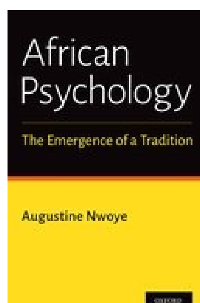

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Augustine Nwoye
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In loving memory of my beloved parents
Nwoye Uchebo, aka Nnakwenze
and
Amoge Uchebo, aka Egbe-Oyibo
and
In immeasurable Thankfulness to my beloved wife and best friend,
Dr. (Mrs.) Chinwe Miriam Agatha Nwoye

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Preface

Although the need for the decolonization and diversification of the psychology degree curriculum in African universities has been recognized for many years (Holdstock, 1999, 2000; Mkhize, 2004; Nwoye, 2014, 2015a, 2017a), its urgency only attained prominence in the post-Apartheid period, the time during which there emerged unprecedented increases in the population of black students in South African universities. That experience brought into sharp focus the persistent questioning by many of these students of the appropriateness and relevance to their lives of a psychology that is exclusively Eurocentric in perspective and that, consequently, has no space to accommodate the psychology and understanding of African realities. In responding to this omission, many universities, particularly in the South and East African subregions, took the matter seriously and called for the urgent creation and inclusion of courses and modules in African psychology in their psychology degree curricula.

Unfortunately, despite this important positive and progressive intervention and momentum in favor of the presence of African psychology as a postcolonial discipline (Nwoye, 2017a) in African universities, a major obstacle arose to hamper its effective implementation. This is the absence of a foundational/definitive text that evolves from the situated knowledges and experience of continental African realities and postcolonial concerns, one devoted to defining and charting the content and scope of the field for scholars both within and outside Africa. This means that there is no foundational text—outside of those written by African American colleagues and aimed at addressing their peculiar problems of existing in a racialized America and in response to their post-slavery conditions, on which students and scholars in Africa can draw regarding the definitional, epistemological, theoretical, methodological, cultural, and spiritual perspectives of African psychology associated with its critical and clinical scholarship in the continental African context.

This book is an attempt to respond to this need. The book brings together a coherent and organically cohesive selection of my essays, majority of them already published in premier international psychological journals on various

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aspects of continental African psychology understood as a postcolonial academic discipline. The book describes the raison d'être, meaning, and scope, as well as the epistemological and theoretical perspectives of African psychology. This is in addition to a section on African therapeutics that draws on publications that have appeared in the aforementioned journals from 2000 to the present. Some of the book's chapters are new as well. These have been specifically written to anchor and provide a conceptual unity to the book. Taken together, the chapters constituting the book serve as an ally, not a substitute, to the great work being done by African Americans in the United States to articulate a psychology of black experience in America. The overall objective of the book is, however, to insert African psychology within other contexts of psychological knowledge that will allow African psychology in continental Africa to both argue against and partner with mainstream Western psychology and other such externally generated psychologies imported to Africa. The result is expected to promote mutual enrichment of Western and African psychological perspectives in continental Africa.

In terms of content, the book consists of four parts. Part I presents the background to the book. It proposes the Madiban tradition as a globalectical (wa Thiong'o, 2012/2014) framework of inclusion for the study of African psychology alongside Western and other psychologies in psychology degree programs in African universities. Part II focuses on the epistemological, methodological, and theoretical perspectives in African psychology. The principal goal of the section is to illustrate some of the efforts that scholars of continental African psychology are making to unbind themselves from the restrictive ways of doing psychology as propagated in mainstream Western psychology. In addressing these issues, my purpose is to provide a warrant and direction for considering continental African psychology as a legitimate and autonomous postcolonial field of psychology endowed with decolonized epistemologies and methodologies and its own cultural and critical orientation to psychological scholarship. Part III of the book introduces the reader to the field of *African therapeutics* and the perspectives and approaches on which African psychological healing systems in continental Africa are grounded. The aim of Part IV is to highlight the healing rituals and practices which the culture and communities of indigenous and rural Africa provide to the traumatized to enable them to transcend the challenges of their complicated everyday experience in contemporary Africa.

The introductory chapter, "The Danger of a Single Story and the Problem of Speaking for Others," provides an anchor to the entire book. The chapter

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draws inspiration from the classic, July 2009 TED talk by Chimamanda Adichie on "The Danger of a Single Story," the important article by Linda Alcoff on the "Problem of Speaking for Others"; and from Ngugi wa Thiong'o's compelling book on the theme of *Globalectics*, as well as from Charles Taylor's remarkable work on the *politics of recognition*. Buttressed by the thoughts of these four great intellectuals, the book projects the crying need for the decolonization and opening up of the study of psychology in African universities in such a way that African, Western, and other approaches to psychology would be made to coexist and enjoy enduring mutual respect, enrichment, and equitable participatory presence in psychology degree programs in continental Africa. The term "Madiban tradition" introduced in the first chapter is put forward to call attention to my belief in the transformative power of postcolonial cosmopolitanism and its associated framework of inclusion and diversity aimed at promoting the spirit of globalectics (wa Thiong'o, 2012/2014), decolonization, and resistance to the hitherto hegemonic and exclusive presence of Western psychology in African universities. According to wa Thiong'o (2012/2014, p. 8), the term "globalectics" is related to the notions of "wholeness, interconnectedness, equality of potentiality of parts, tension, and motion. It is a way of thinking and relating to the world, particularly in the era of globalism and globalization." Thus, seen from wa Thiong'o's globalectical perspective, the goal of African psychology and indeed this book is to formalize the birthing and nurturing of the spirit of inclusive engagement or multilogue or mutual conversation between African psychology and Western and other foreign-based psychologies (e.g., African American, Asian psychology) of interest to psychology students and scholars in Africa (Nwoye, 2018a). The successful practice of such a Madiban tradition of inclusion and postcolonial cosmopolitanism in the study of psychology in Africa is expected to hasten the emergence of harmony between imported and African homegrown psychologies and, therefore, the opportunity in contemporary Africa to reverse for good the many years of exclusion of the significant African point of view in psychology degree programs in African universities.

Having introduced the Madiban framework of inclusion within which African, Western, and other postcolonial psychologies could work together and share mutual enrichment, respect, and responsibility in the production of psychological knowledge in African universities, the task of defining and charting the content and scope of this new discipline in continental African universities is taken up in Chapter 2. In implementing this aim, the chapter

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addresses several fundamental questions (Nwoye, 2015a): (1) What foundational influences precipitated the emergence of African psychology as a postcolonial academic discipline? (2) How can the delayed arrival of African psychology in African universities be explained? (3) What is a postcolonial theory of African psychology? (4) What constitutes the major phases of evolution of African psychology? (5) In what ways can African psychology be defined and conceptualized? (6) What are the principal goals of African psychology as a postcolonial discipline? (7) What key topics does African psychology teach? (8) On what ontological foundations and cosmovision is African psychology grounded? (9) And what is African in African psychology? From responses to these questions, the chapter hopes to demonstrate that African psychology as understood in continental Africa is a postcolonial discipline within the parent field of psychological scholarship in African universities. Through such postcolonial study, scholars of African psychology emerging from formerly colonized African societies endeavor to find a voice in the refashioning of a relevant psychology curriculum for use in Africa (Nwoye, 2015a, 2017a).

In line with the postcolonial and cosmopolitan orientation of the new field of African psychology, Chapter 3 draws from the available evidence in the field of African archaeology to challenge and dismantle obsolete racist images about Africa and Africans propagated in colonial psychiatry. The specific objective of that chapter is to promote a deeper knowledge of ourselves by ourselves (wa Thiong'o, 1993). To achieve this aim, the chapter undertakes a contrapuntal and psychological reading of Thurstan Shaw's archaeological finds at Igbo-Ukwu, Nigeria, to call into question and roundly dismiss as products of bad science and hidden conspiracy the racist representations of the African mind as essentially childlike and lacking in complexity as emphasized in colonial psychiatry (see McCulloch, 1995). Among the important contributions of the chapter is the window of opportunity it offers in understanding the curvilinear orientation that accords with the polycentricity and polyrhythmicity (see Asante & Welsh Asante, 1990) of the African mind and the inclusive civilization of ancient Africans. The chapter ends with the implication that, alongside ancient Nubian Egypt as a key source of pride in our past, there are other sites and sources of pride in precolonial Africa where the ingenious achievements of our ancestors are no less deserving of recognition and celebration.

Chapter 4 highlights the epistemological and cultural perspectives of African psychology. The principal goal of the chapter is to illustrate the

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efforts that scholars of continental African psychology are making to free themselves from sheeplike adherence to Euro-American ways of doing psychology as a natural/physical scientific enterprise. Overall, the chapter aims to show that African psychology is a legitimate postcolonial field of psychology endowed with its own epistemologies and critical methodological orientation to psychological scholarship. Consequently, the chapter discusses the epistemological stances of African psychology, including the methodological philosophy of constructive alternativism that advances the processes of research and scholarship in African psychology. Also addressed are the principle of contestation of alterity and affirming of endogeneity, the notion of African psychology as a human science, the notion of human beings as cultural beings, and the idea of the modern African child as a child of the "middle ground." Each of these themes draws attention to the fact that African psychology is a discipline grounded in its own endogenously generated philosophical and cultural traditions. The chapter argues that, owing to the broad and inclusive nature of its subject matter (encompassing the study of the psychological relevance of visible and invisible realities as understood in Africa) and in line with its effort at quickening the decolonization process in the study of psychology in Africa, African psychology in continental Africa must adopt an open philosophy approach to psychological scholarship and must study psychology as a postcolonial discipline in the spirit of globalectics as proposed by wa Thiong'o (2012/2014).

Introduced and discussed in Chapter 5 are a number of foundational concepts and principles of human thought and experience emerging from African cultural phenomenology that form part of the knowledge base of African psychology. Among these are (1) the principle of bifocality, (2) the principle of duality and interdependent ontology, (3) the principle of diunital rationality, (4) the principle of the guinea-fowl mentality, (5) the principle of endotropism or kienyegism, (6) the Sankofa paradigm or the principle of putting the past ahead, (7) the principle of the "seed yam mentality," (8) the concept of multilayered consciousness, (9) the ideology of the chameleon perspective, (10) the detached attachment hypothesis, (11) the theory of the limits of language, and (12) the notion of prophetic pragmatism.

The presentation and discussion of these principles and the important concepts embedding them together illustrate that African psychology as a postcolonial discipline is culturally situated and derives most of its assumptions and foundational concepts from the mentalities, worldviews,

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moral visions, and orienting frames of reference of the people of Africa, past and present.

Chapter 6 undertakes an African psychological rendering of that fundamental indigenous African assumption made popular by the Nguni proverb that "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*" (often translated as "a person is a person through other persons"). In pursuing this aim, an Africentric theory of human motivation is offered to serve as an ally to—not a replacement of—Abraham Maslow's theory of motivation that is more grounded on the framework of human interiority (Freeman, 2014). In grounding my indigenous theory of human motivation on an Africentric paradigm, my central goal is to show how African personhood and its motivational wellsprings are socioculturally derived and to point at the variety of enduring forces, both ancient and modern, that determine the motivational dynamism of the African person (Nwoye, 2017b).

Chapter 7 paints a synoptic picture of the holistic/interdependent fabric of the modern African self. The chapter argues that the African notion of the self is fundamentally opposed to the prevailing approach to the self expounded in the literature of Western European philosophers such as Plato, Descartes, Locke, Hume, Hobbes, Kant, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Sartre as well as by Euro-American personality theorists such as Freud, Adler, Jung, Maslow, Allport, Murray, Rogers, Kelly, and Kohut. The chapter explains that the Western model of the self is individuocentric and less inclusive and extensive than the African view (Nwoye, 2006a). In addition, the chapter draws attention to the fact that the Western self is imbued with an emphasis on reason and, until quite recently, a denial of the significance of the body in the determination of the overall destiny of a human being (Holdstock, 1999, 2000; Freeman, 2014). The chapter therefore argues that, judged against the African view, the Western idea of the self—as a disengaged and atomistic entity that is more or less independent of the community (Taylor, 1989; Cushman, 1990)—is too self-contained and exclusive to accurately reflect the communal perspective, the interdependent ontology, and the theme of precariousness (Kalu, 1978) in the notion of the self as understood in Africa. Throughout the discussion, emphasis is on the factor of multidimensionality and the holistic representation of the African self, with particular attention given not only to its subjectivity but also to its communal attributes and a host of other elements unsung in the Western European/North American account of the self (Kirschner, 2020).

