent supernatural being(s), plus (typically) closely associated moral codes, ritual practices, personal/group commitments, convictions concerning meaning, purpose, value, and post-death conscious existence, all integrated into an encompassing world-view."[118] The most obvious problem with this definition is the exclusion of religions where belief in "transcendent supernatural beings" is not traditionally central, such as Buddhism. But there are also other problems. For example, defining the Christian God as a "supernatural being" has sometimes been contested by Christian theologians, because these are not terms used in the Christian tradition itself, and many would rather speak of God as the "ground of being" or "existence itself" than as a supernatural being.[119]

Philosopher William Alston has provided a more multifaceted definition of religion. Alston argues that we should not think of religion in terms of a single unifying characteristic, but rather a web of characteristics, many of which may be absent

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114   McGrath 2001, introduction.
115   Brooke 1991.
116   Ratzsch 2009a, 55.
117   McGrath 2002.
118   Ratzsch 2009a, 55.
119   See e.g. Feser 2008, Cunningham 2009, Turner 2002 for critical discussion of seeing God as a "supernatural being".

from a particular religion. These are (1) belief in supernatural beings, (2) a distinction between sacred and profane objects, (3) ritual acts focused on sacred objects, (4) a moral code believed to be sanctioned by the gods, (5) characteristic religious feelings such as awe, (6) prayer, (7) a worldview, (8) a total organization of one's life based on the worldview, and (9) a social group that more or less follows these tenets. While "religion" refers to the conjunction of a sufficient number of such characteristics, "theology" typically refers to the doctrine and way of thought associated with this religion.

Intend to systematically analyse the Intelligent Design movement's design argument and its theology as it relates to this africanisation. Though the movement itself emphasizes its claimed scientific nature, the focus of this book is primarily legal and philosophical rather than scientific. Because of ID´s controversial nature, the movement's thought will be contrasted with theistic evolutionism and atheistic naturalism. The discussion on design and the relationship of science and religion has a long history, and this book will situate ID in this context. Results of which will be that Intelligent Design as well as for the more general discussion about the relationship between the natural sciences and African creation philosophy amd thus answer the magic question did Africa really have God (or a god for Africa or was HE or another just imposed to to us by the others[120].

The book argues that ID's design argument is best understood as an inference to the best explanation that is supported by the analogy between nature's teleological order and the teleological capabilities of minds. The credibility of this design argument depends not only on our philosophical and theological background beliefs, but also on the empirical evidence. Theological and philosophical a priori -considerations arguments are not sufficient to settle the debate on ID apart from empirical study of what the world is like therefore the theistic and naturalistic worldviews will not base merely on scientific data, but also on philosophical, metaphysical and theological and leegal considerations.

While emphasizing its scientific nature if any, the study also seeks to build bridges between science and religion. Rather than conflicting with each other, the study will argue that science and theology support each other, when they are rightly understood. Though this study supports the basic premise that there can be mutually beneficial dialogue between science and theology, it also warns against emphasizing the importance of scientific arguments to such an extent that the broader metaphysical, philosophical and theological nature of the doctrine of creation and the value of non-scientific arguments is forgotten.

The study also argues that contrary to some of ID's argumentation, one can believe both in divine design and Darwinian evolution at the same time. This compatibility thesis can surprisingly be argued not only on the basis of broader theological and philosophical arguments, but also on the basis of the ID movement's own ideas.

The primary goal of this book is to form a general understanding of the structure of

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120   The white man invention or foreign culture interventions especially those native to black africa

Intelligent Design thought and its relationship to central competing views. The book Analyzes the Intelligent Design movements design argument and asses its central concepts and presuppositions. It also Access how Intelligent Design relate to African theistic evolutionism and naturalistic evolutionism on the question of design.

The book adopts a systematic analysis, meaning the analysis of the concepts, arguments and presuppositions of Intelligent Design. Although I will evaluate and criticize arguments in the process of mapping the theological and philosophical landscape of the ID movement´s thought, I must nevertheless emphasize that this book is not an evaluation of IDs claimed research programme, that would require a different type of analysis, with much greater emphasis on interpreting the results of the natural sciences. Furthermore, since the issues in the debate are highly controversial, I do not expect readers to agree with me on every point. I will feel that I have succeeded if readers from several different perspectives can feel that I have at least identified the core issues of the debate and mapped out its cognitive landscape in an insightful manner.

This book uses case the study of African jurisprudence in as far as creationism is said to exist within the African region.

The design argument is traditionally part of the theological and philosophical programme of natural theology, and situating ID's design argument in this discussion is necessary for understanding its strengths and weaknesses when compared to other approaches.

Because I am a legal phillosophist, it is better to concentrate on the aspects where my competence is strongest, rather than attempting an analysis of Intelligent Design in the light of the theology and natural sciences.

Other definitions of Intelligent Design by members of the ID movement reveal the importance of theology clearly. In ID theorist William Dembski's definition, "Intelligent Design is three things: a scientific research programme that investigates the effects of intelligent causes; an intellectual movement that challenges Darwinism and its naturalistic legacy; and a way of understanding divine action."[121] Here "a way of understanding divine action" reveals the importance of the theological side of ID. Thomas Woodward similarly emphasizes the scientific motivations of Intelligent Design, but admits that its goal is also to open up both science and society for the "serious consideration of the theistic perspective."[122] Angus Menuge likewise argues that "defenders of ID see themselves as revolutionaries who can build bridges between science and theology."[123]

Though ID theorists emphasize the scientific side of their motivations, many critics of the movement think the religious side is more important. For example, Barbara Forrest writes that "in actuality, this 'scientific' movement which seeks to permeate

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121   Dembski 1999, 13.
122   Woodward 2003, 205.
123   Menuge 2004a, 48-49.

the American academic and cultural mainstream is religious to its core."[124] For Forrest, Intelligent Design is not a scientific research programme (because it does not fulfil the criteria required of such programmes) but a religious movement that is trying gain power in American cultural and academic life. In her opinion, ID's so-called scientific arguments are just a smokescreen. Their arguments are not of any value scientifically, but represent reiterations of creationist arguments long since discredited by mainstream scientists.[125] Robert Pennock also argues that "the creation/evolution debate is only superficially about science. At its base, it is about religion and it is about philosophy."[126]· I would not go quite as far as this – I think that there are real disagreements about the state of natural science in the debate, and the empirical evidence is important for all sides of the debate. The empirical side of the discussion includes things like debates about the viability of various hypotheses of the origin of life, the possibility of evolving "irreducibly complex" biochemical structures, what kind of values the constants of nature need in order to make life possible, is biological order machine-like and so on. Having read material from ID proponents and based on my interaction with some of the members of the movement, it is my feeling that they honestly believe in the strenght of their empirical arguments. However, Pennock is right that the debate is definitely also about religion and philosophy.

Many secular critics of ID feel that ID's religious overtones are dangerous, and believe that stopping ID is important for the preservation of Enlightenment values and a free secular society. They worry that ID's bid to include intelligent design as a possible explanation within the natural sciences would lead to the cessation of natural science in favour of vacuous "God did it" -explanations when encountering mysterious phenomena.[127] These secular critics of ID argue that the fact of evolution is so clearly established by the scientific evidence that any contrary opinions must be explained by non-rational factors such as a fear of the religious and moral implications of evolutionary theory.[128]

So, it is clear that the debate on ID has its political side. While the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture has focused much of its funding on ID research, it has also argued for the permissibility of criticizing Darwinism and defending the freedom of teachers to teach ID's arguments as part of public science education in the United

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124   Forrest 2001, 30.
125   Forrest 2001, 31-32. More on the definition of creationism below.
126   Pennock 2009, 309.
127   See e.g. Forrest & Gross 2004, Shanks 2004, 244, who believe that ID is ultimately attempting to replace secular democracy with a theocracy. The basis for this claim is that the Discovery Institute has received an important part of its funding from Howard Ahmanson, who Forrest identifies as a follower of the Christian reconstructionism of R. J. Rushdoony (1973) and Dominion theology. Ahmanson also has a place on the Discovery Institute's board of directors. However, as Numbers (2006, 382) has noted, the Discovery Institute has never advocated theocracy. The Discovery Institute's argues that in practice its fellows have defended democracy, human rights and the American separation of church and state on many forums. (Discovery Institute 2005). Gregory Dawes (2007) provides many more examples of polemical characterizations of ID.
128   Freeman & Herron (2007, 105) also argue against ID in this way in their textbook of evolutionary biology.

States.[129] Forrest's most important evidence is the Discovery Institute's Wedge document: a plan sent to supporters which laid out a long-term plan for using Intelligent Design as a means of affecting culture and opening up discussion on moral and religious values. The document was subsequently leaked and later also made available to the public by the Discovery Institute. In the document, ID's scientific programme serves the cultural goal of preserving the cultural authority of Judeo-Christian values such as the value of human life.[130] While Forrest presents the Wedge document with the air of investigators uncovering a secret conspiracy, Menuge correctly points out that these cultural aims were already openly proclaimed by ID supports such as Johnson long before the publication of the Wedge document.[131]

These examples highlight the importance of the religious side of ID, and thus also the importance of its philosophical and theological study. They also reveal the contentious nature of the debate. Theological and philosophical analysis can bring light to openly revealed and hidden presumptions on both sides of the debate. The need for clarity and a balanced analysis has been stressed (for example) by philosophers Jeffrey Koperski and Del Ratzsch, who have called on scholars to analyse ID calmly to identify both the strengths and weaknesses of ID thought.[132] In Finnish systematic theology, the method of systematic analysis is typically used precisely to better understand a system of thought, rather than to criticize it. So the method chosen for this study is suited for producing the sort of balanced analysis Koperski and Ratzsch call for. Of course, understanding a system of thought can also help one see its flaws more clearly. However, my personal hope is that this analysis will not just result in pointing out flaws in the various viewpoints, but also build bridges between them to help the continuation of the dialogue.

The contentiousness of the discussion is also revealed in the varied nature of the criticisms directed against Intelligent Design. For example, the ID movement's design argument has been criticized both by arguing that the hypothesis of a designer is unfalsifiable and by arguing that ID's design argument has been falsified.[133] In theological critiques of ID, ID's susceptibility to falsification by future scientific

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129   Forrest & Gross (2004) chronicle many battles over science education. Here too the truth about Intelligent Design is contentious. The Discovery Institute argues that it has merely tried to defend the academic freedom of teachers to question Darwinism, and has not attempted to force anyone to teach Intelligent Design through politics (DeWolf, West, Luskin & Witt 2006). One battle over school education which received much publicity occurred in Dover, Pennsylvania in 2005. ID was not taught in the classroom but the school district decided that a short statement about the "gaps" of Darwinian evolutionary theory and the existence of ID was read prior to biology lessons. The matter eventually became a court case, which even included an investigation of whether Intelligent Design qualifies as science. The judge accepted the arguments against ID and ruled against the school district. (Jones 2005, for critique see DeWolf, West, Luskin & Witt 2006)

130   The Discovery Institute 2003, Johnson 2000. For critiques of the "wedge", see Shanks (2004, 244) and Forrest & Gross (2004, chapter 2).

131   Menuge 2004, 36.

132   Koperski 2008, Ratzsch 2001.

133   For example, see the collection edited by Pennock 2001 and Del Ratzsch's review (2001).

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discoveries is often seen as one of its greatest flaws.[134] Some critics of Intelligent Design argue that design is excluded from science on philosophical grounds[135], while others argue that naturalistic science is open even to supernatural explanations if there is evidence.[136] Some argue against Intelligent Design from atheist premises, regarding the design argument as the best sort of evidence for God.[137] Others argue against Intelligent Design from theistic premises, believing Intelligent Design to be a theologically mistaken "God of the gaps" -doctrine.[138] Some of ID's critics reject the possibility of all design arguments,[139] while others defend broader cosmic design arguments themselves.[140] Some critics even agree with the ID theorists that there are major problems in mainstream Darwinian evolutionary theory, but do not agree that intelligent design is any better as an explanation for life's development.[141] Intelligent Design is a controversial minority position, and the majority of the scientific community has rejected it. However, the literature responding to ID is far from unanimous. The reasons for the rejection of the ID movement's ideas vary, and many critics agree with ID on at least some point. The philosophical and theological issues of the Intelligent Design discussion have thus not been settled. Because of the variety of viewpoints and the extent of the disagreement on central philosophical issues, there is room for a balanced theological and philosophical analysis of the movement's ideas.

Creationism

Intelligent Design can clearly be classified as creationism. However, this definition also includes many theistic critics of ID (such as the Darwinian biologist Kenneth Miller) among the creationists. Consistent with his definition, Shanks does indeed call Miller a "cosmological creationist". David Sedley similarly classifies the thought of Socrates and Plato as creationism is his important work Creationism and its Critics in Antiquity (2007). Sedley defines creationism as "the thesis that the world's structure can be adequately explained only by postulating at least one intelligent designer, a creator god." For Sedley, this is also the central issue that "separates modern 'creationists' from their Darwinian critics."

Ratzsch (Ratzsch 1996, 12.) argues that in creationism, it is believed that "whether or

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134   See chapter 7.2. of this study.
135   Pennock 1999.
136   Young & Edis 2006, Kitcher 2007.
137   Dawkins 2006a.
138   Haught 2003, Cunningham 2010.
139   Dawkins 2006a, Pennock 1999.
140   Miller 2002, Swinburne 2004c.
141   For iexample, Lynn Margulis, known for her endosymbiosis theory, agrees with Michael Behe's critique of the Darwinian mechanism of natural selection and mutation, but disputes ID theory as an alternative. For Margulis' views on evolution see Margulis 1999, for her views on the ID movement see her interview in Discover Magazine (Teresi 2011.) See also Fodor & Piattello-Palmarini 2009, for their view that the mechanism of natural selection lacks creative power, and Cobb 2008 as well as Pigliucci & Müller 2010 for the complexity and richness of modern evolutionary theory.

not God could have built evolutionary potentials into the creation, or could have brought about life and all its diversity by evolutionary means, he did not in fact do so. There are thus discontinuities in nature – e.g., non-life/life, reptile/mammal, animal/human – which cannot be crossed by purely natural means, each such discontinuity requiring separate supernatural creative action." The use of the word "creationism" therefore varies greatly and we must take care to define what we mean by the term.

Progressive creationism (or Old Earth -creationism) accepts the old history of the Earth and the universe. The "days" of the Genesis account of creation in ways which accommodates the long ages of natural history, and God's creating work is believed to have occurred progressively over this time through numerous supernatural creative acts. Views on where such acts were required vary.

Theistic evolutionism or evolutionary creationism means the belief that God has used an evolutionary natural process to create the living species. Mainline Catholic and Protestant theology accepts the compatibility of evolutionary theory and the doctrine of creation. Theistic evolutionists want to take mainstream science seriously when considering how we should understand the doctrine of creation. There is precedent for this within the Christian tradition. St. Augustine (354-430) argued in his On the Literal Understanding of Genesis that the Bible did not require a Flat Earth -view incompatible with philosophy, but is compatible with the philosophers' spherical view. Augustine, De Genesi Ad Litteram (I, 19).

Richard Dawkins' book "The Blind Watchmaker: How the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe Without a Designer" (1986), in which Dawkins argues that the Darwinian theory of evolution supports atheism, is quoted prominently in many major ID works. Phillip Johnson, the early leading visionary of ID, is reported to have begun formulating his new views on evolution after reading Dawkins' Blind Watchmaker and Michael Denton's Evolution together. After reading these works, Johnson was convinced that the creation-evolution debate had enormous implications for our worldviews and broader culture. He was also convinced that Dawkins' naturalistic view was scientifically, philosophically and theologically problematic. So, opposing the atheistic interpretation of evolution was part of the initial motivation of   ID.

Narratives of the History of Intelligent Design

Several different narratives of the history of Intelligent Design have been proposed. Many have connected Intelligent Design with the creationist movement of the 20th century, noting similarities between the arguments used against Darwinian evolutionary biology. The ID movement's rise to publicity happened after the 1987 Arkansas trial on the teaching of Scientific Creationism in public schools in the U.S.A. However, the movement's proponents themselves see deeper roots for their ideas in the tradition of design arguments stretching back to ancient Greek philosophy. There is a good deal of justification for this, although the Greek arguments also differ substantially from ID.[142] The first versions of the contemporary ID movement's arguments appeared

142   Sedley 2007.

already before the Arkansas Creationism trials, in the 1984 book The Mystery of Life's Origin by Charles Thaxton, Walter Bradley and Roger Olsen. But the formation of an actual movement of thinkers called the Intelligent Design movement is connected to the Berkeley law professor Phillip E. Johnson and his criticisms of naturalism and Darwinism in the 1990's. Johnson was soon joined by philosopher Stephen Meyer, mathematician-philosopher-theologian William Dembski, and biochemist Michael Behe, among others. The movement also gained some support from influential Christian philosophers like Alvin Plantinga, J.P. Moreland and William Lane Craig.[143]

Though different narratives about the origins and nature of the Intelligent Design movement abound, both critics and defenders agree that the Center for Science and Culture (CSC) of the Seattle-based "think tank" Discovery Institute is the most important gathering point for the ID theorists. CSC provides the following definition for Intelligent Design:

Intelligent design refers to a scientific research programme as well as a community of scientists, philosophers and other scholars who seek evidence of design in nature. The theory of intelligent design holds that certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection. Through the study and analysis of a system's components, a design theorist is able to determine whether various natural structures are the product of chance, natural law, intelligent design, or some combination thereof. Such research is conducted by observing the types of information produced when intelligent agents act. Scientists then seek to find objects which have those same types of informational properties which we commonly know come from intelligence. Intelligent design has applied these scientific methods to detect design in irreducibly complex biological structures, the complex and specified information content in DNA, the life-sustaining physical architecture of the universe, and the geologically rapid origin of biological diversity in the fossil record during the Cambrian explosion approximately 530 million years ago.[144]

The Discovery Institute's definition emphasises the Intelligent Design movement's claimed intellectual and scientific nature. According to this definition, Intelligent Design

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143   For different perspectives on the history of Intelligent Design, see Giberson & Yerxa 2002, Woodward 2003 & 2006, as well as Forrest & Gross 2004. On the support for ID from Christian philosophers, see Plantinga 1991, Moreland (ed) 1994 and Craig 2007.

144   Discovery Institute 2011. Campbell (2004, 33) provides a similar idefinition. Bradley Monton (2009, 15-29) has provided a critique of the first part of ithis idefinition: "certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection." Monton argues that the definition is problematic, because: (1) Everyone believes that at least some features of the universe and living things are designed, and thus the definition is not specific enough. For example, human artifacts are also part of the universe, and are designed. (2) Typically, ID proponents mean to refer to the detection of non-human intelligent causes, though this is not entioned in the idefinition. Thus, seeing an automobile as designed does not suffice it make one a member of the ID movement. (3) ID proponents typically believe that the intelligence thus discovered is not itself produced by natural processes. The definition I have quoted avoids the first two dangers by referencing more specific places where the ID movement claims to detect design, such as "irreducibly complex biological structures" and "the life-sustaining physical architecture of the universe." It is clear that not just any believer in human design also sees design in these places.

is three things: (1) a scientific research programme attempting to find evidence of design in nature, (2) a community (or movement) of scholars who participate in this research programme[145], and (3) a theory which holds that there is indeed evidence for intelligent design in nature. This theory is said to be based on the study and analysis of natural systems. Advocates of Intelligent Design emphasize that their design argument rests on new scientific discoveries which provide evidence for design and against Darwinism. They point to developments in (for example) physics, cosmology, molecular biology, genetics, information theory, mathematics and the philosophy of mind as providing the basis for their design argument.

The definition's distinction between the idea of evidence for design and the community known as the Intelligent Design movement is useful. The idea that there is evidence for the operation of an intelligent mind in nature is far older and more popular than the ID movement itself. It is more popularly known as the design argument or the teleological argument, and it has been formulated in many ways over the centuries. According to philosopher Del Ratzsch's definition, "teleological arguments focus upon finding and identifying various traces of the operation of a mind in nature's temporal and physical structures, behaviors and paths."[146] As a community, the main thinkers of the ID movement are mostly located in the United States of America, but the movement does also have global influence.[147]

The design argument of the ID movement is controversial partly because the ID theorists generally believe that a critique of Darwinism is essential for the defence of the design argument. According to ID supporter Thomas Woodward's analysis, the movement's story is about "respected professors at prestigious secular universities rising up and arguing that (1) Darwinism is woefully lacking factual support and is rather based on philosophical assumptions, and (2) empirical evidence, especially in molecular biology, now points compellingly to some sort of creative intelligence behind life."[148] Woodward emphasises the intellectual nature of the ID movement, just as the previously quoted Discovery Institute's definition also does. The ID movement sees its critique of Darwinism as a scientific dissent from a doctrine of evolution which does not fit the facts. Dissent from this doctrine is seen as the courageous and intellectually honest thing to do.[149] The movement's critique of Darwinism sets its design argument apart from views which seek to harmonize evolutionary biology and belief in creation and/or design.