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Chapter 8 introduces the notion that, as understood in mainstream Western psychology, people dream for themselves and are essentially self-contained in their overall mechanism of dreaming. The chapter argues that while this (Western) perspective on dreaming should not be ignored, it also needs to be recognized alongside other dream perspectives. The chapter examines the concept of dreaming from an African perspective, one beyond the Eurocentric paradigm, suggesting that, in the Africentric paradigm, the individual can dream not only for him- or herself but also for others. In the African perspective, at times there occurs the phenomenon of triangulation in dreaming, which posits that dreams originate from another source to give messages to the individual for the benefit of others. The chapter presents three anecdotes and some resulting implications that highlight descriptive elements of African dream theory. The chapter makes an important contribution in its major focus of establishing the tenets of African dream theory. This attempt vindicates the view credited to Guba and Lincoln (2005) that social science scholarship "needs emancipation from hearing only the voices of Western Europe, emancipation from generations of silence, and emancipation from seeing the world in one color" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 212). Hence, the conceptual framework of African dream perspective discussed in this chapter is necessary to add some fresh air to the literature on dreaming in both the African and Western psychological traditions.

Chapter 9 highlights an Africentric theory of the "embodied gates of stress" in ordinary life. Developing such a theory was deemed necessary in light of the fact that, despite the existence of five or more main theories of stress recognized in mainstream Western psychology, there is a need to articulate some experience-near theories of stress that could facilitate a better understanding of sources of stress among people in non-industrial settings like those in Africa. The chapter presents one such theory, offered from the perspective of the Africentric paradigm. In pursuing such a task, the chapter places emphasis on the metaphor of the *gates of stress* in order to recognize the determining role of the body and the spiritual view of people in stress-related illnesses in human beings.

In Chapter 10, my rainbow theory of eight stages of marriage development is presented. The theory is constructed within the framework of the Africentric paradigm and proposes that a rainbow of roles and expectations, challenges/tasks, tensions, joys and crises, conflicts, strengths, and opportunities constitute and determine the psychology and experience of the typical marital pair in Africa from the mate selection stage to the last stage of marital

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life. Contributing such a theory was deemed necessary as one of the practical efforts to respond to the current demand for the decolonization of scholarship in African universities. The chapter argues that one important way that African scholars could break away from the spells of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and the current limitation of overdependence on foreign-based theories in the study of psychology is to generate home-based theories endogenously sourced from their African practice and experience. The chapter aims to demonstrate that, unlike the family life framework to marriage development emphasized in mainstream Western psychology, a comprehensive rainbow theory of stages of marriage development could be formulated, one originating from data arising from several years of my clinical and academic experiences in various universities in Africa.

The argument developed in Chapter 11 is that the emerging field of African psychology needs an open research approach that is not available in mainstream Western psychology. The principal view of the chapter is that, although the Africentric paradigm—like the Eurocentric approach to knowledge generation—values controlled research-based knowledge output, it also recognizes "other ways of knowing" (e.g., the power of personal and sibling epistemology) that are not accorded serious attention and consideration in mainstream Western psychology. The chapter proposes that due to the complex nature of the multiple realities (natural and supernatural, visible and invisible, and the real and the miraculous) that constitute the subject matter of African psychology, the qualitative and mixed-method research methodology provides a more realistic and promising approach to the task of doing research in African psychology. Given this understanding, the principal aim of the chapter is to clarify the epistemology, theory, and techniques of research in African psychology. The major qualitative research approaches relevant for advancing knowledge generation in African psychology are delineated. Specific attempts were also made to delineate distinctive conditions for doing good research in African psychology following each of the models of qualitative research highlighted.

Chapter 12 offers a four-factor theory of psychopathology to extend the limited model for understanding the basis for psychological disturbances propagated in the Eurocentric paradigm of mental illness. It accomplishes this task by first problematizing the prevailing biopsychosocial (BPS) theory of psychopathology that forms the canon for understanding mental illness and treatment within Western psychological literature. In contrast to the Eurocentric paradigm of mental illness, the Africentric paradigm of mental

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illness (Nwoye, 2015b) traces causality for misfortune beyond the biological, psychological, and social domains, or beyond the visible world, to the invisible world of the spirits and ancestors, where the problem may arise. This follows from the assumption in African culture and worldview that the visible and invisible worlds are highly interconnected and can influence one another and that some people (such as the hermeneuts) have the capacity to communicate as intermediaries with these invisible spirit forces to find out their intentions when they bring illness to human beings (Animalu, 1990; Cheetham, 1975; Edwards, 1984; Erdtsieck, 2001; Holdstock, 2000; Horton, 1962, 1967, 1995; Kalu, 1978; Ogbaa, 1992; Mbiti, 1969; Mkhize, 1998; Nwoye, 2011; Peek, 1991; Touche, 2009; Turner, 1968). The chapter highlights that one of the aims of African psychology in general, and this book in particular, is to enable clinicians in the South and other regions of Africa to recognize the strength and limits of Western psychology, particularly when confronted with the needs and problems of Black African clients with difficult illness presentations.

Chapter 13 presents and expounds one model of how to do child and family therapy in Africa, one that is grounded in the cultural demands and realities of African traditions. The chapter uses one case vignette to show that African children are great observers who take full notice of their parents' malpractices, partialities, inconsistencies, and executive miscalculations and that listening in child and family therapy in Africa must include an attempt to discern some of these anomalies that might form the background of a child's symptom presentation. This is because African children frequently resort to *analogic communication*, particularly through illness presentations, to call attention to themselves and comment against and regulate their parents' maltreatment. The chapter suggests the need for caution in not reading these presentations in their literal rather than analogical meanings (Nwoye, 2006b). The chapter further explains that child and family therapy in Africa is not compatible with the *conjoint* family therapy model emphasized by Minuchin (1974) and others. The Western model valorizes the need for the presence in the therapy room of both parents and children in "confrontation" with one another. This chapter clarifies that the ethos of deference, which African children by upbringing owe to their parents, makes such a model an impractical option in Africa. The chapter proposes that the role of the therapist in child and family therapy in Africa is not just to listen, but to also play the role of "double agent" and collaborator in the production of narratives that heal. As the chapter suggests, in narrative therapy in Africa, therapists

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often seek to repair stories by drawing attention to events not accounted for by clients' narratives (Nwoye, 2006b).

The main theme developed in Chapter 14 is that, in order to promote effective practice of marriage therapy in the Africentric perspective, the therapist must be very clear in his or her mind about the distinguishing qualities that promote the development of a good marriage as understood in Africa (Nwoye, 2006c). Because of their strategic importance in the practice of the indigenous model of marriage therapy in the African context, the chapter sets out and expounds the key issues to be engaged in, the enduring qualities of viable marriages, and the negative orientations to be shunned. The enduring qualities of viable marriages as understood in my framework are discussed (Nwoye, 2006c). This undertaking is important since most marriage disturbances encountered in Africa arise in conditions in which the virtues or capacities of healthy marriages are disregarded. This understanding forms an essential background to the therapy process.

Chapter 15 reports on the psychological processes and rituals of hope-healing communities organized by religious ministers in two regions of Africa. The chapter provides narrative accounts of the key hope-generating processes incorporated into the eight-stage structure of their practice, presenting new concepts and highlighting the healing factors in these communities that are intended to help people cope with the devastating conditions in today's Africa. The chapter highlights the sources and complexity of therapeutic hope, including the generative power of human language and spirituality in promoting hope in people brutalized by life.

Chapter 16 draws attention to the psychological challenges and dilemmas of "green-carded" African immigrants in Europe and North America, whose special concerns and problems are often insufficiently addressed in the professional literature. The chapter aims to broaden and extend the current Western frameworks for understanding and treating the psychological needs and challenges of transnational immigrants. The key argument of the chapter is that, in addition to currently existing Western models for working with established immigrants in Europe and North America like those proposed by Falicov (2003, 2007), successful work with green-carded African immigrants must begin by taking into account their journey motif (i.e., their innermost aspirations for leaving Africa), their narratives of hope and significance, their failed constructions of finding a better life (in their country of destination), and their cosmopolitan perspective. The chapter clarifies these

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issues, introducing new concepts and strategies for working with African immigrants in Europe and North America.

Because one of the major goals of African psychology as a postcolonial discipline is to promote the knowledge of ourselves by ourselves, Chapter 17 highlights the social change mechanisms implemented by the oppressed majority in South Africa during the apartheid period (Nwoye, 2018b). Those mechanisms drew inspiration from the pedagogy of the oppressed articulated by Steve Biko and other members of his generation. That inspiration enabled the Black majority in South Africa "to name their world by reflecting on their conditions, imagining a better world, and then taking action to create it" (Freire, 1968, p. 253) through the use of revolutionary and therapeutic songs that resulted in the collapse of apartheid. Importantly, the chapter presents one typical example of the successful practice in Africa of the notion of the pedagogy of the oppressed as articulated by Freire (1968).

The central argument developed in Chapter 18 is that, whereas some influential Western theorists and scholars drawing from Sigmund Freud have emphasized the role of intrapsychic factors in the course of grief and mourning and have tended to give the impression that people *grieve alone and heal on their own* in the face of bereavement, I contend that, across the different cultural groups of Africa, bereaved persons *neither grieve alone nor heal on their own*. They are rather assisted by the community and culture to grieve and mourn the pain of their loss. The chapter offers a five-stage theory of community participation in grief work in Africa to substantiate this claim.

The last chapter, Chapter 19, discusses an Africentric approach to treatment of moral injury. The chapter aims to show that, despite its enormous promise of being a good option for managing the psychological problems of people overcome by the pains and grief of moral injury, *adaptive disclosure* or its equivalent, which currently stands as a leading Western model in the treatment of moral injury, has a number of limitations for use in Africa. This is due to its emphasis on the individuocentric/intrapsychic perspective and the implied notion that the process of rehabilitating the morally injured is a clinic-based affair. No attention is given in its intervention dynamic or procedure to the notion of moral injury as entailing the *social wounds* of war; neither does the Western approach consider how to redress the associated cultural injury or disequilibrium brought about by the experiences of war (through horrendous acts of omission or commission) by returning soldiers. In addition, most of the discussions about moral injury in the Western literature tend to focus on the problem of the veteran, rather than the civilian

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victim of such injuries. Yet, in Africa, the problem of moral injury among the civilian population is never an exception to the rule. The aim of this chapter is to work toward closing such gaps. The chapter discusses the causes and consequences of moral injury among child soldiers in contemporary Africa and the types of cleansing and repossession rituals used to treat the moral injury of child soldiers and civilian clients in Africa. The chapter explains that the use of rituals in mental health promotion is one aspect of psychological practice in Africa that uniquely distinguishes it from the highly medicalized traditional Western approach to treatment of moral injury.

Taken together, these chapters, in their various dimensions and contributions and perspectives, represent my purposive attempt and vision to create a comprehensive awareness and understanding among scholars both within and outside Africa of what African psychology as a postcolonial discipline stands for and deals with in the continent of Africa. The aim is to provide a much-needed pioneering study of and light to an uncharted field.

The Notion of Africentric Paradigm

Having said all this, a pertinent question to explore here is, "How does one understand the notion of the Africentric paradigm or the African perspective that is used repeatedly throughout this book? It is to this question that I now turn. First, I use the terms "Africentric paradigm," and "the African perspective," interchangeably throughout this book. They, in their various nuances, represent in my view the continental African equivalence of that framework of thinking developed by prominent African scholars in the 1960s and made popular by Molefi Asante (1987, 1998) in his foundational and compelling book, *The Afrocentric Idea*, to call into question various forms of marginalization of the African people (Mgbeadichie, 2015; Nwoye, 2017b). Seen in this respect, I use the terms "Africentric paradigm" or "Africentricity" here to stand for a theory that interprets Africa in its own terms, perceiving rather than projecting it, or, in the words of Mudimbe in his remarkable book, *The Invention of Africa*, as a framework that gives the African "subject-object the freedom of thinking of himself or herself as the starting point of an absolute discourse" (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 200). This means that the term "Africentric paradigm" should be understood here as referring to an anticolonial theory that aims to "liberate Africans from the margins of western domination and colonization"

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(Mgbeadichie, 2015, p. ii; Asante, 1987, 1990). I take this position in line with Ibrahim Sundiata, a leading Afrocentric scholar, who, in his article "Afrocentrism: The Argument We're Really Having" [*American Historical Review*, 30 (1996), 202–239], proposed that "any theoretical move directed at erasing inscriptions of inequality, marginalisation and subjugation of any kind among African peoples could be classified as a version of the Afrocentric impulse." Seen in this perspective, I position my use of the Africentric theory or the Africentric paradigm in this book to encompass any ideology that resists forms of marginalization of African peoples, places African culture at the center of inquiry, and promotes African peoples as subjects rather than objects of humanity. Indeed, in line with Mgbeadichie (2015), I extend the use of the term "Africentric paradigm" to stand for that framework of thinking that not only critiques external forms of discrimination in Africa, but also challenges debilitating or retrogressive African cultural practices, structures, or traditions which marginalize certain communities and persons within African countries.