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145   The terminology of the first two definitions comes from the philosopher of science Imre Lakatos' (1977) analysis of scientific research programs. For a classic analysis of Lakatos in the theology and science discussion, see Murphy 1993.

146   Ratzsch 2010.

147   The works of Cardinal Christoph Schöenborn (2007) and Matti Leisola (2013) are just a few examples of support for ID in Europe. Many others could also be cited; see Numbers 2006, chapter 18 for further discussion. My dissertation focuses on the work of ID's main theorists, who are all U.S. citizens.

148   Woodward 2003, 195.

149   For examples of this understanding in the own words of the ID movement's thinkers, see Dembski's collections Uncommon Dissent: Intellectuals Who Dissent From Darwinism (2004), and Darwin's Nemesis: Phillip Johnson and the Intelligent Design movement. (2006)

In addition to its defence of the design argument, Intelligent Design's critique of methodological naturalist is also a distinctive mark of the movement's argumentation.[150]

Methodological naturalism is understood in the movement as the idea that only "natural", mechanistic and non-purposeful explanations are allowed in the natural sciences. ID´s critique of methodological naturalism stems partly from a desire to challenge materialistic interpretations of natural science, and build a new kind of natural science more consonant with theology. So, the definition of science is thought to have not only scientific, but also cultural importance. The issue is also important to critics of ID. Theistic evolutionists typically argue that methodological naturalism does not imply that we cannot rationally discuss theological questions (such as the purposiveness of nature) outside of natural science. The issue is politically charged, since the status of ID as science or non-science will determine whether it can be taught in public schools U.S. Consequently, much has been written on whether ID is natural science or not. In this study, I will consider this question of definitions primarily as it related to ID's primary idea: the design argument.

The primary source material of this book consists of the central Intelligent Design theorists' writings and collections where they engage their naturalistic and theistic critics. The most central thinkers of the Intelligent Design movement, according to both defenders and critics of the movement, are Phillip Johnson, Michael Behe, William Dembski and Stephen Meyer.[151] Their works constitute the main sources of this study. Works by other ID theorists are also used to fill in gaps and to help identify central arguments. I will now briefly describe these thinkers and some of my source material.

Phillip Johnson, professor emeritus of law at the University of Berkeley, California, is universally acknowledged to be the movement's most important early leader and the one most responsible for creating the movement's vision in the 1990's. This study uses Johnson's books Darwin on Trial (1991), Reason in the Balance (1995), Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds (1997), and The Wedge of Truth (1999), as well as several articles. However, many of Johnson's ideas have been defended in more depth and substantially altered by the other thinkers of the ID movement, and thus Johnson is not often in the spotlight in this study.

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150   As noted by Beckwith (2003).
151   Dawes (2007, 70) similarly considers Behe, Dembski and Meyer to be the central ID theorists. Meyer has become even more important since Dawes' article, because of the publication of Meyer 2009 and Meyer 2013. Jonathan Wells and Paul Nelson are also important figures for the ID movement, and were present in the Pajaro Dunes meeting which the ID movement considers pivotal. (Illustra Media 2003) Robert Pennock (1991) thus characterizes Nelson as one of ithe "four horsemen" of ID together with Johnson, Behe, and Dembski. The Discovery Institute's Wedge Document (2003) likewise highlights Nelson's research as important for ID. However, Nelson's and Wells' publications have not been as central or as referenced as those of Johnson, Behe, Dembski and Meyer. Nelson's monograph On Common Descent, already promised in the Wedge Document, is still under work and cannot be used as a source. In any case, Wells and Nelson focus on critiquing the arguments for common descent, and this debate will not be in the focus of this study, since it is not essential to ID´s design arguments. (I will demonstrate this in chapter 6.)

Michael Behe, professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, is responsible for the movement's most popular anti-Darwinian argument, the argument from irreducible complexity. Behe's main importance for the movement comes from his scientific arguments, but he has also written on the philosophy of the design argument, and has commented on its religious implications. This study utilises Behe's works

In recent years, Casey Luskin has been one of the most important popularizers of ID through the Discovery Institute blog Evolution News and Views. However, his arguments are dependent on the work done by the main ID theorists, so he himself will not be in the focus of this study.

Darwin's Black Box (1996) and The Edge of Evolution (2007), as well as many articles and Behe's dialogues with his critics on the Internet.

William A. Dembski is a mathematician and theologian. Dembski is currently affiliated with the Discovery Institute, but has previously been employed at Baylor University (where he briefly led his own controversial centre of research) and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Forth Worth, Texas). He is known for his development of the concept of specified complexity and his eliminative design inference as well as his many books integrating ID with Christian theology. Dembski is a profilic and influential writer. This study references his works The Design Inference (1998), Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science and Theology (1999), No Free Lunch (2002), The Design Revolution (2004), The End of Christianity (2009), as well as many articles and co-authored or edited books, such as The Design of Life (2007, together with Jonathan Wells) and How to be an Intellectually Fulfilled Atheist (Or Not) (2008, together with Jonathan Wells).

Stephen C. Meyer is a philosopher of science and the director of the Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture in Seattle. Meyer´s recent works Signature in the Cell (2009) and Darwin's Doubt (2013) have substantially expanded and elaborated the ID movement's defence of design arguments. However, Meyer has been important for ID's development from the beginning behind the scenes, and I also reference many of his articles that predate the books. Meyer is also the author of the ID textbook Explore Evolution: The Arguments for and Against Neo-Darwinism (2007) together with Scott Minnich, Jonathan Moneymaker, Paul A. Nelson, and Ralph Seelke.

CHAPTER SIX
Divergence in Religion

Aside from the African perspective of religion, the major religions of the world (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Confucianism, Christianity, Taoism, and Judaism) differ in many respects, including how each religion is organized and the belief system, or common tenets, each upholds. Differences include the nature of belief in a higher power, the history of how the world and the religion began, and the use of sacred texts and objects.

Religions organize themselves—their institutions, practitioners, and structures—in various ways. For instance, when the Roman Catholic Church emerged, it borrowed many of its organizational principles from the ancient Roman military and turned senators into cardinals, for example. Ecclesia, denomination, and sect are terms used to describe these classifications. Scholars are also aware that these definitions are not static. Most religions transition through different organizational phases. For example, Christianity began as a cult, transformed into a sect, and today exists as an ecclesia.

Cults, like sects, are new religious groups. In the world today this term often carries pejorative connotations. However, almost all religions began as cults and gradually progressed to levels of greater size, stability, and organization. The term cult is sometimes used interchangeably with the term "new religious movement" (NRM). In its pejorative use, these groups are often disparaged as being secretive, highly controlling of members' lives, and dominated by a single, charismatic leader.

A **sect** is a small and relatively new group. Most of the well-known Christian denominations in the world today began as sects. For example, the Methodists and Baptists protested against their parent Anglican Church in England, just as Henry VIII protested against the Catholic Church by forming the Anglican Church. From "protest" comes the term Protestant.

Occasionally, a sect is a breakaway group that may be in tension with the larger society. They sometimes claim to be returning to "the fundamentals" or to be contesting the truth of a particular doctrine. When membership in a sect increases over time, it may grow into a denomination. Often a sect begins as an offshoot of a denomination, when a group of members believes they should separate from the larger group.

Some sects dissolve without growing into denominations. Sociologists call these established sects. Established sects, such as the Amish or Jehovah's Witnesses fall halfway between sect and denomination on the ecclesia–cult continuum because they have a mixture of sect-like and denomination-like characteristics.

A **denomination** is a large, mainstream religious organization, but it does not claim to be official or state sponsored. It is one religion among many. For example, Baptist, African Methodist Episcopal, Catholic, and Seventh-day Adventist are all Christian denominations.

The term **ecclesia**, originally referring to a political assembly of citizens in ancient Athens, Greece, now refers to a congregation. In sociology, the term is used to refer to a religious group that most all members of a society belong to. It is considered a nationally recognized, or official, religion that holds a religious monopoly and is closely allied with state and secular powers.

Note that some religions may be practiced—or understood—in various categories. For instance, the Christian notion of the Holy Trinity (God, Jesus, Holy Spirit) defies the definition of **monotheism**, which is a religion based on belief in a single deity, to some scholars. Similarly, many Westerners view the multiple manifestations of Hinduism's godhead as **polytheistic**, which is a religion based on belief in multiple deities, while Hindus might describe those manifestations are a monotheistic parallel to the Christian Trinity. Some Japanese practice Shinto, which follows **animism**, which is a religion that believes in the divinity of nonhuman beings, like animals, plants, and objects of the natural world, while people who practice totemism believe in a divine connection between humans and other natural beings.

It is also important to note that every society also has nonbelievers, such as atheists, who do not believe in a divine being or entity, and agnostics, who hold that ultimate reality (such as God) is unknowable. While typically not an organized group, atheists and agnostics represent a significant portion of the population. It is important to recognize that being a nonbeliever in a divine entity does not mean the individual subscribes to no morality. Indeed, many Nobel Peace Prize winners and other great humanitarians over the centuries would have classified themselves as atheists or agnostics.

All these world's known religions, cults, sects, denominations or ecclesiae advance the idea that the faithful should act towards others in a positive and prosocial manner. Results from previous investigations reveals that religion has been found to be associated with a variety of positive outcomes, including forgiveness, reductions in both delinquent and criminal behaviour, and greater propensity to engage in altruistic behaviours such as formal volunteering, and contributing to charitable causes. Religion has also been found to be associated with a variety of negative outcomes including prejudice, discriminatory behaviours, and both authoritarianism and ethnocentrism.

Hinduism

The oldest religion in the world, Hinduism originated in the Indus River Valley about 4,500 years ago in what is now modern-day northwest India and Pakistan. It arose contemporaneously with ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian cultures. With roughly one billion followers, Hinduism is the third-largest of the world's religions; its followers, known as Hindus, constitute about 1.15 billion, or 15–16% of the global population. Hinduism is the most widely professed faith in India, Nepal and Mauritius. It is also the predominant religion in Bali, Indonesia. Significant numbers of Hindu communities are also found in the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, North America, Europe, Africa, and other countries.

Most forms of Hinduism are henotheistic, meaning they worship a main single deity, known as Brahman, but still recognize other gods and goddesses such Vishnu, Shiva, and Krishna, among others. Hinduism includes a diversity of ideas on spirituality and traditions, but has no ecclesiastical order, no unquestionable religious authorities, no governing body, no prophet(s) nor any binding holy book (although there are sacred texts). Hindus can choose to be polytheistic, pantheistic, panentheistic, pandeistic, henotheistic, monotheistic, monistic, agnostic, atheistic or humanist. Because of the wide range of traditions and ideas covered by the term Hinduism, arriving at a comprehensive definition is difficult. Hinduism has been variously defined as a religion, a religious tradition, a set of religious beliefs, and "a way of life." From a Western lexical standpoint, Hinduism, like other faiths, is appropriately referred to as a religion but in India, the term dharma is preferred, which is broader than the Western term religion.

One of the key thoughts of Hinduism is the belief in the soul, or atman. This philosophy holds that all living creatures have a soul, and all will be reincarnated, which is one reason why many Hindus are vegetarians. The ultimate goal of Hinduism is to achieve moksha, or salvation, which ends the cycle of sorrow, suffering and rebirths (saṃsāra) to become part of the absolute soul, or in complete oneness with God and existence. Hindus also generally believe in a set of principles called dharma, which refers to one's duty in the world that corresponds with righteous choices and ethical actions. Hindus also believe in karma, or the notion that spiritual ramifications of one's actions are balanced cyclically in this life or a future life.

The caste system, described in the module on social stratification, is based on the Hindu principles of karma and dharma. This ancient system, estimated by some scholars to be 3,000 years old, divides society into the following four castes: 1) brahmin (the intellectual and spiritual leaders), 2) kshatriyas (the protectors and public servants of society), 3) vaisyas (the skilful producers), and 4) shudras (the unskilled laborers).[152] Although discrimination based on caste was banned with India's independence from Great Britain in 1947, some traditions such as marrying within one's caste are still embraced.

Multiple sacred texts, collectively called the Vedas, were composed around 1500 B.C. and contain hymns and rituals from ancient India. They are mostly written in Sanskrit. Like many other religions, Hinduism was suppressed at various points in India's history—by Muslim Arabs from 1200 to 1757 and between 1757 and 1848 when the British controlled India.[153]

There are several Hindu festivals that are observed, but Diwali, or the festival of lights, is probably the most well-known. The five days of Diwali include different rituals such as spring cleaning, shopping, decorating, praying, fasting, gift-giving, and eating, but the focal point of the celebration includes lighting lamps to represent a victory of good over evil and the light that comes from within. Another popular festival is the celebration of the arrival of spring, known as Holi, or the festival of colours, named for the bright colours of powders and water that many throw at others during the celebration.

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152   "Hinduism," 2018. History.com, https://www.history.com/topics/religion/hinduism.
153   Ibid

The most famous Hindu, Mohandas 'Mahatma' Gandhi, helped India to gain independence from the British in 1947 before he was assassinated by an extremist Indian nationalist in 1948. After the dissolution of the British Raj in 1947, two new sovereign nations were formed—the Dominion of India and the Dominion of Pakistan. The subsequent partition of the former British India displaced up to 12.5 million people and resulted in conflict and war between the main religions groups, Muslims and Hindus, with estimates of loss of life varying from several hundred thousand to 1 million. India emerged as a secular nation with a Hindu majority population and a large Muslim minority, while Pakistan emerged also as a secular nation with a Muslim majority population and a large Hindu minority.

Jainism

Jainism is another predominantly Indian religion that shares some commonalities with Hinduism, although there are still major distinctions. Followers of Jainism are called "Jains," a word derived from the Sanskrit word jina (victor) and connoting the path of victory in crossing over life's stream of rebirths through an ethical and spiritual life. Jains consider their religion to be eternal (sanatan), and trace their history through a succession of 24 victorious saviors and teachers known as tirthankaras. Jains believe that Jainism is an eternal dharma with the tirthankaras guiding every cycle of the Jain cosmology.

The main religious premises of Jainism are ahiṃsā (non-violence), anekāntavāda (many-sidedness), aparigraha (non-attachment) and asceticism. Devout Jains take five main vows: ahiṃsā (non-violence), satya (truth), asteya (not stealing), brahmacharya (celibacy or chastity), and aparigraha (non-attachment). These principles have impacted Jain culture in many ways, such as leading to a predominantly vegetarian lifestyle that avoids harm to animals and their life cycles. "Parasparopagraho Jīvānām" (the function of souls is to help one another) is the motto of Jainism.

Buddhism

Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha Gautama around 500 B.C.E. Siddhartha was born as a prince in present-day Nepal and was so moved by the suffering in the world, he is said to have given up a comfortable, upper-class life to follow one of poverty and spiritual devotion. At the age of thirty-five, he famously meditated under a sacred fig tree and vowed not to rise before he achieved enlightenment (bodhi). After this experience, he became known as Buddha, or "enlightened one." Followers were drawn to Buddha's teachings, known as "dharma," and the practice of meditation, and he later established a monastic order.

Buddha's teachings encourage Buddhists to lead a moral life by accepting the four Noble Truths: 1) life is suffering, 2) suffering arises from attachment to desires, 3) suffering ceases when attachment to desires ceases, and 4) freedom from suffering is possible by following the "middle way." The concept of the "middle way" is central to Buddhist thinking, which encourages people to live in the present and to practice acceptance of others (Smith 1991). Buddha taught that wisdom, kindness, patience, generosity and compassion were important virtues. Buddhism also tends to deemphasize the role of a godhead, instead stressing the

importance of personal responsibility (Craig 2002). This is illustrated by five moral principles, which prohibit; Killing living things; Taking what is not given; Sexual misconduct; Lying; Using drugs or alcohol.

The Four Truths express the basic orientation of Buddhism: people crave and cling to impermanent states and things, which is dukkha, "incapable of satisfying" and painful. This keeps people caught in sa␣s␣ra, the endless cycle of repeated rebirth, dukkha, and dying again. According to Buddhism, there is a way to liberation from this endless cycle to the state of nirvana, namely following the Noble Eightfold Path. The Eightfold Path consists of eight practices: right view, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right samadhi ("meditative absorption or union").

Buddhism is the world's fourth-largest religion, with over 520 million followers, or over 7% of the global population. While some of the main tenets were explained above, Buddhism encompasses a variety of traditions, beliefs, and spiritual practices, and can be further divided into other traditions, which have some variations in their beliefs. The two major extant branches of Buddhism are Theravada (Pali: "The School of the Elders") and Mahayana (Sanskrit: "The Great Vehicle"). Theravada Buddhism has a widespread following in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia such as Myanmar and Thailand. Mahayana, which includes the traditions of Pure Land, Zen, Nichiren Buddhism, Shingon and Tiantai (Tendai), is found throughout East Asia.

Vajrayana, a body of teachings attributed to Indian adepts, may be viewed as a separate branch or as an aspect of Mahayana Buddhism. Tibetan Buddhism, which preserves the Vajrayana teachings of eighth-century India, is practiced in the countries of the Himalayan region, Mongolia, and Kalmykia. The Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1959 has led Tibetan Buddhists to live in exile in India since 1959, including His Holiness The Dalai Lama.

Buddhists celebrate several festivals throughout the year, including a Buddhist New Year, Vesak, a festival to celebrate Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death, and Uposatha, an observance that encourages Buddhists to recommit to the teachings.[154]

Taoism and Confucianism

The government of the People's Republic of China officially espouses atheism, though Chinese civilization has historically long been a cradle and host to a variety of the most enduring religio-philosophical traditions of the world. Confucianism and Taoism, later joined by Buddhism, constitute the "three teachings" that have shaped Chinese culture. There are no clear boundaries between these intertwined religious systems, which do not claim to be exclusive, and elements of each enrich popular or folk religion. Following a period of enforced atheism after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) in China, religion has recently become more popular once again. The government today formally recognizes five religions: Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam (though the Chinese Catholic Church is independent of the Catholic Church in Rome). In the early twenty-first century, there has also been increasing official recognition of Confucianism and Chinese folk religion as part of China's cultural inheritance. Let's take a closer look at two of these Chinese religious traditions:

154   "Buddhism," 2018. History.com. https://www.history.com/topics/religion/buddhism.

Taoism and Confucianism.

In Taoism (also commonly written as Daoism), the purpose of life is inner peace and harmony. Tao is usually translated as "way" or "path." Lao Tzu, sometimes written Laozi, was an ancient Chinese philosopher and writer who lived during the 6th or 4th century B.C.E., and who authored the Tao Te Ching, which remains the fundamental text on philosophical Taoism. In the Tao Te Ching, Laozi often explains his ideas by way of paradox, analogy, repetition, symmetry, rhyme, and rhythm.

Taoism as an organized religion began in the year 142 C.E. with the revelation of the Tao to Zhang Daoling (Chang Tao-ling) by the personified god of the Tao, Taishang laojun, the Highest Venerable Lord (one of the three main deities). Taoism became a semi-official Chinese religion during the Tang dynasty (7th-10th centuries) and continued during the Song dynasty (960-1279). As Confucianism gained popularity, Taoism gradually fell from favor, and changed from an official religion to a popular religious tradition. [155]

The central concept of tao describes a spiritual reality, the order of the universe, as being in harmony with the virtues of compassion and moderation. The ying-yang symbol and the concept of polar forces are central Taoist ideas (Smith 1991). Some scholars have compared this Chinese tradition to its Confucian counterpart by saying that "whereas Confucianism is concerned with day-to-day rules of conduct, Taoism is concerned with a more spiritual level of being" (Feng and English 1972).

After the communist takeover of China in 1949, Taoism was banned and its followers re-educated, with the result that the number of practicing Taoists fell by 99% in 10 years. At this time Taoism began to flourish in the greater freedom on offer in Taiwan (a separatist island territory which had not been absorbed into the new communist China). After the end of the Cultural Revolution the Chinese government began to allow a small measure of religious freedom. Taoism began to revive in China, and Taoist temples and practitioners can now be found throughout the country.[156] Today, the Taoist tradition is one of the five religious doctrines officially recognized in the People's Republic of China (PRC) as well as the Republic of China (ROC), and although it does not travel readily from its East Asian roots, it claims adherents in a number of societies, in particular in Hong Kong, Macau, and in Southeast Asia.