Thus, whenever I use the term "Africentric paradigm" or "Africentricity" here, I do so to refer to that theory or ideology that provides "a critical corrective to a displaced agency among Africans" (Conyers, Jr., 2004, p. 643). And, paraphrasing Gerald Early, I also use the term "Africentric paradigm" in various instances to emphasize the importance of centeredness, location, voice, or agency in African scholarship and to empower Africans wherever they are found to place themselves in the center of their scholarship and analysis so that their works (as in this book) are grounded in a relevant historical and cultural context.

Now, a note on the title: *African Psychology: The Emergence of a Tradition*. I chose this title to call attention to the fact that the recent inclusion of the study of African psychology as a postcolonial discipline in the psychology degree syllabuses of some forward-thinking African universities has led to the irreversible emergence of an unprecedented tradition of inclusion and diversity in the history of the study of psychology in Africa. As clarified in Chapter 1, before this watershed occurrence, the negative practice that prevailed was the exclusive hegemonic presence of Western psychology masquerading as a universal psychology speaking for all cultures. However, with the current formal inclusion of African psychology in the study of psychology degree programs in some African universities, this colonialist practice of exclusion has yielded to what I refer to as the *Madiban tradition*. This observation implies that, with the emergence of the Madiban tradition, a

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much-awaited globalectic framework of inclusion and African presence in the study of psychology in African universities has dawned.

Now to those possible critics who may ask why another book on African psychology when there is already in existence so much culturally relevant African-centered psychological knowledge contributed by African American scholars in the past 30–40 years. In response, I wish to answer that this book is not largely intended to deal with African psychology as understood in the African diaspora, such as in the United States or in the Caribbean. It is rather written to make a novel contribution to the field of African psychology in its present state of development in continental Africa. Seen in this way, my conviction is that *there is no book of its range and depth, vision, and mission currently available in continental Africa.*

Also, it is important to ask which field of African psychology do critics have in mind? Do they assume the existence of one field of African psychology? Or do they believe that everybody must be guided by what drives the field of African psychology in the United States, for example? My guess is that such critics must speak from the standpoint of the assumption that African psychology in the United States and African psychology in continental Africa comprise one discipline driven by a common philosophy and history. But it is a grave mistake for any one in the African diaspora to assume that because we are both Africans we, scholars of African psychology in continental Africa, must automatically reproduce their (e.g., African Americans') own notion of African psychology in the mother continent. Indeed, part of the objective of this book is to show that this mentality is wrong and needs to be resisted.

On the other hand, the urge to see the two disciplines as related but separate and independent from one another is as it should be, particularly if we are to borrow a page from our sister discipline of African literature, where this confusion does not exist between scholars of African literature and those of African American literature. Thus, in 2001, Professor Simon Gikandi, in an important article entitled "Chinua Achebe and the Invention of African Culture," tended to give the impression that Chinua Achebe, the iconic African novelist, can be thought of as having invented African literature. He appeared to base that assumption on the stature of Achebe's classic novel *Things Fall Apart*, published in 1958, that became a canon for subsequent novel writing in the field of African literature in continental Africa. The article in which Gikandi's reference was made was published in the famous journal *Research in African Literatures*. The point I am trying to make

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is that when Professor Gikandi declared Achebe the “inventor” of African culture and literature, no African American literature scholars and critics raised an objection on the grounds that Chinua Achebe’s novel came 18 years later than Richard Wright’s famous novel *Native Son,* published in 1940. They did not complain because they know that the two fields are both similar and different, developing at their own pace in their respective cultural locations and continents. If this is so, it is difficult to see why the situation in African psychology should be assumed to be an exception. Seen in the same way, it becomes rather difficult to appreciate why scholars of African psychology in the United States, for instance, should see themselves—if they are at all interested in doing so—as gatekeepers to what should constitute the field of African psychology in continental Africa.

In this light, I can therefore foresee one of the major impacts of this book to be that of establishing the fact of this difference. In this regard, I think the key contribution of this book is its notion of seeing African psychology in continental Africa as a postcolonial discipline driven by an urge for the emergence of the Madiban tradition as a globalectical framework of inclusion that is in sync with the current movement toward the decolonization of psychology degree programs in Africa, a movement that offers a balance of both African and Western traditions.

Of course, I can hear other critics complaining that a number of topics for which African psychology in the United States is known are glaringly absent in this book, such as the long history of psychological knowledge production in Africa prior to westernization, meaningful treatments of questions of identity, sociocultural disruptions due to the loss of millions of Africans through chattel enslavement, the impact of colonization and psychological oppression, the role of racism and the assimilation of Western ideologies, contemporary examination and analysis of the psyches of the colonizer and colonized, and health and sustainable well-being in the wake of neo-colonialism and globalization.

In response, I would like to say that I am aware that some colleagues in the diaspora do currently tend to approach the notion of African psychology from the standpoint of what African American psychology deals with. But, in doing this, they tend to forget that our realities are different, that we do not completely share the same historical experiences as Africans (e.g., that we here in continental Africa were not de-Africanized through the process of slavery like they were, by loss of indigenous languages, culture and history, ethnicity, and religion, etc.) and that, consequently, we cannot be expected

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to forge a totally similar psychology. In particular, although I recognize the importance of sharing with our students the long history of psychological knowledge production in Africa prior to westernization, I believe I do not need to write about this theme here since there are already in existence so many good sources and references concerning it. Given this understanding, my view and conviction is that this book, as earlier intimated, is meant to be an ally to, not a substitute for the great and original work being done by African Americans in America to answer to their needs and realities in the United States. But our colleagues in the United States should not in any way presume to be speaking for us when they are concerned with expounding the phenomenon and challenge of Black experience in America.

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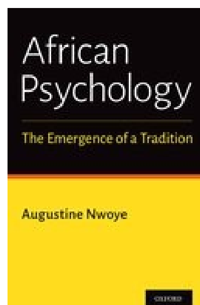

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FRONT MATTER

Acknowledgments

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Subject: Social Psychology

Several institutions and individuals have been instrumental in the build-up that led to the publication of this book. Among the most recent of these beneficial institutions is the US Fulbright Scholar Program, South African office, Pretoria, which processed and recommended my application for the 2015 US Fulbright Grant award. With the acquisition of that award (Grant No. 68150675), I gained the precious opportunity, space, and time to do research that led to the writing of the new chapters in this book.

Be that as it may, nobody can enjoy the rewards of a Fulbright scholar program unless they are lucky enough to find a reputable US academic institution with the ambience to invite and accept a visiting Fulbright scholar in their midst. In my own particular case, I had the good fortune to be invited by two great US institutions. The first is Howard University in Washington, DC, through its Department of African Studies under the able leadership of its chair, Professor Mbye Cham. The second institution is the College of the Holy Cross, in Worcester, Massachusetts, through the auspices of its Department of Psychology under the charismatic leadership of Distinguished Professor and Chair Mark Freeman. Through the respective support and immense contributions of these eminent scholars and other members of their respective departments, such as Professor Suzanne R. Kirschner (the Director of College Scholar Program in the case of College of the Holy Cross), my Fulbright Scholarship experience in the United States was a very fruitful, successful, and memorable one. During that period, I was able to write the draft of the anchor chapters as well as the proposal for the publication of this book before the period of my scholarship elapsed. I therefore owe an immense debt of gratitude to these fine academics for the honor of their invitation and for their enormous sacrifice, friendship, and collegial support in hosting me all through my stay in their respective universities.

The other institution that deserves particular mention here is the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, that became my university of affiliation from September 2012 to August 2021. It was through the auspices of its inaugural lecture program that I was given the vital opportunity to reflect on and put together
p. xxvi
my thoughts over the years on the critical question of ↳ "What is African psychology a psychology of?" This was the topic of my lecture, the outcome of which is incorporated in Chapter 2 of this book. Through the University's vision and mission of serving as an African champion for the development and inclusion of African psychology in its psychology degree programs and the enduring support and encouragement I received from my colleagues in the School of Applied Human Sciences, particularly Professor N. J. Mkhize, the current Deputy Vice Chancellor and Head of the College of Humanities, my work and scholarship in the area of African psychology gained immense recognition and an enormous boost, for which I am ever grateful.

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Similarly, in the fall of 2001–2002, I received a 6-month visiting fellowship from the University of Toronto under the auspices of its Department of Counselling Psychology of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) to develop and teach a course called Psychotherapy in Africa. I wish to thank Professor Lana Stermac, who was at the helm during my fellowship period in that university and who was highly helpful in making my stay in that university a very memorable one. In this regard, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Professor Karl Tomm, Director of the Family Therapy Program, Faculty of Medicine of the University of Calgary, for the kind invitation I got from him to give a workshop on Family Therapy in Africa during the period of my Fellowship at the University of Toronto. It was for the purposes of that workshop that the initial work on my Corroborative and Narrative Approach to Child and Family therapy in Africa, the current version of which constitutes Chapter 13 of this book, was formulated. My sincere thanks must therefore go to Professor Karl Tomm for the privilege of that invitation and for hosting me during the period of the workshop and for his spirit of collegiality and friendship ever since.

The University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom must also be acknowledged. It was through the presentation I made in the Staff Seminar of their Faculty of Education during the period of my 4-month visiting fellowship there, in 2004, that the initial formulation of my synoptic theory of the modern African self, the revised version of which is presented in Chapter 7 of this book was made. I thank Professor Colleen McLaughlin who hosted me during that period for her spirit of collegiality that made my fellowship experience in that university a very fruitful one.

Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya, deserves a special mention here, too, for it was in that University as well as at the University of Dodoma in Tanzania that the initial thoughts and writings that constitute the majority ↳ of the chapters that make up this book were generated. I thank my colleagues in the two universities for their spirit of collegiality and academic friendship.

My special thanks are also due to my teachers and mentors over the years, too numerous to mention. Some of them are now of blessed memory: the Right Rev. Monsignor Martin Maduka, a genius of his kind and an exemplary Catholic priest of the Awka Diocese in Nigeria, who taught me among other things the value of taking pride in my blackness and in the importance and wisdom of our African culture and tradition. As well, Professor Chinua Achebe, my unassailable teacher and mentor and the icon of African literature, deserves to be mentioned very early in this list. It is from his novels and critical essays (such as "The Novelist as Teacher," "The Role of the Writer in a New Nation," "The Black Writer's Burden," and "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' ") that I took my first lessons on African psychology as a postcolonial discipline. Another of my great mentors and academic ancestors in this list of those of who have passed on is Leopold Sedar Senghor, the former President of the Republic of Senegal. He was the pioneer theorist of African cultural identity from whom I learned the invaluable wisdom of affirming the spirit of inclusion in dealing with people of all cultures. From him, too, I learned and cherished the poetics of the African way of *seeing* the world that is different from the Western way of doing so. As with Achebe, I learned from Senghor that we "must first be rooted in our native soil and culture, and only then, from that base, must assimilate, in ever-widening circles, all other civilizations and cultures" (cited in Nespoulous-Neuville, 1999, p. 135), a view that could easily serve as the philosophical underpinning for the study of African psychology as a globalectical/postcolonial discipline. I equally agree with Senghor's conviction that "there are *several* civilizations, not just *one*." And that "if indeed there exists but one human civilization, it is dialectical, with each continent, each race, each people displaying a particular and irreplaceable aspect of that civilization" (cited in Nespoulous-Neuville, 1999, p. xx).

Yet another of my hidden teachers and mentors in this list in our anchor field of psychological humanities is Professor Emmanuel Obiechina. Among his many writings that have influenced my work and scholarship in African psychology is his important 1994 Ahajioku Lecture entitled "Nchetaka." From that presentation I took the lesson that one key constituent of the modern African self is its narratological component (see Nwoye, 2006a, and Chapter 7 of this book), an aspect of the African individual that is made up of ↳ the

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sediments of the values, stories, and wisdom of the community inscribed in the African child through the oral tradition.

Needless to say, most of my basic lessons on African psychology as a postcolonial discipline were not only learned from Maduka, Achebe, Senghor, or Obiechina, but also from those who still live among us, such as the Kenyan literary giant Ngugi wa Thiong'o. His three classic books of critical essays (*Decolonizing the Mind* [James Currey Ltd./Heinemann, 2011], *Moving the Centre* [James Currey, 2008], and *Globalectics* [Columbia University Press, 2014; originally published in 2012]) have directly or indirectly influenced much of my perspectives on the postcolonial theory of African psychology highlighted in this book.

Similarly, my great academic friend and mentor, Professor Len Holdstock, deserves to be thanked for his pioneering efforts in generating arguments and rationale in favor of giving attention to the development of an African perspective to psychology in African universities. His numerous writings in this regard were highly instrumental in helping to shape and build a solid conviction in me of the importance of my attempt to articulate my own view of the major merits of centering African psychology in the study of the discipline of psychology in African universities. Prof. Holdstock is therefore a major inspiration in the making of this book.

Also, my graduate supervisor and academic inspiration, mentor, and friend, Professor Christie Achebe, Professor Chinua Achebe's illustrious widow, deserves to be thanked for her ever-supportive encouragement and mentorship over the years. In particular, it was through knowing her and learning from her that I came to know and learn more from her husband, Professor Chinua Achebe. Thus, her presence in my academic life has been a double blessing to me. And for this I remain deeply grateful and indebted to her.

To all my brilliant graduate students whom I came across in different countries (Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and South Africa), I am no less indebted for their critical reception of the various lectures that I presented to them that served as springboards to the making of the various chapters that constitute the core of this book.

The staff of Oxford University Press, New York, particularly my seasoned and dedicated editor Abby Gross and her able, brilliant, and indefatigable assistant editor, Katharine Pratt, must be extended my special gratitude and appreciation for the thorough attention given to the painstaking process of assessing and ensuring the academic merit and market potential of this book p. xxix ↳ while in the manuscript stage. Similarly, the staff at Oxford University Press (Ashitashah and Prabha) who took effective charge of the book's production process are no less deserving of my heartfelt commendation.

Finally, to my indefatigable and ever-ready critical and captive audience and beloved wife, Dr. Chinwe Miriam Agatha Nwoye, *nee* Mgbenwelu, I owe an immense debt of gratitude for always standing by me with immeasurable support and sacrifices while this book was in the making!

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About the Author

In 2015, Augustine Nwoye, then a professor of psychology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, visited Holy Cross as a Fulbright scholar to work closely with Mark Freeman, professor of psychology at the College. Prior to that meeting, Nwoye has read Freeman's fascinating book, *The Priority of the Other*: *Thinking and living beyond the self* (Oxford University Press, 2014), and instantly took particular interest in Freeman's research, for which reason he reached out to work with him specifically through the golden opportunity of the Fulbright grant tenancy during which period Nwoye had the time and the space to work on a proposal for the present book focusing on African psychology.

Dr. Nwoye's argument has been that the accepted psychological canon is comprised mainly of European and/or White psychologists who analyze the human experience in their respective westernized cultures. This discourse, Nwoye argues, is difficult to apply to the African human experience and often leads to disconnects between accepted psychological theory and African reality. Through this new book, Dr. Nwoye aims to create a new canon—African psychology—that he asserts will more accurately relate to the African world and which, furthermore, can be applied back to Western psychology and, by extension, better inform it.

Dr. Nwoye has held distinguished teaching positions in several other universities in Africa, including the University of Jos, Nigeria; Kenyatta University, Kenya; and The University of Dodoma, Tanzania. During his time at Kenyatta University, he helped to establish its Department of Psychology and served as the pioneer Chair of that department. Also while at Kenyatta, he was selected along with some few other academics to represent Kenyatta University in the task of assisting the University of Rwanda when the latter was struggling to reestablish itself at the cessation of hostilities and the return of civil peace in that country. Dr. Nwoye has won several visiting fellowships and given public lectures in many universities in continental Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America, including the Universities of Cambridge and Suffolk (England), Toronto and Calgary (Canada), Stockholm (Sweden),

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Universiti Sains Malaysia (Malaysia), and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa). Dr. Nwoye is a native of Nigeria and received all his graduate education from the University of Nigeria. His Fulbright scholarship was spent at the College of the Holy Cross and Howard University in the United States.

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1

Introduction

The Danger of a Single Story and the Problem of Speaking for Others

One of the most unprecedented developments in the history of the scientific study of psychology in postcolonial Africa is the recent welcome inclusion of the study of African psychology within the psychology degree curriculum of some foreword-thinking African universities. In each of those universities (such as the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa), there now exists a gradual entrenchment of African-derived psychology in the curricular provisions of their psychology degree programs. With particular reference to the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, for instance, a number of African psychology–based modules have recently been developed, approved, and incorporated into the list of modules for psychology degree students at the undergraduate, honors, and master's degree levels (see University of KwaZulu-Natal, College of Humanities' Handbook, 2021).

Consistent with this development is the recent establishment of the Forum of African Psychology (FAP) as a registered new division within the unified and prestigious Psychological Association of South Africa (PsySSA). FAP held its first International Conference at the University of Limpopo, Polokwane, Limpopo, South Africa, from March 27 to 29, 2014 (Nwoye, 2017). The theme of that conference was "From Psychology in Africa to African Psychology." Speakers and participants at the conference came from both within and outside the continent.

These two significant occurrences came as a kind of rewriting of history in the context of the scientific study of psychology in continental Africa: for the past several years prior to these developments, the colonialist practices that prevailed had favored the exclusive and hegemonic presence of mainstream Western psychology in the study of psychology in African universities. This awkward situation came into being during the period of colonialism, European expansion and imperialism, and the emergence of missionary Christianity in Africa. Supporting this observation, Nsamenang (2007)

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remarked that Euro-American psychology made its entry into Africa during the colonial period partly through the auspices of Christian missionaries and partly through the contributions of visiting Western psychologists and some returnee Africans trained in mainstream Western psychology in overseas universities. The Christian missionaries, according to Nsamenang, introduced the teaching of mainstream Western psychology in their philosophy training curriculum that was intended for the education of African candidates for theology and the priesthood, a structure that has persisted in most Christian (Catholic) seminaries in sub-Saharan Africa from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present.

However, shortly after many African states gained their political independence from their erstwhile colonial masters, most of them, but particularly Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia, established their own universities to train their own local experts (Eze, 1991; Long, 2017). And most of these universities (such as the University of Nigeria, at Nsukka, Nigeria) established departments of psychology for the same national and social purpose (Nwoye, 2015a). Unfortunately, creating departments of psychology at that time was one thing: filling them up with relevant and local experts was quite another. And that was where the major problem of Western hegemonic domination and the attempt to speak for Africans on the nature of the life of the mind in Africa had its origins. In those early years (the 1940s, 1960s, and 1970s, and indeed up to today), most nations of Africa, like other non-Western countries (e.g., China, India, Iran, and Philippines; Yang, 2012), did not have a fully articulated, scientific psychology of their own. In addition, there was an inability, as Danziger (2004/2006a, 2006b) aptly put it, to recognize and admit that there was something worthwhile, psychologically, out there in other regions, beyond the traditional location of the European cultural and psychological tradition. Consequently, to fill the vacant psychology positions available in African universities at the time, the authorities at the helm had no other option than to rely on recruitment drives abroad.

This negative situation generated the need for persistent importation and *ipso facto* transplantation of scientific psychologies indigenous to Europe and America (Danziger, 2004/2006a) into the psychology departments of African universities (Nsamenang, 2007; Yang, 2012). In that way, the formal study of psychology in African universities emerged as a subordinated, dependent, and Westernized psychology. And African psychologists in continental Africa, over-determined by the Eurocentric story of what psychology

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is about, have for years ended up in disappointment and traumatic bewilderment regarding how to break away from the restricted boundaries this tradition set for the study of psychology in Africa (Benjamin-Bullock & Seabi, 2013). This stifling situation was further compounded by the fact that mainstream Western psychology (a kind of "provincial psychology extrapolated widely," as Danziger [2004/2006a] would put it) was at that time operating against the background of colonial discourse that framed and fixed the African as a *tabula rasa* who needed to be spoken for and filled up with Western knowledge. The latter, mainstream Western psychological knowledge, being itself tightly controlled by Eurocentrism, was presented as a virtually single story responding to all questions.

The irreversible danger (Owusu-Bempah & Howitt, 1995) that came with this dominant etic or exogamous origin of the single (Western) story of psychology in Africa was barely noticeable at the time. By then, in the history of psychology as a discipline, as Yang (2012, p. 8) lucidly put it, "Western and non-Western psychologists alike tended to believe that the theories, concepts, methods, and tools of Western psychology are universally or cross-culturally applicable." The basis for this ill-conceived assumption was perhaps because, according to Davies (1999), for years,

> in order to center itself, Eurocentrism has to operate with the logic of single ownership of knowledge. To do this it had to construct a certain originary point from which all knowledge emanated and reduce the rest to backwardness. Rather than identifying gains and advancement or breakthroughs at certain points in history and in different cultural contexts, it instead incorporated all advances as European or erases them as non-existent. (p. 100)

It is this same point that Danziger (2006b) was alluding to when he remarked that "In the West if psychologists outside the United States remained poorly informed about developments there, they were at risk of suffering some loss of professional status, whereas American psychologists habitually ignored work done elsewhere with complete impunity" (p. 214).

This ill-founded belief in the universality of the traditional Western story of psychology and the notion of Eurocentrism as a paradigm for the study of psychology applicable to all persons was a grave and presumptuous error that African scholars in Africa and in the diaspora now recognize as one of those myths that managed to survive unnoticed until quite recently due to the absence of relevant research and information to unmask its falsity and danger

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(Danziger, 2004/2006a, 2006b; Holdstock, 1999, 2000; Kim, Yang, & Hwang, 2006). However, many critical and indigenous psychologists from Africa (Bakker, 1993; Holdstock, 1999, 2000; Long, 2017; Mkhize, 2004; Mpofu, 2002; Nsamenang, 1992, 1999, 2007; Nwoye, 2014, 2015a, 2017; Ratele, 2017) and other non-Western countries, such as India (D. Sinha, 1997; I.B.P. Sinha, 2000; Pandrey, 2004), Japan (Azuma, 1984); China (Qicheng & Fun, 2010); Taiwan and Hong Kong (Kim & Berry, 1993; Kim, Park, & Park, 1996; Kim et al., 2006), and the Philippines (Enriquez, 1989, 1992, 1993) have since discovered the gross limitations of such a belief and have mounted a fierce and sustained challenge against its continued domination (Danziger, 2006b). Responding in the same way, important critical psychologists and scholars from the African diaspora have mounted a similar challenge against the exclusive domination of Eurocentric psychology as a universal psychology destined to speak on behalf of all others (Akbar, 1984; Ani, 1994; Asante, 1987/1998, 2003; Azibo, 1988; Belgrave & Allison, 2006; Guthrie, 1998; Harrell, 1999; Kambon, 1992; Mazama, 2001; Myers, 2012; Myers & Speight, 2010). All these critics have consistently emphasized the conviction that traditional Western psychological theories are highly culture-bound and do not have significant cross-cultural validity, generalizability, and applicability to speak for people of other cultures such as those found in Africa, India, China, and New Zealand (Bhatia & Stam, 2005; Gergen, Gulerce, Lock, & Misra, 1996; Heine & Norenzayan, 2006; Kirschner, 2015; Nwoye, 2017).

The basic argument of these critics is that it is not possible for mainstream Western psychology, operating from within its own limited Cartesian perspective or standpoint, to generate a psychological knowledge system that is able to adequately and effectively reflect and understand the culture-bound psychological and behavioral characteristics of local people in culturally diverse non-Western societies. It is this fundamental argument against the insufficiency and danger of the hegemonic single Western story of psychology, dominating space in the study of psychology in African universities, that I attempt to flesh out in a more theoretical stance in this chapter.