Taoism has had a profound influence on Chinese culture in the course of the centuries, and Taoists (Chinese: 道士; pinyin: dàoshi, "masters of the Tao"), a title traditionally attributed only to the clergy and not to their lay followers, usually take care to note the distinction between their ritual tradition and the practices of Chinese folk religion and non-Taoist vernacular ritual orders, which are often mistakenly identified as pertaining to Taoism. Chinese alchemy (especially neidan), Chinese astrology, Chan (Zen) Buddhism, several martial arts, traditional Chinese medicine, feng shui, and many styles of qigong have been intertwined with Taoism throughout history.

The founder of Confuciusism (also known as Ruism), or Master Kong, better known as Confucius (551-479 B.C.E.), was a philosopher and politician. He did not intend to create a new

155   "The Origins of Taoism." BBC. http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/taoism/history/history.shtml.
156   Ibid

religion, but sought to provide structure and reform to some of the religious ambiguities of the Zhou dynasty. According to Judith Berling, Professor Emerita of Chinese and Comparative Religions at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, "The burning issue of the day was: If it is not the ancestral and nature spirits, what then is the basis of a stable, unified, and enduring social order?"[157] This sounds very familiar to founding sociologist August Comte's question after the French Revolution—what holds society together? Confucius' answer was in the Zhou religion and its rituals (li), which embodied the ethical core of Chinese society.

The worldly concern of Confucianism rests upon the belief that human beings are fundamentally good, teachable, and perfectible through personal and communal endeavor, especially self-cultivation and self-creation. Confucian thought focuses on the development of virtue in a morally organized world. Some of the basic Confucian ethical concepts and practices include rén, yì, and lǐ, and zhì. Rén (仁, 'benevolence' or 'humaneness') is the essence of the human being which manifests as compassion, and is sometimes translated as love or kindness. It is the virtue-form of Heaven, and the source of all other virtues. Yì (義/义) is the upholding of righteousness and the moral disposition to do good. Lǐ (禮/礼) is a system of ritual norms and propriety that determines how a person should properly act in everyday life so as to be in harmony with the law of Heaven. Zhì (智) is the ability to see what is right and fair, or the converse, in the behaviors exhibited by others. Confucianism holds one in contempt, either passively or actively, for failure to uphold the cardinal moral values of rén and yì. Confucianism also places am emphasis on filial piety (Chinese: 孝, xiào), which is a virtue of respect for one's parents and ancestors.

Confucianism entrenched itself in Chinese history and culture, becoming what sociologist Robert Bellah called a civil religion whereby "the sense of religious identity and common moral understanding is at the foundation of a society's central institutions."[158] Like Hinduism, Confucianism was part of the social fabric and way of life; to Confucians, everyday life was the arena of religion. Some religious scholars consider Confucianism more of a social system than a religion because it focuses on sharing wisdom about moral practices but doesn't involve any type of specific worship; nor does it have formal holy objects.

Confucianism was the official religion of China from 200 B.C.E. until it was officially abolished when communist leaders discouraged religious practice in 1949. Like Taoism, Confucianism spread to other countries and was somewhat dormant in China for a time, but is on the rise once again.

Judaism

Judaism is the ethnic religion of the Jewish people. It is an ancient, monotheistic, Abrahamic religion that encompasses the religion, philosophy, and culture of the Jewish people. It began over 3,000 years ago and is well known through the book of both the Torah and the Old Testament called Exodus, which describes the emancipation of the Hebrews from Egyptian

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157   Berling, Judith. "Confucianism." 1996. Center for Global Education, Society for Asian Studies. https://asiasociety.org/education/confucianism.

158   Bellah, Robert Neeley. 1975. The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in a Time of Trial, New York: Seabury Press.

captivity in the thirteenth century B.C.E. Judaism is considered by religious Jews to be the expression of the covenant that God established with the Children of Israel. It encompasses a wide body of texts, practices, theological positions, and forms of organization. The Torah is part of the larger text known as the Tanakh, or the Hebrew Bible, and is supplemented by oral tradition represented in later texts such as the Midrash and the Talmud. The Torah consists of the five books of Moses, which are also contained in the Christian Bible. With between 14.5 and 17.4 million adherents worldwide, Judaism is the tenth largest religion in the world.

The most important teaching of Judaism is that there is one God, who wants people to do what is just and compassionate. Judaism teaches that a person serves God by learning the holy books and doing what they teach. These teachings include both ritual actions and ethical interpretative frameworks. Jews place an emphasis on moral behavior and action in this world as opposed to personal salvation in the next world. Like Hindus and Buddhists, the Jewish sages believed in non-violence and taught: "Anyone who takes a single life, it is as though he has destroyed the entire world. And anyone who saves a single life, it is as though he has saved the entire world"[159]. Jews also believe in improving the world around them, as another core value is that of Tikkun olam, which translates to mean "repair" and "of all time [later translated to mean the world]"—meaning they feel an obligation to fix up the world.[160] Another related value is that of tzedakah, which translates to mean "righteousness or justice or fairness," but which is often mistaken for charity. The Talmud categorizes tzedakah into eight levels with the lowest level of giving as "begrudging" and the highest as "enabling the recipient to become self-reliant"[161] It is a mitzvah, or commandment, and is one of 613 laws.

Today, the largest Jewish religious movements are Orthodox Judaism (Haredi Judaism and Modern Orthodox Judaism), Conservative Judaism, and Reform Judaism. Major sources of difference between these groups include their approaches to Jewish law, the authority of the Rabbinic tradition, and the significance of the State of Israel. There is a wide spectrum of devotion, practice, and even appearance within Judaism, but the most visible are Orthodox Jews because they are recognized by their outward appearance. For example, one ultra-orthodox group that emphasizes conservatism and tradition are Hasidic Jews, who have a large population in parts of Brooklyn, New York. They are recognizable by their dress code—women cover most of their bodies (shirts with sleeves below the elbows, legs covered with pantyhose, hair covered with a wig and often a hat, etc.) and men wear black coats, black hats, payos or long curly sideburns, and full uncut beards (sometimes brown fur hats depending on the sect and time of year and/or holiday), and sometimes white stockings (depending on the type of Orthodox Jewish sect). At the other end of the spectrum is Reformed Judaism, which permits women to be rabbis and does not require strict observance to the laws found in the Torah.

Although Jews make up a very small percentage of the global population (0.2%), most people around the world are familiar with Jewish culture and practices, and some historical facts.

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159   Freeman, Tzvi. 2018. "What are Jewish Values?" Chabad.org. https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/3852164/jewish/What-Are-Jewish-Values.htm.

160   "Tikun Olam: Repairing the World," My Jewish Learning. https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/tikkun-olam-repairing-the-world/.

161   "Tzedekah 101," My Jewish Learning. https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/tzedakah-101/.

Children all over the world are taught about the genocide that occurred during World War II when 6 million Jews were killed in Europe during the Holocaust. In New York City, public schools observe many of the major Jewish holidays including Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, Sukkot, and Passover. Foods associated with traditional Jewish culture like bagels and lox, knish, latkes, and babka are enjoyed widely.

Islam

Islam is monotheistic, Abrahamic religion that follows the teachings of the prophet Muhammad, born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, in 570 C.E. Muhammad is seen as an earthly prophet, not as a divine being, and he is believed to be the messenger of Allah (God), who is divine. The followers of Islam, whose U.S. population is projected to double in the next twenty years (Pew Research Forum 2011), are called Muslims. It has over 1.8 billion followers worldwide (24% of the population), making it the world's second-largest religion. Islam is one of the fastest-growing religions in the world, with Muslims expected to account for 30% of the global population by 2050.[162] Births to Muslims between 2010 and 2015 outnumbered deaths by 152 million (213 million births vs. 61 million deaths), meaning Muslims have the highest fertility rate of any religious group at 2.9 children per woman (Christians are 2.6 children per woman and Hindu and Jewish fertility rates are 2.3)[163]

About 13% of Muslims live in Indonesia, the largest Muslim-majority country; 31% of Muslims live in South Asia, the largest population of Muslims in the world; 20% in the Middle East–North Africa region, where it is the dominant religion; and 15% reside in Sub-Saharan Africa. Sizeable Muslim communities are also found in the Americas, the Caucasus, Central Asia, China, Europe, Mainland Southeast Asia, the Philippines, and Russia.

Most Muslims belong to one of two denominations: Sunni (87–90%) or Shia (10-13%) (Pew Research). Following Muhammed's death in 632 C.E., disagreements arose over would be the next caliph, or leader. Those who believed that Muhammed's father-in-law, Abu Bakr, was the first caliph became known as Sunnis, and those who followed Muhammad's son-in-law and cousin Ali ibn Abi Talib became known as Shias. Today Shia Muslims are the majority in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, Lebanon, and Azerbaijan, as well as being a politically significant minority in Pakistan, Syria, Yemen and Kuwait.

Islam means "peace" and "submission." The sacred text for Muslims is the Qur'an (or Koran). As with Christianity's Old Testament, many of the Qur'an stories are shared with the Jewish faith. While divisions exist within Islam, all Muslims are guided by five core beliefs or practices, often called "the five pillars":

1. Shahadah: the profession of faith in God. This is commonly recited, and translates to "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet."

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162   The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050 Why Muslims Are Rising Fastest and the Unaffiliated Are Shrinking as a Share of the World's Population (2015). Retrieved from https://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/.
163   Hackett, Conrad and David McClenden. 2018. "Christians Remain World's Largest Religious Group." https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/05/christians-remain-worlds-largest-religious-group-but-they-are-declining-in-europe/.

2. Salat: daily prayer. These prayers are performed five times a day, at set times, with the individual kneeling and prostrating in a particular pattern while facing in the direction of Mecca (the birthplace of Muhammed, and therefore of Islam itself). The five prayer times correspond to dawn, noon, afternoon, evening, and night.

3. Zakat: almsgiving. This is given as a tithe (often around 2.5% of a person's income) and is used to support holy places and mosques around the world, as well as those within the same community as the payer.

4. Sawm: fasting as a spiritual practice, as is done during the month of Ramadan. During Ramadan, Muslims do not eat or drink from sunup to sundown for an entire month. Ramadan includes special daily prayers called taraweeh, which take place at mosques and last for 1-2 hours, and a period of seclusion, or l'tikaf, during the last ten nights of the month. The fast is meant to allow Muslims to seek nearness and to look for forgiveness from God, to express their gratitude to and dependence on him, to atone for their past sins, and to remind them of the needy. During Ramadan, Muslims are also expected to recommit to the teachings of Islam by refraining from violence, anger, envy, greed, lust, profane language, gossip and to try to get along with fellow Muslims better. In addition, all obscene and irreligious sights and sounds are to be avoided

5. Hajj: pilgrimage to the holy center of Mecca. The reason for this journey is to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad, hoping to gain enlightenment as Muhammad did when he was in the presence of Allah.