The Theory of Incompleteness of Traditional Western Psychology

In theoretical terms, as Nyamnjoh (2015/2017), drawing from Tutuola's popular novel, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (Tutuola, 1952), put it, what the

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foregoing critiques and perspectives seem to say is that, essentially speaking and as with every other knowledge system, the factor of *incompleteness* is the basic characteristic of traditional hegemonic Western psychology imported to Africa. In this context, I use the notion of *incompleteness* as a framework of insufficiency articulated by Nyamnjoh (2015/2017) in his critical analysis of Tutuola's *Palm-Wine Drinkard* to draw attention to the fact that at the heart of the traditional (mainstream) Western psychology imported to Africa are sources of limitation that constitute major grounds for its basic insufficiency or barrenness and that are therefore the basis for its costly inadequacy to center a holistic study of the life of the mind and culture in continental Africa. These sources of incompleteness include

1. Its tendency to limit the subject matter of psychology to only the physical realities, with a bias on the observable, quantifiable, and measurable, ignoring attention to the study of spirituality and invisible realities in its theory, research, and scholarship. In contrast to this orientation, African psychology, as reflected in the writings of its scholars (e.g., Baloyi, 2009; Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothata, 2014; Matoane, 2012; Mkhize, 2004; Myers, 1985, 1988; Nobles, 2006; Nwoye, 2015a; Sodi, 1998, 2009), recognizes and acknowledges the existence and impact of supernatural forces and other invisible influences in people's life-worlds and the need to include both categories of realities (supernatural and natural) in its study of psychology (Nyamnjoh, 2015/2017). Supporting this observation, Morrison (1984, p. 342) highlights that "the black reality involves supernatural and a profound rootedness in the real world at the same time with neither taking precedence over the other."
2. Its persistent failure to recognize the complexity of the human being as a doubly constituted being, or a product of the complex mixture of both physical and spiritual elements, in which neither has full primacy. In contrast, in African psychology, the complexity of the human being is highly recognized as it is believed within the African worldview that when "faced with inadequacies, [African people] every now and then, invest hope, interpretation and mediation in those claiming the status of seers and frontier beings, in those imbued with larger than life clairvoyance and capacity to straddle worlds, navigate, negotiate and reconcile chasms" (Nyamnjoh, 2015, p. 5). In that way, according to Nyamnjoh (2015/2017), with the potency they (the seers and frontier beings) avail the people, those so enhanced become able to activate

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themselves to mitigate the inadequacies of the five senses, so that the people, too, might perceive what is ordinarily lost to them in terms of the fullness and complexity of reality. In fact, as depicted in Tutuola's novel, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (Tutuola, 1952), and followed-up and elaborated by Nyamnjoh (2015/2017), in the African worldview (that anchors the study of African psychology), "mediators or interpreters are multidimensional in their perception, because of their capacity to see, feel, hear, smell and taste things that are ordinarily beyond sight, feeling, hearing, smelling and tasting" (p. 5).

3. Its inability to recognize and work with the assumption and the associated humility that psychology is a human, not a physical, science. This is in contrast to the view of African psychology, which works from the assumption that, as far as African human science is concerned, there exists a certain kind of knowledge "that is accessible by intuition (not by direct view of reality), knowledge from a fusing and harmonizing with things" (Senghor, 1970, p. 181).
4. Its tendency to undertake its psychological study of human beings in a mechanized, laboratory-centered, decontextualized condition bereft of background (Cushman, 1990). In contrast, African psychology, operating from the point of view of the African worldview as depicted in Tutuola's novel, *Palm-Wine Drinkard* and as highlighted by Nyamnjoh (2015, p. 6; see also Nyamnjoh, 2017), assumes that "People and things adopt different forms and manifest themselves differently according to context and necessity" and, consequently, that the "contamination" of context and background must always be taken into account in any psychological study of human beings (Kirschner, 2015).
5. Its bias in favor of empiricist epistemology as *the* royal road for achieving reliable human knowledge and its neglect of *other ways of knowing* in the field of psychology (Danziger, 2004/2006a; wa Thiong'o, 2012/2014). In contrast to this one-dimensional and restrictive epistemology, African psychology, along with several strands of progressive Western psychology (such as cultural psychology, sociocultural psychology, narrative psychology, international psychology, etc.), recognizes the existence of other ways of knowing or multiple epistemologies other than scientific positivism in its study of psychology.
6. Its failure to recognize and factor in the role of culture and community and the limits of reason in its methodology for the study of the human subject. In the effective study of the life of the mind and the vicissitudes

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of the black experience in Africa (Long, 2017), this is a very serious limitation. In contrast, owing to the inclusive nature of its subject matter (Nwoye, 2015a), African psychology endeavors to adopt an "open philosophy approach" and a globalectical epistemology (wa Thiong'o, 2012/2014) to psychological scholarship. Hence, the current effort that some scholars (e.g., Baloyi, 2009; Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothata, 2014; Matoane, 2012; Mkhize, 2004; Nwoye, 2015a; Sodi, 1998, 2009) in African psychology are making to liberate themselves from the restrictive ways and exclusivist orientation of doing psychology propagated by mainstream Western methods. Based on this understanding, part of the critical aim in the study of African psychology has been to promote a wholesale rethinking of the restrictive colonial epistemologies we have inherited.

7. Its continuing adherence to the ethic of *conversational monologue* in its relationship to other knowledge traditions in psychological scholarship. This superiority attitude gives rise to a situation in which mainstream Western psychology's attention to or acknowledgment of psychological knowledge traditions other than its own is either contested, completely ignored, or dismissed with complete impunity (Danziger, 2006b; Davies, 1999).
8. Its overreliance on questionnaire studies using university undergraduates (as spokespersons for humanity) and animal laboratory experiments as its main source of data collection to formulate its theories about human beings (Arnett, 2008). This is in contrast to the approach adopted in African psychology, where the emphasis is on the need for methodological decolonization and adoption of the philosophy of constructive alternativism (Kelly, 1955) in its study of human subjectivity, culture, and experience in pre- and postcolonial Africa (Nwoye, 2015a). This emphasizes that the field of African psychology, as a postcolonial discipline (Nwoye, 2017), works to unbind itself from the master narratives of traditional Western psychological methodologies. Yet, taking this position is not another way of saying that African psychology seeks to work from a kind of idealistic methodological *tabula rasa*. Instead, it means that, as a postcolonial specialization with a broad-based subject matter (encompassing both the natural and spiritual realities) in its research agenda, African psychology feels unconstrained, from the perspective of globalectical epistemology (wa Thiong'o, 2012/2014), to explore and appropriate

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different epistemological perspectives and research methodologies—wherever they are found—that can allow it to do justice to the study of the complexity of human experience in the African world. Consequently, scholars of African psychology operate from the epistemological perspective of complementary dualism that entails the freedom to adopt any methodological approach relevant to the study of human subjectivity, culture, and experience in pre- and postcolonial Africa (Nwoye, 2015a, 2021a, 2021b). Seen from this perspective, when scholars of African psychology adopt, for instance, the *contrapuntal reading* approach proposed by Edward Said (1983) a fitting strategy for exploring the psychological capital embedding some enduring African cultural traditions and spiritual practices, they do so not minding the fact that this approach has not been legitimated within the psychological lexicon of the West. Rather, they adopt that approach (which allows them to explore the unsaid in any issue under investigation), largely because they have seen that, in comparison to some other conventional methods (e.g., use of the questionnaire and experimental methodologies) imported from mainstream Western psychology, it comes closer to serving their research needs as psychologists and scholars operating from a continental African perspective in the study of psychology.

This list clarifies that African psychology currently operates from the epistemological conviction that there are multiple methodological standpoints from which viable human knowledge can be produced (wa Thiong'o, 2012/2014). On the basis of this conviction, scholars of African psychology have chosen to operate from the methodological philosophy of *constructive alternativism* (Kelly, 1955; Nyamnjoh, 2012, 2015/2017), which underscores the wisdom of adopting from among available methodological alternative approaches the most viable options to move the field of African psychological scholarship forward.

Given this, my principal argument in the context of this book is that by allowing these various sources and signatures of partialities to characterize its unique approach to doing psychology both in Europe and Africa, traditional (mainstream) Western psychology, to say the least, ends up with the unintended consequence of incompleteness. And judging from such a theoretical stance, among the fundamental goals of African psychology is to work toward closing the gap and filling the absences that arise from these

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outlined inadequacies or the state of incompleteness at the heart of traditional Western psychology for the study of the life of the mind in Africa.

Search for a New Direction or Tradition

Influenced by these theoretical considerations and minding the danger of our relying on a single story of psychology originating from the West, two important conclusions can be made regarding the current situation within the context of the study of psychology in Africa. The first is that, with its now clearly recognized inadequacies for the study of the life of the mind in Africa, traditional (mainstream) Western psychology can no longer be allowed to continue unchallenged in its hegemonic way of dominating the space for the study of psychology in African universities. The second conclusion is that, as a decolonized, postcolonial discipline through which scholars of African psychology can have their own space and voice for doing meaningful and holistic study of psychology in Africa, African psychology (Nwoye, 2017) in no way deserves to continue to be relegated to the periphery in the study of the life of mind and the challenges of the human condition in the different countries of Africa. African psychology should rather be placed at the forefront, given its capacity to go beyond restricted colonial epistemologies and methodologies derived from the Cartesian tradition of metaphysics that anchors the study of mainstream psychology in Europe and North America.

In the face of these conclusions, the critical issue now becomes how to respond constructively to the fundamental question of which way to go in our search for a new direction or tradition to enhance and propagate a holistic study of psychology in Africa.

In responding to this question, Long's (2017) important and well-written article proposes that African psychology should fundamentally focus on the study of Black violence and poverty in post-apartheid South Africa. I considered this point of view inadequate because it seems to confuse the trees for the forest. Following such a vision would mean, first and foremost, that the hegemonic dominance of mainstream Western psychology in African universities would continue unchallenged, with African psychology being made to concern itself only with the partial duty of focusing its energy and potential on this study. Seeing the future of African psychology solely in this restrictive image means that, according to Long (2017), African psychology could only find its relevance in the context of its study of the Black experience

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in South Africa. In that way, it is meant to be understood as a handmaiden of Western psychology in Africa. Seeing the status of African psychology in the future in this limited way means, additionally, that it is not considered by Long (2017) as a postcolonial specialization within the larger field of psychology in Africa, one endowed with its own epistemological and methodological voice, subject matter, research culture, contents, and objectives (Danziger, 2004). Pushed into this peripheral or fringe status, African psychology, according to Long (2017, p. 19), should therefore ideally be seen as a minor area of research in the study of psychology in South Africa, with a fixed focus to explore "the workings of structural violence, not in the general context of a colonized society, but specifically in the African macro, meso, and micro worlds." Thus, for Long (2017), African psychology has a role to play, but only in the South African context where it "must articulate the lived realities of ordinary South Africans, realities that are embedded in a landscape soaked in ableism, classism, gender-based violence, and racial humiliation." All this, in my view, is a rather limited vision for African psychology, which should devote its attention to the psychological study of Africans across the continent, not just South Africa. In addition, another limitation of such a view is that it appears to imply that the task of studying and articulating the lived realities of ordinary South Africans (Long, 2017) should be the unique preserve of African psychology. Yet it is obvious that even now such a specific concern is being addressed by other African scholars in the fields of sociology and social psychology. Thus, there is nothing unique in associating African psychology with the study of structural violence and the problem of Black poverty in the South African context.

Most importantly, such an option clearly has nothing to offer about how to fill the gaps and absences created by the limitations of incompleteness highlighted earlier that impede the practice of traditional Western psychology, in both its epistemology, methodology, and restricted subject matter, as a holistic approach for the equitable and holistic study of psychology in Africa. In addition, by limiting the concern of African psychology to the study of the Black experience of poverty in post-apartheid South Africa, the unintended impression is created that African psychology is only for Black Africans. This is for me a great irony since it was the same author (Long, 2016) who, in his previous contribution on the theme of relevance in the study of psychology in Africa, complained that many definitions of African psychology have tended to present it in racially conceptualized terms that make non-Black Africans feel alienated from it.

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These observations mean that the recommendation for a way forward in the study of psychology in Africa as offered by Long (2017) has not gone far enough, and this impels us to search further for a new and more inclusive direction or framework.

The Madiban Tradition as a Globalectical Framework of Inclusion

Against this background, I propose for adoption in this book the inauguration and consolidation of the Madiban tradition as a globalectical framework of inclusion for the study of psychology in degree curricula in all African universities.

Here, I draw from wa Thiong'o's (2012/2014) term "globalectics," which, according to him, is derived from the shape of the globe: on its surface, there is no one center, any point is equally a center, and "as for the internal center of the globe, all points on the surface are equidistant to it—like the spokes of a bicycle wheel that meet at the hub." In this regard, the term "globalectics" as articulated by wa Thiong'o (2012/2014) and understood in this chapter "combines the global and the dialectical to describe a mutually affecting dialogue, or multi-logue, that embraces wholeness, interconnectedness, equality of potentiality of parts, tension, and motion. It is a way of thinking and relating to the world, particularly in the era of globalism and globalization" (wa Thiong'o, 2012, p. 8).

Following such a framework of inclusion would mean that both African psychology and traditional Western psychology, as well as the more progressive aspects of Western psychology and other relevant imported psychologies, would be entitled to share the same platform in African universities in the production of psychological knowledge. Implementing this approach will mean that African psychology is empowered to operate as a co-shaping force in the production of psychological knowledge in contemporary Africa.

Now, in the context of the present book, the term "Madiban," etymologically speaking, owes its origin to the word "Madiba," which coincidentally is the name of the clan of which Mr. Nelson Mandela, the first democratically elected President of the Republic of South Africa, is a member. However, as used in this book the term "Madiba" should be taken to refer to an African-centered moral vision which embodies the indigenous African emphasis on a *diunital* way of seeing things in bipartisan perspective, an orientation

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recognized in many African communities in addition to that of President Mandela. It is thus to be understood in this book not as a construct or linguistic metaphor originating from President Mandela himself in the way that the concept of "Ujamaa" originated from President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania or that of "Consciencism" authored by President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. It is rather being used in the context of this book as an indigenous African philosophical metaphor that has its roots in the distant past.

Given this particular understanding, the implied inclusive or bipartisan character embedding what I refer to in this chapter as the Madiban tradition derives from the basic moral vision or philosophy of the "Madiba" as an elder who is known among his or her people as a "filler of ditches," a "reconciler of contraries," or "an individual who builds bridges of understanding over the divides of culture and ethnicity." Hence, the sociocultural dimension of the Madiban idea as used in this book shares much in common with the Swahili word "harambee," which is used in many East African countries like Kenya and Tanzania as a clarion call for members of the community to close ranks and "pull together" to achieve a common purpose. Seen in this perspective, the notion of the Madiban tradition as a framework of inclusion draws attention to the notion of "the strengths of working together" or, as understood among the Igbo people of Nigeria, *akaweta-akaweta*, which in its English rendering implies that "the fingers work together in feeding the mouth."

Against this understanding, the notion of the Madiban tradition should specifically be taken in the context of this book to refer to that framework of inclusion aimed at promoting a bipartisan perspective and the operation of the principle of complementary duality in African universities' psychology curricula. The goal is to formalize the birthing and nurturing of the spirit of inclusive engagement and conversation between African psychology and Western and other foreign-based psychologies (e.g., African American psychology and Asian psychology) considered necessary for the holistic training and education of psychology degree students in Africa. The successful implementation of such a tradition of inclusion is expected to hasten the emergence of the harmony of imported and African homegrown psychologies and, therefore, the opportunity in contemporary Africa to reverse for good the many years of exclusion or peripheralization of a significant African (psychological) voice in psychology degree programs in Africa. In that way, African university degree students in psychology will be able to draw from the best that is available in African, Western, and other psychological knowledge systems to enrich their psychological scholarship

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(Nwoye, 2015a, 2017). Seen from this perspective, the Madiban tradition can be viewed as embodying a culturally grounded generative and imaginative platform intended to open up the study of psychology in African universities to a new future, one in which, unlike previously, both Western psychology and African (including African American) approaches to psychology would enjoy enduring mutual respect and co-creative presence in psychology degree programs in contemporary Africa. Implementing this approach will mean that African psychology should center on or at least operate as a *co-shaping force* in the education of psychology degree students and in the production of psychological knowledge in contemporary Africa.

Hence, as understood in this chapter and throughout this book, the Madiban tradition is proposed to operate as a framework of inclusion that is aimed to champion the operation of the *bipartisan principle of complementary duality* (local and foreign) in the structure of psychology degree curricula in Africa. Such an inclusive and harambee-like framework should be welcomed as a true breakthrough in the system, recognizing that, for the holistic study of psychology to bear fruit in the African context where the current inadequacies of traditional Western psychology stand to be enriched by the visible and central presence of African psychology, firm acceptance of the pluralism of cultures and psychologies should be assumed by leading researchers and scholars in the two hemispheres.

These observations imply that, within the ambit of the Madiban tradition as a framework of inclusion, African psychology should not be understood as a psychology of polarities but as an inclusive psychology (Nwoye, 2015a, 2017), a psychology ready to enter into open dialogue and work together with other psychologies. Such a double move is important in that, for African psychology to express itself, it must go beyond itself by going beyond what it knows from traditional African civilizations to open up to the best that can be offered by other civilizations, including those of the African diaspora (Nwoye, 2015a; White, 1980). However, while operating within this framework of inclusion, the meeting of African, African American, Western, and other psychologies at any time should come to be recognized as "a meeting of giving and receiving, a symbiosis of psychological civilizations, and a dialogue of cultures" (Mabana, 2014, p. 7).

Having made these clarifications, it is now time to provide some further explications on the expected dividends of the Madiban tradition and the challenges and limitations of following that approach. The first point to make is that, through the influence of the proposed Madiban tradition as a

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framework of inclusion in the study of psychology in African universities, each of the two main psychological traditions (African and Western) will have legitimate standing and can be drawn upon in working out psychology degree programs in African universities. Operating from this standpoint, each of the two psychological paradigms would also be free to develop on its own terms by drawing, endogenously, from its native cultural and philosophical traditions and creative literatures in research, theory formulation, and practice. And it is this capacity and opportunity for the African scholar and psychologist to embrace a relation to the West, on the one hand, and to the African and the African diaspora universe of experience, on the other, which I believe will benefit the emergence of the Madiban tradition as a framework of inclusion in psychological education and scholarship in Africa.

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to stimulating further reflections on the other benefits, practical implications, and challenges of following the Madiban tradition as a framework of inclusion in the study of psychology in Africa. In pursuing this task, I would first like to address some of the key preliminary ambiguities concerning what needs to be done to recover initiative along the lines of implementing this new framework of inclusion in the holistic study of psychology in Africa.

The first point to make is that following the Madiban tradition as a framework of inclusion will give rise to the emergence of heterogeneity and hybridity or symbiosis in the study of psychology in African universities and, in that way, lay to rest and rectify the limitations inherent in the prevailing, exclusive, and inadequate Eurocentric approach (Holdstock, 1999, 2000; Mkhize, 2004; Nwoye, 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2017). Second, following the Madiban tradition as a framework of inclusion will help advance the African *voice* (along the lines emphasized by Danziger, 2004/2006a; Holdstock, 1981, 1999, 2000) in psychology degree curricula in African universities. Thus conceived, the present pressure (through the Africanization Movement by South African students) for the emergence of this new tradition of inclusion in the study of psychology in African universities should not be taken to mean an indiscriminate attempt on my part to exchange one form of *unicentricity* (Davies, 1999) for another, such as an exclusive Africanization of psychology degree programs in African universities in place of Westernization (Nwoye, 2017). To do so would be tantamount to an overreaction against traditional Western psychology's excessive tendency to monologism, a negative situation usually made worse by its habit of wanting to reduce other cultures to hearers, not participants in a dialogue of psychological knowledge creation

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(Davies, 1999; Danzinger, 2006b; Holdstock, 1999, 2000; Nsamenang, 2007; Naidoo, 1996; Nwoye, 2015a, 2017). Rather, the Madiban tradition entails an effort at constructive decolonization of the African mind (Ngugi, 1986) and the development of an open attitude of bifocality in psychology degree programs in Africa. The Madiban tradition as a framework of inclusion is therefore not aimed at substitution or inversion of the previously unicentric order (Davies, 1999) but instead at a genuine insertion of plural methodological, theoretical, and practical possibilities in these programs.

In working to usher in this new tradition in the study of psychology in African universities we must transcend the prevailing arrogance of *conversational monologue* (of tending to hear only its own voice) that has so far been the bane of mainstream Western psychology's hegemonic approach (Danziger, 2006b; Fanon, 1967; Holdstock, 1999, 2000; Nandy, 2010) in African universities.

The proposed Madiban tradition is one whose role is not to exclude but to foster reciprocal dialogue between different psychological paradigms (African, African American, Eastern, and Western) that constitute the common heritage of psychological scholarship in contemporary Africa. The overall aim is to situate the study of African psychology as a legitimate and central partner to mainstream Western psychology, against whose domination it argues and with which it seeks to partner alongside other psychologies (such as African American psychology) in promoting the development of psychological knowledge in continental Africa (Nwoye, 2017).

In making these suggestions, I could anticipate the possible reluctance of some critics that might stem from the assumption implied in this proposal that the hegemonic mainstream Western psychology imported to Africa can in fact agree with and even submit to a partnership. Additionally, it is easy to anticipate that the proposal of the Madiban stance would appear to some critics as a vision that does not take into account a critical review of traditional Western psychology pedagogy that is still grounded in a reductionistic stance that privileges a Western worldview of individualism, dominance over nature, and lack of integration of spirituality, etc. Similarly, it is foreseeable that some critics might argue that much of what informs mainstream Western psychology either directly conflicts with African psychology (even as conceptualized in this book) or seeks to pathologize African ways of being and/or perpetuate the idea of White–Black inferiority with regard to optimal mental health. More specifically, some critics may even submit that, in order for the proposed Madiban tradition to work, I have assumed that those (e.g.,

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Black African scholars) who have imported traditional mainstream Western psychology would in fact be willing to de-center and let go of some inherent power (Katele, 2017; Long, 2017).

All these are, of course, quite legitimate and understandable concerns. Yet, despite the relevance of these concerns that provoke doubt rather than optimism in the proposed Madiban tradition as a bipartisan principle of inclusion between African and Western psychologies, I have derived my inspiration and support for the emergence of the Madiban tradition as grounded on Vaihinger's theory of the psychology of "as if" (Vaihinger, 1925/2009), which proposes that humans in all cultures engage in whatever it is they do (e.g., setting out on a journey, undergoing surgery, starting up a business, getting married, becoming pregnant, etc.) largely from the point of view of "the psychology of as if," or from the fictional ideology and conviction that everything will work out fine in the end and in favor of these anticipated undertakings. Borrowing a leaf from this particular framework of optimism, my hope is that the proposed need for the emergence and consolidation of the Madiban tradition will work out fairly well in the end, as indeed it is already working in some universities in South and Eastern African countries, as highlighted at the beginning of this chapter. Consequently, although I agree that there might be some resistance to this proposal, I do believe—banking on the wisdom of "the psychology of as if"—that, with time, the practice of the Madiban tradition as a framework of inclusion in African psychology degree programs will prevail. Indeed, I must say that the foundation of my optimism in this regard lies squarely in the fact that, although I agree that Black Africans in Africa and the Diaspora have extensive years of negative evidence that strongly suggest that the proposed partnership between Western and African psychology may not work, I believe that such skepticism must remain only a reasonable hypothesis until the Madiban tradition has been given sufficient time and tested in practice and found wanting. And, unless such a thing happens, I would prefer to stand on the side of optimism in favor of that tradition.

Positive Challenge of Adopting the Madiban Tradition as a Framework of Inclusion

The positive challenge to be faced by African scholars in welcoming and implementing the Madiban tradition as a framework of inclusion in the

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study of psychology in African universities must include the task of reeducating and liberating themselves (wa Thiong'o, 1986) from their past narrow way of seeing psychology solely through the perspective of the (inadequate) Eurocentric paradigm grounded in the Cartesian tradition. More in-depth comments appear later in this chapter on the question of the synthesis of Western and African psychology, with particular attention given to addressing the challenges as well as the limitations of this approach. My view here is that, drawing inspiration from the Madiban philosophy of inclusive engagement, the vision of African psychology in continental Africa working in partnership with Western psychology will essentially follow the path of bifocality, oriented and guided by the dynamic motto of *the constructive tendency to avoid indiscriminate attachment to or rejection of what is African or Western that comes their way*. And to the question of whether the hegemony of Western psychology will take over the essence of African psychology, my answer is "not necessarily"—particularly if the spirit of harambee and complementary duality embedded in the Madiban tradition truly operates. To achieve this aim, scholars of African psychology in continental Africa would engage in the required selective appropriation of the best that has been thought and said in Western psychology in accordance with the following goals:

- To facilitate and hasten the emergence of a "post-Eurocentric humanity" (Korang, 2011) that should give rise to the art of "thinking otherwise" (Freeman, 2014), in postcolonial Africa and in the wider world, in which the values of many traditions (African/African American, European American, Asian, Arabic) can be integrated to contribute to improving the situation of life in the world.
- To encourage continued constructive decolonization and relevant transformation of the psychology degree curriculum in African universities in such a way that halts ongoing African "cultural suicide" in the study of psychology and other aspects of the human sciences in Africa (Myers, 2012; Nobles, 2006).
- To reassure all people of African descent and Africa's foreign partners that Africa has never been a client civilization but a co-producer of civilization, one that is well known in history, not only for borrowing but also for giving culture to people of other lands (Carney, 2002; Herskovits, 1941/1990; Jackson, 1980; James, 1976; Nwoye, 2001; Thompson, 1984; Walker, 2001; Williams, 1974).

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- To nurture Africa-based research that would yield significant results that might be of both local and international relevance.
- To emphasize originality and relevance in all psychology research undertakings in Africa, rather than being seen as mere copiers and echoers of foreign ideas, followers of the paths beaten by European Americans in search of solutions to problems unique to their needs and cultural surroundings rather than those of Africans (Achebe, 1958).