While Muslims celebrate many special occasions and events, there are two specific days set aside as holy days: Eid ul Fitr and Eid ul Adha (Eid or Id is a word meaning festival). The holiday, Eid ul Fitr, marks the end of Ramadan and is a time of feasting, fine clothes, decorating one's home, praying, and making amends. Eid ul Adha is a festival to remember the prophet Ibrahim's (known as Abraham in Judaism and Christianity) willingness to sacrifice his son when God ordered him to do so.[164]

Christianity.

The largest religion in the world is Christianity, with 2.3 billion people, or 31.4% of the world's population identifying as Christian. Today, the four largest branches of Christianity are the Catholic Church (1.3 billion), Protestantism (920 million), the Eastern Orthodox Church (260 million) and Oriental Orthodoxy (86 million).
Christianity began 2,000 years ago in Palestine, with Jesus of Nazareth, who believers consider to be the Son of God and saviour of the world. Christianity understands its namesake to be a charismatic leader who taught his followers about caritas (charity), or the principle that one should treat others as you would like to be treated yourself. Jesus, a Jew, rebelled against many of the Jewish laws and did things like heal the sick on the Sabbath—a day in which no work was to take place. Christians believe that Jesus died and was resurrected, and that Jesus' death was necessary so that humankind can obtain salvation.

164   "Muslim Holy Days," BBC. http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/holydays/holydays.shtml.

The sacred text for Christians is the Bible. While Jews, Christians, and Muslims share many of same historical religious stories, their versions of these narratives and subsequent beliefs often diverge. In their shared sacred stories, it is suggested that the son of God—a messiah—will return to save God's followers. While Christians believe that he has already appeared in the person of Jesus Christ, Jews and Muslims disagree. While they recognize Christ as an important historical figure, their traditions don't believe that he is the son of God, and these faiths see the prophecy of the messiah's arrival as not yet fulfilled.

Within Christianity, different groups do not necessarily adhere to the same religious texts, though there are often important similarities among them. For instance, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, an established Christian sect, use the Book of Mormon, which they believe details other parts of Christian doctrine and Jesus' life that are not included in the Bible. Similarly, the Catholic Bible includes the Apocrypha, a collection of texts that, while part of the 1611 King James translation, is no longer included in Protestant versions of the Bible.

The 16th-century Reformation led to Protestants, or protest-ants, breaking off from the Catholic Church. Today 40% of Christians are Protestants, which include Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, and others.

Although monotheistic, Christians often describe their god through three manifestations that they call the Holy Trinity: the father (God), the son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a term Christians often use to describe religious experience, or how they feel the presence of the sacred in their lives. One foundation of Christian doctrine is the Ten Commandments, which decry acts considered sinful, including theft, murder, and adultery.

Christian holidays such as Christmas and Easter are widely celebrated in the United States and around the world. They are marked by gift-giving, singing, praying, decorating one's home, and preparing specific foods associated with the holidays. Many Christians and Jews strive to go to the holy sites of Israel, as a form of pilgrimage, which is similar to a Muslim's journey to Mecca to participate in the Hajj. Although Christians do not typically fast, Lent (or the forty days leading up to Easter) is a time of reflection and contemplation for Christians, and many choose to give up something as part of their preparation for the sacred holiday.

Like participants in other world religions, Christians have been persecuted for their beliefs, but have also historically been involved with persecuting non-Christians, such as during the Spanish Inquisition or the Crusades. Today politically volatile forms of Christian extremism, often combined with strains of nationalism and/or racism, is on the rise, with some terrorists explicitly claiming that their actions are rooted in Christian beliefs. Examples include the July, 2011 Norway attacks and the March, 2019 shootings at a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Convergence of Religions

In the contemporary times, the idea and philosophy of religion has been a great intellectual ingenuitywhere there has been the quest to understand various aspects of religion, especially the existence of the Most-High and His powers. There has been a process of an in-depth study into the various major religions other than Christianity within its purview - such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. With these religions in place, there may be a

mistaken assumption that these religious traditionshave come up witha lot to offer by way of philosophical reflection.

Philosophy has objects: the good, the true, and the beauty. Here, one is concerned more with the true - truth. Reality is one, in spite of this, there are alternate realities, and this has something to do with the problem of one and many, appearance and reality in philosophy. Despite the fact that there may be a number of religions, they lead to one ultimate reality. Religion is not in the clouds unlike philosophy; it deals with the affairs of men, so men practice it and live by it. It has to do with beliefs, convictions and commitment. Every culture in every part of the world and at every time in the history of humankind has had a belief in a god or gods.

This paperdelves into sombre themes discussed in the philosophy of religion. Through this paper, there is an analysis of the concept of God taking into account that all these religions lead to the same reality, which is the one true God.Arvind Sharma makes a perfect case for a cross-cultural philosophy of religion in which all world religions, especially primal religions, could effectively participate in the dialogue and conversation about the relevant issues in the quest for the transcendent and the sacred. The work ultimately may be a prolegomenon to the study of philosophy of religion of many primal religious traditions, because it provokes debate and responses from scholars of these traditions.[165]

The amalgamation of Christianity, African Traditional Religion, Buddhism and other religions appears to overlook the essence of these religions, as there is currently no clarity on how such religions can be best expressed within the African cultural and religious heritage. However, within the modern missiological debate, there are scholars who contend that the attitude of early missionaries towards the African cultural and religious heritage was often misguided. Early missionaries are accused of being too much involved with their own culture (colonialism included), did not understand much of the African culture, and worked hard to destroy what they did not understand. This error resulted in the perception of the Christian identity as equivalent to the western cultural and religious heritage. Following western precedence, conversion was determined by behavioural norms, in which African converts had to abandon their traditional African customs and adopt the western ones.[166]

Achebe illustrates this in the book *Arrow of God*. *The book* gives an intimate portrayal of a traditional culture facing the challenges of colonial presence and shifting times. In this book, Christian missionaries have made major inroads into society, establishing converts and trying to show that the old gods are ineffective. Apoint of interest is whenEzeulu, the Chief Priest of Ulu, refuses to announce the Feast of the New Yam, the men are horrified. If they wait three months before they are allowed to harvest their crops, the crops will be ruined and the people of Umuaro will suffer widespread famine.

The Christian catechist, Mr. Goodcountry, recognizes this as an opportunity. He says that

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165 A Primal Perspective on the Philosophy of Religion https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/1-4020-5014-3?error=cookies_not_supported&code=948d4ffe-b4c9-464d-9382-b6f92c01cd73

166 Mokhoathi, Joel. (2017). From Contextual Theology to African Christianity: The Consideration of Adiaphora from a South African Perspective. Religions. 8. 266. 10.3390/rel8120266 in Transforming Encounters and Critical Reflection: African Thought, Critical Theory, and Liberation Theology in Dialogue edited by Justin Sands and Anné Hendrik Verhoef

anybody who wants to offer their yams to the Christian god instead, so they can harvest their yams, will receive the protection of the Christian god as well. That year, many of the yams were harvested in the name of the Christian god; and the crops reaped afterwards were reaped in the name of the Christian god. As *Arrow of God* comes to a close, it the worship of the Christian god has replaced that of Ulu.This illustrates the point of sacrifices as an important aspect of worship. One may offer sacrifices but all these sacrifices are made to one absolute being. This will be further discussed later as I delve into sacrifices as an important part of religion or worship.

Be that as it may, the implications of African theology, are that imported theologies do not sufficiently touch the hearts of African believers because they are couched in a language that is foreign to them.[167]According to Mbiti traditional African peoples are deeply religious. It is religion which colours their understanding of the universe and their empirical participation in that universe, making life a profoundly religious phenomenon. On the religious front, three systems have been and continue to be most dominant in Africa: Christianity, Islam and Traditional religions. Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism and Baha'ism are other, though numerically small, traditions that add to the present religious complexity in Africa. There have been modern changes everywhere and at least at the conscious level.

Recently there has been a search for religious accommodation in Africa as such there has been the development of the concept of inculturation. The invasion of traditional African societies, Christianity and Islam have come loaded with western and Islamic culture and institutions. There has been the process of partial giving and partial receiving, partial withholding and partial rejection, at the encounter between western Christianity and African traditional societies. This is with the view that the western or Islamic religion is blended into the African culture.

Ideally, Christianity and Islam would each present a theological case which accommodates all elements into their view of God, man and the universe. There is no reason why these revolutionarist systems like capitalism, communistsshould be allowed to slip out of the hands of the religious man of Africa and become "enemies" of religion when he has the historical and theological resources to use them as tools.[168]Within these expressions various questions arise concerning the nature and existence of this transcendent reality. Is there an objective reality to which the language corresponds or points, or are the terms and descriptions merely the reifications of the believing communities expressed in the various linguistic forms of a given culture?

The Biblical narrative portrays God as the "I AM". This implies the immutability and the oneness of the Most-High. God appeared to Moses in the burning bush and told him to go to Egypt to lead the Israelites out of slavery. In response, Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you," and they ask me, "What is his name?" Then what shall I tell them?"[169] God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM.

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167   ibid
168   Mbiti, John S. African Religions & Philosophy. Oxford: Heinemann, 1990.
169   Exodus 3:13

This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you'"[170]When God identified Himself as I AM WHO I AM, it implies that no matter when or where God is. It is similar to the New Testament expression in Revelation 1:8, "'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.'" This is true of Him for all time. This properly demystifies who God is; can we define God? can God be defined in one single language? This passage ripostes the assumption of likening God to a certain group of people, for example, God is a musoga, God is a muzungu, god of the African et cetera. Truly God is even the idea that the white man brought religion to Africa is merely fallacious. If God is, God cannot be imported into another continent since God transcends space and time. From this background, it can be asserted that the idea of saying that the African god is false or the European god is true is truly a misnomer.