These observations taken together suggest that the urge for the birth of this new framework of doing psychology in African universities, of a type that permits the entrenchment of the Madiban or bipartisan spirit of African thought (Nobles, 2006) in the study of psychology in Africa, shares a kindred spirit with the vision of the "Nairobi troika" (Henry Owuor-Anyumba, Taban Lo Liyong, and James Ngugi, three young black lecturers employed at the English Department of the University of Nairobi, Kenya) led by Ngugi wa Thiong'o in October 24, 1968 (see Amolo, 2010). The troika challenged the undue emphasis or the central or exclusive role given to the study of English and other foreign languages at the expense of African languages and literature in Kenyan universities. The result was the emergence of a situation where the study of both foreign and African languages and literature was given equitable space to operate. Similarly, the celebration of the emergence of the Madiban tradition that will favor the injection of the African voice (Danziger, 2004/2006a; Fanon, 1967; Holdstock, 1999, 2000) into the study of psychology in Africa is also in line with the spirit of Toni Morrison, the well-known Black American Nobel Laureate for literature who, in her Tanner Lectures, emphasized the need to open up the canon of American, White-dominated literature to accommodate the well-deserved African presence and who, in her creative writings, maintains unceasing links with the best in African cultural heritage. This is reflected in her major novels (e.g., *Beloved* [Knopf, 1987]) and critical essays, all of which project with pride a strong conviction in the creative power of the African imagination and subjectivity.

Indeed, when considered as one of the youngest direct descendants of enduring decolonization efforts among the citizens of postcolonial Africa, the present proposal for the operation of an inclusive (Madiban) tradition in the study of psychology in African universities can be seen to be consistent with the spirit of a long list of Africanists such as John Casely Hayford of Ghana (then the Gold Coast), particularly in his *Ethiopia Unbound* (C.

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M. Phillips, 1911), which dealt with the question of retaining all that is good in African native institutions; Frantz Fanon of Algeria, especially in his urge against the African tendency to succumb to the crisis of the "White mask neurosis"; Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal, with his well-known philosophy of Negritude and his theory of the need to promote the synthesis of the "Civilization of the Universal"; Mbonu Ojike, Chinua Achebe, and Wole Soyinka of Nigeria, each of whom had characterized the educated modern African as one in a position to play the role of interpreter of good and bad contemporary cultural traditions (African, Asian, Western, Arabic) to rural and urban African peoples. Still others in this celebrated group include Okot p'bitek of Uganda, famous for his *Song of Lawino* (Waveland Press, 2013) that condemns the tendency among some Westernized Africans to be ashamed of things African; Ngugi wa Thiong'o of Kenya, particularly with reference to his two influential books *Decolonizing the Mind* (Heinemann, 1986) and *Moving the Centre* (Heinemann, 1993); Steve Biko of South Africa, with particular reference to his thoughts that galvanized the emergence and growth of Black Consciousness in apartheid South Africa (see Chapter 17 in this book); and Ezekiel Mphahlele of South Africa, known for his emphasis on the need to incorporate both vertical (spiritual) and horizontal (secular) dimensions in any effort to construct an African humanism if it was to be both rich and holistic in perspective to guide Black Africans way through life (Nobles, 2006). Each of these great Africanists (from continental Africa and the Diaspora) had in their various ways and platforms emphasized the need to articulate "a vision of an African university" that would propagate the ethos that African realities, including the worlds of seen and unseen in line with the basic African principle of complementary duality, are scientifically researchable and that African persons and worlds are proper subjects for academic scholarship (Neville, Tynes, & Utsey, 2009; Nwoye, 2014, 2015a, 2017).

I have gone into detail here to show that the present demand for a new and inclusive tradition in continental African curricular and research paradigms in psychology is not an idea birthed in haste, without history or meditation. Rather, it has a long and respected ancestry in the minds of the great African people. In particular, if we presume that Eurocentrism and its corresponding emphasis on methodological positivism and empiricism fits well with the needs and interests of European American psychologists and other human scientists, then we must also build and nurture, through the freedom set in motion by the Madiban tradition, an Africentric perspective capable of reorienting priorities in the study of psychology in Africa to serve the interest

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and needs of African clients better (Asante, 1987/1998, 2003; Holdstock, 1981, 1999, 2000; Mazama, 2001; Myers, 1985, 2012; Myers & Speight, 2010; Wilson, 1993).

Requirements for the Study of African Psychology Under the Madiban Tradition

Achieving this reorientation is not expected to come on a platter of gold but at a price and with a certain responsibility. It must, for example, call on African psychologists and scholars to respond to the question: What shifts in emphasis and perspective should be made when the orienting frame places African relevance and interests at the center of the study of psychology in Africa?

In the remainder of this chapter, I offer my own humble take on this important question. But before doing this, I consider it crucial to first mention that the basis for focusing on this critical question is that continental African psychologists and scholars now have the defining moment to re-vision the kind of epistemology and research paradigms that better suit the conditions of African existence and which can enable them to better understand and respond to the needs and problems of the people of Africa. In this regard, it is my view that unless African psychologists and scholars are ready to engage in this rethinking and restructuring of the center of their research epistemology and paradigms, along the path of African relevance and direction, their efforts will remain at best a pale copy of Western human science, rightly designated a "Euro American product," in which what they do will have little concern with social reality as it prevails in Africa.

Shifts to Be Made in African Psychological Science Research

The following shifts need to be made if continental African psychologists and scholars are to move their center of preoccupation from European American centrism to a centering of African psychology that will endorse the spirit of heterogeneity and originality that is supported by the Madiban tradition as a framework of inclusion in African psychological education, research, and practice.

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The first of these is the epistemological shift: namely, from emphasis on the empiricist epistemology into which all African psychologists and scholars have been inducted to a more inclusive/holistic perspective that goes beyond Eurocentric frames of thought (Akbar, 1984; Ani, 1994; Asante, 1987/1998, 2003; Azibo, 1988; Guthrie, 1998; Jamison, 2008; Kambon, 1992; Mazama, 2001; Nobles, 1996, 2006; Nwoye, 2021a).

The second is the need to expand the research methodology and paradigms popularized in the Westernized (mainstream) psychology curricula of African universities to include approaches usually excluded by Western quantitative and calculative practice. In this regard, I have in mind a shift to accommodate quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method paradigms in programs of psychology research in African universities. Presently, in many, if not all, universities in Nigeria (Nwoye, 2017), the tendency is to ignore the importance of adopting the principle of complementary duality in this regard and instead champion exclusive emphasis on the use of the quantitative research methodology, placing attention to qualitative approaches as an after-thought.

The third is the sociocultural turn (Kirschner & Martin, 2010) that needs to be made, by means of which relevant social phenomena and allied human/spiritual experiences other than those derived from intrapsychic processes should be understood as proper subjects for applied human science research in African psychology (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothata, 2014; Matoane, 2012; Mkhize, 2004; Myers, 1985; Nobles, 2006; Nwoye, 2014, 2015a, 2021a).

The fourth relates to a shift regarding the type of people to study or to engage with as sources of data for psychological research in Africa. In European American universities enormous emphasis tends to be placed on the use of undergraduate students in this venture. Should African psychologists and scholars stick to this framework once the focus has shifted to the more inclusive Madiban tradition? Here the main issue is not so much about young versus old; it is about the assumption that the European American college student is considered a quasi-universal subject whose voice somehow speaks for all of humanity. Having said this, the issue that the "old" can be regarded differently in the African context than they usually are in the West is an important one that ought to be taken into account in psychological research practice in Africa.

The fifth shift is determining what kind of instrumentation best suits the nature of African psychological research when the emphasis shifts to real (non-quantifiable) African issues and problems, including the study of lives

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as lived through the methodology of psychobiography. This is not, of course, to say that quantitative methods (clarified later) have no role. Instead, I argue that in a context where most research subjects are not oriented to expressing themselves and their stories in writing, but instead do so orally, scholars in African psychology should not continue to insist on the strategic importance of structured and unstructured questionnaires and allied paper-and-pencil tests as key instruments of data-gathering in African psychology. We must continue and intensify an extensive tradition of work in many universities in South Africa that has sought and put into practice new approaches that will give opportunity for people to air their views on certain research themes orally rather than in writing or through the use of paper-and-pencil tests.

The sixth issue follows from the fact that, with the proposed shift in the kinds of instruments needed for research data generation in rural Africa, scholars in African psychology must also make a shift in their approach to research data processing and analysis. In this regard, the shift must be from quantitative to qualitative modes of inquiry and analysis or to a mixed model that suits the demands of some African-based research objectives (Gergen, Josselson, & Freeman, 2015; Myers, 1985).

The seventh shift is from theory-testing research (with attention to proper hypothesis formulation and testing) to theory-generating research (requiring proper training to formulate adequate statements of research questions and study objectives). So far, most research engagements endorsed by many scholars in African psychology still appear to be preoccupied with testing Western-derived theories in the African context (Nwoye, 2015a). But, as far as I am concerned, the way forward is to begin to formulate and conduct more theory-generating research that will help in gathering relevant data for understanding the unique concerns and lived experiences of the great people of Africa (Azibo, 1988; Kambon, 1992; Kambon & Bowen-Reid, 2010; Welsing, 1991). One good example of the kind of research I have in mind is the work being done by Bandawe and colleagues at the Medical School in Malawi, where the African-derived theory of *cognitive tolerance* is being tested, rather than Leon Festinger's well-known Western-derived theory of *cognitive dissonance.* In this way contemporary scholars in African psychology will have no need to force their respondents to fit alien theories, but will work toward finding theories that derive directly from African people's everyday realities, behavior, and thought. Needless to say, I am quite aware—as reflected in many of the references cited under this discussion—that most African psychologists from the Diaspora (Akbar, 1984; Kambon,

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1992; Myers, 1985, 2012; Nobles, 1996, etc.) have earlier stressed the need to engage in these shifts in the promotion of their psychology and scholarship. In urging the same shifts as a way forward in developing relevant scholarship in continental African psychology, I do so with the current African situation in mind, where the need for such shifts is still a task to be addressed.

Having identified these shifts, I now offer additional remarks on some protective factors that seem to be called for in *some* of these expected shifts, focusing, in particular, on the first of them: namely, the shift to be made in the area of research epistemology and worldview. In this regard, the amplification I want to make is that the African human universe, the focus of the inclusive psychology training program proposed in this book, must be understood to entail an integrative vision of the world that encourages constant awareness of a spiritual principle in the universe (Irele, 1981, 1991; Myers, 1985, 2012; Nobles, 2006). It is a vision that is more inclusive than the attenuated universe of post-Renaissance Europe, which frames the context of mainstream psychology and other Western human science disciplines. Thus, the world of African psychology research within the more inclusive context of the Madiban tradition must be understood as calling for a vision of psychology that can include the religious/spiritual within its scope or, in other words, a type of worldview that embraces in its conception of human life and society the interpenetration of realms of being that encompasses physical, organic, symbolic, and spiritual dimensions of reality (Freeman, 2013, 2014; Myers, 1985; Nobles, 2006; Nwoye, 2015a, 2021a, 2021b). For this reason, the realities admissible for study in psychology research in continental Africa and in the Diaspora must be seen to be much more diverse and broader than those admissible for traditional (mainstream) Western psychology that prevails in European American universities and presently in many African universities, with their emphasis on objectivity and the application of methodologies employed in the natural sciences, anchored on the philosophical investigations of British empiricists and logical positivists.

Thus, to remain relevant, students of applied human sciences in African universities, in general, and African psychology, in particular, must push back the limits of European American frames imported to Africa to accommodate the need for other aspects of relevant research in Africa. In doing this, applied human scientists in Africa working within the inclusive Madiban frame of reference must try to reconnect their research approaches with the complexities of "life as lived" in African society. Consequently, the language and research paradigms to occupy the center of attention in the

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African psychology component of the inclusive psychology degree program in African universities must be flexed to allow relevant human science idiolects and registers to be invented and made use of, to account for the unique experiences and challenges of the African environment (Nwoye, 2015a, 2021a; Ratele, 2017).

Seen against the background just presented, it is obvious that there is a crucial place for alternative and transformative research paradigms, such as the qualitative approach, in psychology training programs in African universities. This is because qualitative and mixed methods, more so than the quantitative approach, have concepts and methodologies more flexible and diverse and thus better able to accommodate the challenges of understanding the nature and complexities of human thought, social change, and experience in the postcolonial African world and beyond. It is therefore regrettable that, presently, in some African universities outside South Africa, qualitative methodology is never offered as a course in psychology degree programs, with the result that students with research interests that border on qualitative methods and analysis, such as psychobiography, must learn these approaches through the back door. With the inauguration of the Madiban framework of inclusion in the study of psychology in African universities, this will no longer be acceptable and must be changed so that African students of psychology are given the opportunity for sustained exposure to both the resources and limitations of the quantitative and qualitative research traditions.