In his work, *The World's Religions*, Huston Smith highlights an 19th century Hindu saint, Ramakrishna, as an illustration of a conviction that the various major religions are alternate paths to the same goal. Ramakrishna, after experiencing each of the major religions, concluded that there existed an essential unity among them. He wrote, "God has made different religions to suit different aspirations, times, and countries. All doctrines are only so many paths; but a path is by no means God Himself." A more contemporary version of this argument runs like this: all religions are like the spokes of a wheel that all end in the same center. The question, of course, is can this be right?[171]

For instance, the aspect of sacrifices cut across all religions. Sacrifice is the offering of material possessions or the lives of animals or humans to a deity as an act of propitiation or worship. Among the Moslems is *Qurbani*, or *Udhiyah* in Arabic, which means sacrifice. Every year Muslims around the world slaughter an animal – a goat, a sheep, a cow or a camel – to reflect Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son Ismail for the sake of God. At least one third of the meat from the animal must go to people who are poor or in vulnerable situations.[172]In the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Lutheran Churches, the Methodist Churches, and the Irvingian Churches, the Eucharist or Mass, as well as the Divine Liturgy of the Eastern Catholic Churches and Eastern Orthodox Church, is seen as a sacrifice. In Africa, sacrifices and offerings are the commonest forms of worship. In light of this, when one makes a sacrifice, there is a higher being to which it is made to. This cuts across in every religion. That is why in the book Arrow of God when the people turn away from the god, Ulu and make their sacrifice to the "Christian God," their sacrifice was accepted. This implies the oneness of the Supreme Being to which any and all of us can turn to and implore help or give thanks.

However, Christianity finds it difficult to absorb the entire richness of the African cultural and religious heritage, and to transform the intricate aspects of that cultural and religious heritage which do not match with its ideals. In this sense, some African traditional practices, which are neither seen as positive nor negative, such as the ritual reincorporation of the

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170   Exodus 3:14

171   Doug Culp, Are All Religions Simply Different paths to the Same God? May 2018 https://faithmag. com/are-all-religions-simply-different-paths-same-god

172   https://www.islamic-relief.org/what-is-qurbani-2/

living-dead, the ritual inclusion of babies into the clan, the rite of passage into manhood, or the consultation of traditional healers, are allowed to form part of this Christian identity.[173]

Thus, Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches possess a form of pragmatism which appears to compete with mainstream Christianity and ATR. To this, Anderson notes that African Pentecostal Churches proclaim a message of deliverance from sickness and from oppression of evil spirits, and the message of receiving the power of the Holy Spirit, which enables people to survive in a predominantly hostile traditional spirit world. In this sense, African Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches become an attractive religion that offers solutions to all problems of life, and not just the spiritual ones. This is what is lacking in mainstream Christianity; hence many professed Christians tend to revert back to African traditional practices.[174]

Some Christian scholars like argue that Christianity does not permit the inclusion of African cultural and religious beliefs that conflict with the revelation of God as found in the Bible. Therefore, African Christians must renounce and break away from these cultural and religious beliefs. In this sense, African Christians are encouraged to renounce their traditional cultures and religious beliefs that pertain to the "fear of evil spirits, evil spells, curses, or the anger or favour of spirits of ancestors". Besides there is also another African rigorist perspective that seeks to preserve the African cultural and religious heritage of indigenous people, which was handed down by the forebears of the present generation (Mbiti 1975, p. 12). Within this perspective, scholars like Mndende argue that Africans must not mix their African Traditional Religion with other religions such as Christianity or Islam. The amalgamation of African Traditional Religion with other faiths like Christianity or Islam is interpretedto be the constraint of 'true' African spirituality. In this sense, the perspective maintains that indigenous people should preserve their African Traditional Religion and not mix their African traditional cultures and religious practices with Christian or Islamic elements. Those who amalgamate the African Traditional Religion with Christianity or Islam, are said to be "sitting on the fence".

Further, there is a perspective that assumes a middle ground. It argues that both Christianity and African Traditional Religion can be amalgamated or made to work together. This is because Christianity has strongly influenced the Africans to an extent that they have to integrate Christian values into their cultural value systems.[175] This is a trend to which many are heading.

There is a popular analogy used to show that all religions are valid ways to describe God. Religion professors especially love this analogy, because it equalizes all religions, making all religions equally "true" in their description of God.[176]

There has been one specific "diversity issue" with which philosophers of religion have been

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173   Mokhoathi, Joel. (2017). From Contextual Theology to African Christianity: The Consideration of Adiaphora from a South African Perspective. Religions. 8. 266. 10.3390/rel8120266 in Transforming Encounters and Critical Reflection: African Thought, Critical Theory, and Liberation Theology in Dialogue edited by Justin Sands and Anné Hendrik Verhoef
174   ibid
175   ibid
176   Michael Horner,Do All Religions Lead To The Same God?https://thelife.com/do-all-religions-lead-to-the-same-god

most concerned: the question of the eternal destiny of humankind, that is, the question of who can spend eternity in God's presence—who can obtain salvation. Those who are religious exclusivists on this question claim that those, and only those, who have met the criteria set forth by one religious perspective can spend eternity in God's presence. Adherents of other religious perspectives, it is acknowledged, can affirm truth related to some or many issues. But with respect to the question of salvation (one's eternal destiny), a person must come to understand and adhere to the unique way. Or, to be more specific, as salvific exclusivists see it, the criteria for salvation specified by the one correct religious perspective are both epistemologically necessary in the sense that those seeking salvation must be aware of these conditions for salvation and ontologically necessary in the sense that these conditions must really be met (Peterson et al. 2013, 322)[177]

It is important to note, though, that not only Christians are salvific exclusivists. For example, just as Christian salvific exclusivists maintain that only those who respond appropriately to requirements set for in Christian belief can spend eternity in God's presence, Muslim salvific exclusivists maintain that "whether a person is 'saved' or not is principally determined by whether he or she responded appropriately to Islamic belief" (Aijaz 2014, 194).[178]

Can it justifiably be claimed that only one religion offers a path into the eternal presence of God? Most religions are theistic in the sense that they posit the existence of a personal Supreme Being (God) or set of personal deities, although within some belief systems normally labeled religions—for example, Buddhism—there is no belief in such a being. Monotheistic religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam agree that there is a sole God. Polytheistic religions such as Taoism, Japanese Shinto, and Chinese folk religion hold that there are multiple deities (gods). While Hinduism typically recognizes many gods and goddesses, it is not polytheistic. Those varieties of Hinduism that count these many deities as aspects of a single God can be considered monotheistic. Other strands of Hinduism are henotheistic, worshiping one deity but recognizing many others. While much of what follows is applicable to any theistic religion, the focus will be on the diversity issues that arise predominately in those religions that believe in a sole personal Supreme Being (God).

While there is obviously widespread diversity of thought among these monotheistic religions on such issues as the God's nature and character, the relationship between divine control and human freedom, the extent to which God unilaterally intervenes in our world, and how God would have us live, it is being increasingly recognized that widespread diversity of thought on all these issues also exists just as clearly, and in exactly the same sense, within basic theistic systems. For example, within Christianity, believers differ significantly on the nature of God. Some see God as all-controlling, others as self-limiting, and still others as incapable of unilaterally controlling any aspect of reality. Some believe God to have infallible knowledge only of all that has occurred or is occurring, others claim God also has knowledge of all that will actually occur, while those who believe God possesses middle knowledge add that God knows all that would actually occur in any possible context. Some believe the moral principles stipulated by God for correct human behavior flow from God's nature or character

177   https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/religious-pluralism/
178   https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/religious-pluralism/

and thus that such principles determine God's behavior, while others believe that God acts in accordance with a different set of moral rules than those moral rules given to humans; that for God what is right is simply whatever God does. Some believe that only those who have consciously "given their lives to Christ" will spend eternity in God's presence. Others believe that many who have never even heard the name of Jesus will enter God's presence, while others yet do not even believe subjective immortality (a conscious afterlife) to be a reality. Muslims also differ significantly among themselves on these same divine attributes. Consider, for example, the wide variety of Muslim perspectives on such issues as the autonomy of the individual when interpreting the Qur'an, how best to apply core Islamic values to modern life, and the status of women. We find equally pervasive, significant intra-system diversity in Hinduism and Judaism.

Moreover, there is also an increasing awareness that the practical import of intra-theistic diversity is just as significant as is that of inter-theistic diversity. For most Christians, for instance, the practical significance of retaining or modifying beliefs about God's power or knowledge is just as great as retaining or modifying the belief that Christianity is a better theistic explanatory hypothesis than Islam. In fact, whether there are actually differing inter-theistic perspectives on a given issues often depends on which intra-theistic perspectives one can consider. So, both types of diversity can be given equal attention in any debate.

For instance, in his book, *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*, Reza Alsan, a moslem writes about Jesus. The central argument of Zealot is this: Jesus, like other messianic figures of his day, called for the violent expulsion of Rome from Israel. Driven by religious zeal, Jesus believed that God would empower him to become the king of Israel and overturn the hierarchical social order. Jesus believed that God would honor the zeal of his lightly armed disciples and give them victory. Instead, Jesus was crucified as a revolutionary. Early Christians changed the story of Jesus to make him into a peaceful shepherd. They did this for two reasons: because Jesus' actual prediction had failed, and because the Roman destruction of rebellious Jerusalem in AD 70 made Jesus' real teachings both dangerous and unpopular. Paul radically changed the identity of Jesus from human rebel to divine Son of God, against the wishes of other leaders like Peter and James.

Admittedly, Aslan has spent time reflecting on the life and times of Jesus, whom he obviously respects and admires. Many Christians, unfortunately, are unaware that Muslims think highly of Jesus, and for that matter so does the Qur'an. For me, it is particularly interesting that this Muslim author believes Christ's death is the most provable point in the history of Jesus.[179]

This brings in the aspect of religious tolerance. However, religious intolerance, defined as the practice of keeping others from acting in accordance with their religious beliefs, is not new. However, there is concern worldwide over the increasing amount, and increasingly violent nature, of such behaviour. Accordingly, there is understandably a renewed interest in fostering religiously tolerant environments in which individuals with differing religious perspectives can practice their faiths unencumbered.

Philip Quinn maintained that serious reflection on the undeniable reality of religious diversity

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179   Larson Warren, Review of Reza Aslan's Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth. http://www.ciu.edu/content/review-reza-aslan%E2%80%99s-zealot-life-and-times-jesus-nazareth

will necessarily weaken people's justification for believing that their religious perspective is superior to the perspectives of others and that this weakened justification can lead to greater religious tolerance for example, will lead to a more accepting, less confrontational attitude toward others.

Further, there has been some aspects of religious inclusions. Probably the best-known Christian proponent of this inclusivist perspective is Karl Rahner. Christianity, he argues, cannot recognize any other religion as providing the way to salvation. However, since God is love and desires everyone to be saved, God can apply the results of Jesus's atoning death and resurrection to everyone, even to those who have never heard of Jesus and his death or have never acknowledged his lordship. Just as adherents to pre-Christian Judaism were able, through the redemptive acts of Jesus of which they were not aware, to enter God's presence, so, too, is it possible for adherents of other religions to enter God's presence, even though they are not aware of the necessary redemptive acts of Jesus that makes this possible.

The incredible amount of variation between different religions makes it challenging to decide upon a concrete definition of religion that applies to all of them. In order to facilitate the sociological study of religion it is helpful to turn our attention to four dimensions that seem to be present, in varying forms and intensities, in all types of religion: belief, ritual, spiritual experience, and unique social forms of community.

The second dimension, ritual, functions to anchor religious beliefs. Rituals are the repeated physical gestures or activities, such as prayers and mantras, used to reinforce religious teachings, elicit spiritual feelings, and connect worshippers with a higher power. They reinforce the division between the sacred and the profane by defining the intricate set of processes and attitudes with which the sacred dimension of life can be approached.[180]

Fundamentally, Buddhism is a religion of salvation. Its goal is the achievement of nirvana, quiescence, an absolute annihilation of all life by bringing the elements of life (or dharmas) to a stand still. Thus, nirvana becomes the absolute limit of life-the extinction of consciousness. There are four noble truths of Buddhism. They express the general view that there is an unreal, painful, and phenomenal existence; it is propelled by a driving force (desire); there will be a final extinction of existence; and there is a path toward this deliverance.

Theists agree that throughout history, prophets, theologians, and institutions have been used by God to convey truths concerning himself and that God has directly spoken to individuals or groups of individuals, for example to Moses on Mount Sinai.[181]

Have you ever wondered who to thank when something wonderful happens to you? Some thank the Almighty God, some Allah and some the god in themselves. Whatever or whomever one thanks, there is a higher deity to which the person ascribes such great works. Therefore, thanksgiving is a great aspect that shows that despite our different beliefs, there is at least some greater power that we are able to attribute the luck to. Therefore, religions should be a way of leading us to this greater power.

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180   https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology2ndedition/chapter/chapter-15-religion/
181   T.J Mawson, Belief in God: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), p.82

It is good for people to show gratitude to their benefactors. This is a necessary truth deriving from what it is to be a person. Where a person has chosen to benefit us in some way, we would be failing to treat them as a person were we not to acknowledge this fact with thanks, and thus, given that persons are inter alia also those who show moral respect for other persons, we would be diminishing our own selves as persons were we not to do so.[182]

When the benefit is relatively large, we might say a more elaborate thank you or seek to help them in turn with some project of their own that they will find easier with our assistance. If there is a God, then he's at least as great a benefactor as any human could ever be. If there's a God, then in virtue of the property of creatordom, he's ultimately responsible for our continued existence from moment to moment. So, if our lives are overall good enough for it to be reasonable for us to wish that they not end, we should be grateful to him; we should seek to express our gratitude to him in some way. So how can we express our gratitude to God?[183]

It seems that the best entry point for understanding the theistic concept of God is given by the methodology of what is usually called 'Perfect Being Theology', this in essence being the thought that God should be conceived of as the best possible – indeed the perfect – being. The more particular traditional divine properties – omnipotence, omniscience, and the like – may all be seen to flow from this central idea and indeed in some cases to flow from one another.[184] Despite the fact that the Africans have various divinities, there is a higher power to whom the divinities subject. In the scripture, the Bible usually uses the name of God in the singular (e.g., Ex. 20:7 or Ps. 8:1), generally using the terms in a very general sense rather than referring to any special designation of God. However, general references to the name of God may branch to other special forms which express his multifaceted attributes. Scripture presents many references to the names for God, but the key names in the Old Testament are El Elyon, El Shaddai and YHWH. In the New Testament Theos, Kyrios and pater are the essential names. However, all these affirm respect for the name of God is one. God may have various names, but the perfect being is one. In fact, among the Muslims, God is referred to as Allah. In their worship, the Muslims say *Allahuakbar*. According to the majority of scholars, the phrase *Allahuakbar* is elliptical and means God is the greatest great (being) or Allah is greater than every other great being. He is greater than such as that one knows the measure of His majesty.[185] All these point to the fact that there is some ultimate good or greatness.

Moreover, it seems clear that many of the core beliefs in religious belief systems – for example, the belief that God exists, that God is good, or that it is immoral to act in certain ways – fall into this category. That is, they too are beliefs (truth claims) with respect to which we have no agreement on what would count as adjudicating evidence or criteria.[186]

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182   Mawson, Belief in God: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion, p.82
183   ibid
184   T.J. Mawson, "Monotheism And The Meaning Of Life," inReligion and Monotheism edited by Chad Meister and Paul Moser (Cambridge University Press, 2019)
185   Who is Allah? Understanding God in Islam, https://theconversation.com/who-is-allah-understanding-god-in-islam-39558
186   Michael L. Peterson and Raymond J. Van Arragon, Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Religion(ed) (Wiley, 2019) p.246

The path that leads to the one God must be walkedin part without God, wrote Emmanuel Levinas in the aftermath of World War II in the course of a theological and philosophical reckoning of the events of the war. This was no incidental slip on his part. On the contrary, Levinas articulates numerous variations of this idea in his philosophical and Jewish writings. For Levinas, the first and perhaps most important aspect of this assertion is the ethical demand it encompasses: our thinking about pure monotheism must meet the minimum requirements of morality, or what Levinas refers to as the legitimate demands of atheism.[187]

That said, Mbiti notes that religions in Africa continue to exert their presence and influence at different levels. He notes that at the contact religious level, Christianity, Islam and traditional religion overlap in a number of points. They try to incorporate life elements from traditional religions. One may have a Christian or moslem name, or wear a rosary or cap but in the subconscious, the spirit of the African man still lives. One is deeply traditional.

Further, at the instant level, this is where the individual develops or adopts a certain religion because of a crisis for example death, depression, birth, wedding among others. Many peoples subscribe to this. However, many have moved to the level of transfusion where religion is sort of a social uniformity, without theological depth, personal commitment or martyrs. It is just there, somewhere in the corpus of beliefs, whether one is conscious of being religious or not.

All this said and done, religious heritage, institutional and orthodox religions need not be apprehensive if their inner and professing adherents are few. They should be able to take comfort in that they will have shepherded a portion of humanity from secular to sacred history, from slavery of formal religiosity to the freedom of selfhood. With the coming of other religions, it is highly doubtful if these religious systems and ideologies current in Africa brought in something new. What is embedded in Christianity is embedded in the traditional religion. It is only that we view it a different perspective.

The strength of Christianity is Jesus Christ which may sometimes be a stumbling block to other religions and ideologies.[188]Be that as it may, what is akin to these religions is the attainment of full stature and identity which demands reverence to an external, absolute and timeless denominator. This is precisely what Christianity should offer and any other religion. They should provide a platform for the search of the ultimate being, the *summumbonum*.

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187   Richard I. Sugarman"To Love The Torah More Than God" Translated by Helen A. Stephenson and Richard I. Sugarman with a Commentary, Levinas, Emmanuel.**Judaism; New York** Vol. 28, Iss. 2, (Spring 1979).

188   **Mbiti, African Philosophy and Religion**

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ABOUT THE BOOK

The intention of this book is to affirm the exixtence of an African God (if there is any thing like that) God the maker of a dynamaic universe, in this book a nalyse the mtyhs of various African peoples who relate that after setting the world in motion the Supreme Being withdrew and remains " remote" from the concerns of human life or better perhaps set his paradigms in which (we call mankind) could reach him through different metaphors, call them different religions.

[T)he elementary concepts of British justice are a part of the essentials of civilization that we bring to Africa along with vaccinations and drains and literacy and GOD(Emphasis added) per Julius Lewis, "Native Courts and British Justice in Africa" (1944) 14 Afr.: J Int'l Afr. Institute 448 at 4. This book focuses on how the idea of God(s) permeated the legal ideology of the Africa's nascent states. During the colonial period, it debated the best way to instil the principles of English justice in "savage" and "barbarous" peoples.

Africa ... the Gold-land compressed within itself-the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of self-conscious history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of Night per Georg Hegel, The Philosophy of History trans. By J. Sebree (New York: Pmmeteus Books, 1991 The pain of us all human beings always trying to fill the spiritual man and death exacerbate the problem, for none has returned of those that left us in our life time. As such all our peoples are on a quest and receive revelations differently, therefore all what we may call leads to GOD becomes vehicles metaphors that only help us understand and relate to our One God.
So then who is God or what is God, to some the Hindu it's a cow, to the Christian it's the Christ, to the Moslem it's Mohammed, to the Chinesee its Confucuius, all simply metaphors that lead us to a true God.

Karl marx said that religion is for those who have already satisfied their human basic needs....who knew that Indians would throw away their gods for not savng them in time sof anew covid out break.
"Your greatness is measured by your kindness, your education and intellect by your modesty: your ignorance is betrayed by your suspicions and prejudices, and your caliber is measured by the considerations and tolerance you have for others" William J.H Boetcker.

In my book Obuntu Bulamu and the law: An extra texual aid statutory interpretation tool (Lubogo2020) I make an argument that Ubuntu (Humanness) is an ancient African worldview characterized by community cohesion, group solidarity, mutual existence, and other associated values. It is a value of great importance in African communities and espouses some religious, cultural, and philosophical importance for Africans (Kroeze, 2012). Ubuntu is thus a fundamental ontological and epistemological category in the African thought including the Bantu-speaking people and indeed lies at the root of African philosophy (Ramose, 1999; Pieterse, 2007). The value of the concept to African communities is manifested by the moral, religious, cultural, and philosophical norms it espouses in African communities (Kroeze, 2012). Not surprising, therefore, it is considered the foundation of African law (M'Baye, 19 74:141; Ramose, 2002:81; Keevy, 2009: 22). African law, variously known as—Bantu law, African customary law, African indigenous law, living customary law, or unofficial customary law, is often contrasted with the codified version of African law known as codified customary law or official customary law (Mutwa, 1998; Bhengu, 2006; Keevy, 2009). Extant literature regards African law a s the unwritten and uncodified living law, that is, living African indigenous or customary law representing the oral tradition (M'Baye, 1974:141; Ojwang, 1995:45; Keevy, 2009:22). As an unwritten law, therefore, African law represents African oral culture—a scrupulously preserved tradition that was highly guarded and passed on from generation to generation.

The African saying goes 'when the gods want to kill you, they first make you mad' but this time these gods have given you an opputunity to know them as metorphors of the most Intelleigent Designer.