Another important point to be made is the need that scholars in African psychology have to transcend the limitations of the monologism and hegemony inherent in the Eurocentric approach to psychological training. To achieve this aim, we must create sufficient time and space in psychology research training modules to thoroughly introduce students to the ramifications and benefits of different aspects and methodologies—including narrative, participatory, autobiographical, psychobiographical, phenomenological, ethnographic, and case study of qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Schultz & Lawrence, 2017). It is encouraging to note that some progressive African universities, particularly in the Eastern (Kenyatta University and the University of Dodoma) and Southern African subregions (University of KwaZulu-Natal, Nelson Mandela University, University of Johannesburg, University of Cape Town, University of Limpopo, University of South Africa, University of Zululand, University of Forte Hare, etc.), are already doing this. The aim of exposing psychology students in Africa to

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such training must include the idea of reminding them that qualitative and mixed-method research is worthwhile and appropriate when a complex, detailed understanding of an issue, institution, individual, or community is required.

Conclusion

To conclude, if we are to prosper and advance in the successful implementation of the Madiban framework of inclusion, what must be envisaged is the need for the commissioning and writing of homegrown textbooks not only in the area of research but also in other major themes in African psychology as well. This is in line with the previous initiatives in this direction, as occurred in South Africa in the 1990s and 2000s. Indeed, there is need to focus attention on the issue of writing textbooks and monographs intended to move the field forward. For it is only in this way that African psychologists in continental Africa, like their counterparts in the African Diaspora, will be in a position to fill openings at the undergraduate, honors, and master's degree programs under the new Madiban framework of inclusion. Here, the great example set by African psychologists in the Diaspora will always stand out for emulation. In the same way, the good job being done by *Theory & Psychology*, *Journal of Black Psychology*, *South African Journal of Psychology*, *PINS (Psychology in Society) Alternation*, and *Journal of Psychology in Africa* (to mention only a few) as objective and fair outlets for the publication and dissemination of articles and conversations in African psychology provide important inspiration to draw from in thinking of a way forward and toward the consolidation of gains made in the development of African psychology in continental Africa.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, is the need which scholars in African psychology have to effectively re-educate themselves in African traditions and indigenous knowledge systems. In this regard, their great role models are Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, and Abiola Irele, all of whom are well known in the area of African literature. The feat which they achieved in that discipline came about, according to Irele's account, due to their belief that, before they could make any headway in founding that literature as an autonomous entity, they needed to revisit and thoroughly relearn their African traditional systems of thought (Myers, 1985; Nobles, 2006). Commenting on

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this theme in an interview with Na'Allah, Abiola Irele (as cited in Olusola, 2010) remarked that

> [c]oming to our education, you are right to say it was Eurocentric. In my case, it was decidedly so, because I grew up a Catholic. . . . It was after all the only one available to us at that time. . . . Those of us who also received that colonial education; and I include people like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka. We had to rediscover our African background ourselves. It is very important to bear in mind that we had to come back and relearn our own traditions sometimes even to tell the truth, relearn our own language. (p. 90)

This revelation is instructive. It challenges scholars in African psychology to remember that African psychologists who have been originally trained in colonial education as Western psychologists—at times, at the expense of learning their own language and cultural traditions—must return to these indigenous knowledge traditions and re-educate themselves in the thoughts and philosophies that these traditions embody. Accomplishing this task in the context of the current need to create an African psychology for use in Africa and the wider world will, of course, only be a means and not an end in itself. This is because African psychology will not be discovered at the surface of these traditions (Myers, 1985). Thus, to mine the psychology that they embody, scholars in African psychology must penetrate beyond the surface or literal content of these traditions. And this they can only do by engaging and seeking to understand the deep thoughts and visions embodied beneath the surface of these traditions (Myers, 1985; Nobles, 2006); this will help them to improve their critical scholarship and clinical practice in the African context. In my view, it is only in this way, rather than through domesticating or indigenizing traditional (mainstream) Western psychology, that the process of producing an authentic African psychology will be able to make significant contributions to the world literature of psychology.

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2

What Is African Psychology the Psychology of?

A Postcolonial Theory

Having introduced the Madiban framework of inclusion within which African and Western psychologies are expected to work together and share mutual space, epistemic respect, and responsibility in the production of psychological knowledge in African universities, the task of defining and charting the content and scope of this new postcolonial discipline—African psychology—is taken up in this chapter. To accomplish this aim the chapter raises and addresses the following questions:

1. What foundational influences precipitated the emergence of African psychology as an academic subject field?
2. How can the delayed arrival of African psychology in African universities be explained?
3. What is a postcolonial theory of African psychology?
4. What constitutes the major phases in the evolution of African psychology?
5. In what ways can African psychology be defined and conceptualized?
6. What are the principal goals of African psychology as a postcolonial discipline?
7. What key topics does African psychology teach? Or, put another way, what constitutes the subject matter of African psychology?
8. On what ontological foundations and cosmovision is African psychology grounded?
9. What is African in African psychology?
10. Does African psychology have a future? If so, in which directions?

In exploring these questions, the term "African psychology" is used in the singular. I am sure that many people will criticize me for presuming that

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African psychology can truly be designated in the singular, given the diversity of peoples and regions (North and South, East and West) constituting the continent. However, I crave the indulgence of such prospective critics by noting that I have taken this decision influenced by the understanding that there is a metaphysical unity or a hidden common ground—indeed a central worldview—undergirding the observable and obvious diversities and pluralisms of historical experience in Africa. These include a belief in the existence of the principle of *duality* (Achebe, 1958, 1964; Julien, 2018), an interdependent ontology or complementarity of contraries in African thought and worldview (Ngwaba, 1996, 2006a; Webb, 2012a, 2012b). It is this same assumption of worldview similarity among the entire people of Africa that I believe is behind the current practice of making reference to African literature, African art, African history, African medicine, African anthropology, and African culture, all in the singular. For each, as for the newcomer, African psychology, is grounded on the assumptions of a common African worldview and the Africentric paradigm to knowledge. I assume that it is a similar logic (or belief in the applicability of a common Eurocentric orientation and framework in the Western/European American world) that is responsible for the imagined unity of Western European traditions that support the current use of the term "Western psychology" in the singular (Nwoye, 2015). And with this said, the ground now is set for introducing and addressing the important question of the foundational influences in the emergence of African psychology as a postcolonial university discipline.

Key Influences in the Emergence of African Psychology

Here, the theme to be developed is the view that the new field of African psychology as a postcolonial discipline (Nwoye, 2017) came into being as a byproduct of a confluence of historical circumstances within the African continent. Among such influences is the deeply felt need for a corrective counterdiscourse aimed at interrogating and refuting the highly partial and self-serving negative images of Africa found scattered throughout Western scholarship. Some of these images and stereotypes were formulated and advanced by some supposedly "respected" and influential thinkers in Europe and North America, such as G. W. Hegel, Immanuel Kant, David Hume, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Joseph Conrad, and John C. Carothers, the latter being a former staff member at Mathari Psychiatric Hospital, in Nairobi,

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Kenya, and a one-time consultant on "the African Mind" for the World Health Organization (McCulloch, 1995). One fundamental bias held in common by these individuals is the assumption that the humanity of the African is, to say the least, questionable. Hence it is argued that one of the greatest contributions of African psychology, and indeed one of the reasons for its emergence as a postcolonial discipline, is to serve as a *protest psychology* aimed at engaging in African image reconstruction and, in that way, adding to and advancing the determination of the African to recover from colonial disturbance (Holdstock, 2000).

The second influence is the recognition that imported Western approaches for the study of psychology in Africa are partial, largely European American in content and emphasis, and not geared to promoting any meaningful theoretical engagement with the psychological significance of important African cultural traditions, such as emphasis on kinship care, invisible loyalty to the guardianship of ancestral spirits, spirituality, and the interconnections between the mundane and profane in the universe, all anchored on the theory of complementary dualism or interdependent ontology that underpins the cosmology of the various peoples of Africa (Holdstock, 2000; Mkhize, 2004; Mpofu, 2002; Nwoye, 2006a, 2015; Nsamenang, 2001; Webb, 2012a, 2012b). It is argued that part of the reason for the emergence of African psychology is to interrogate and challenge the meaningful relevance of American and European theories and practices for African contexts. In this way African psychology is said to have emerged to help the African people to find a voice in the study of psychology in African universities and open up the field with the aim of enlarging the space of researchable reality in the study of psychology in Africa.

The third influence is the discovery that some Western psychologists and psychiatrists have conducted and published research that is disrespectful, misrepresentative, and highly judgmental of the culture and peoples of Africa, past and present. For instance, during his period of service at the Mathari Mental (Psychiatric) Hospital in Nairobi, Kenya, H. L. Gordon (1936; as cited by McCulloch, 1995, p. 48) conducted a study of the inmates in which he concluded, along with F. W. Vint's study of the cranial capacity and brain weight from autopsies in Nairobi Hospital mortuary, that in terms of cortical development "the brain of the adult African corresponded to that of a European child of seven or eight years of age." Against this, African psychology came into being to enable African students and scholars to give a more constructive direction to the theme and pattern of psychological

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research in continental Africa. In this way African psychology can be understood as a *psychology of rehabilitation* of the culture and orientation of research in African universities, of a type that will set its anchor, not in comparing Africans and Europeans, but rather in people's everyday needs, epistemologies, and worldview.

The fourth derives from the recognition that previous efforts by some Western-educated African academics in psychology were largely imitative of or essentially patterned after the contributions of Western psychological theorists and practitioners. These scholars were accused of lacking in originality and perspective. Their works, it was argued, were never genuinely focused on exploring and highlighting the struggles, hopes, sufferings, and positive and negative traditions of the African people. In this context, their error of commission was that of standing too far away from their African cultural perspective because of overdeference to the European American, white-centered frame of reference. This made much of their output lack conviction and pertinence, sounding like mere echoes of Western scholarship and intellectualism, limited in their potency and relevance for addressing the needs and problems of people in rural and urban Africa. The harmful effect of this state of affairs emanated from the fact that, with such an approach, the study of psychology in Africa came to be tied to the apron strings of Western psychology theories and developments (Dawes, 1994) and did not, until recently, show any sign of maturing beyond the attempt by some students and scholars (operating in the spirit of cross-cultural psychologists) to determine the extent to which some of the leading psychological theories (e.g., by Piaget, Rawls, Festinger, Vygotsky, Eysenck, Lewin, Tajfel, Sternberg, and Gardner) developed in Europe and North America could find expression and application in the African context. With this, most studies in psychology undertaken in most African universities for many years became unrelated to the larger daily psychosocial needs and existential perturbations of the contemporary African world. Supporting this observation, Akin-Ogundeji (1991) remarked that psychology in Nigeria "is still largely a classroom-research enterprise" with little practical relevance "to the problems of living in contemporary Nigerian society" (p. 3). Based on this, it is argued that entrenchment of African psychology in the psychology degree curriculum of African universities will help ameliorate this negative state of affairs in the coming years.

Fifth, the present African hybrid culture into which most of our children are born and bred has been noted to have introduced a complexity that does

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not tally well with most of the reductionistic models and principles of human behavior and experience advanced in much of Western perspectives to psychology. Commenting in this regard, Teo (2009) notes that psychology's mainstream operates with a *mechanistic*, and hence an *atomistic* and *reductionistic*, model of human mental life. Yet contemporary life is lived in a globalized, not atomistic or fragmented, world of culture and technology. Consequently, by its tendency to divide psychological life into stimulus and response (behaviorism) or into independent and dependent variables (experimental psychology), mainstream psychology in Teo's (2009) view is problematic because it neglects the reality of culture and intersubjectivity, the contribution of spirituality, and the impact of "other" forces in people's lives (Holdstock, 1981, 1999, 2000) as understood in Africa. Hence one principal reason for the emergence of African psychology is the search for a psychology which, unlike mainstream (Western) psychology, will work from the insightful view credited to Cliford Geertz that "no human being lives in the world in general," since each lives in particular historical and cultural contexts. This understanding demands that a relevant psychology for use in Africa be found, the type that will explore people's needs and lives in context rather than in isolation from their culture and circumstances of existence. In this way, African psychology enters into the picture with the aim of making this kind of culture- and context-sensitive psychology possible in African universities.

Sixth, Africa's many years of marginality in the field of scientific study of psychology in African universities is undeserved and a continuation of colonialism through entrenchment of Eurocentrism in these universities' psychology curricula (Holdstock, 2000). This trend has given rise to the African intellectual's self-alienation that results from being educated in Western schools and inducted into the intellectual system of other people's ancestors while being left in the dark about the knowledge system created by their own ancestors. Hence, according to Obiechina (1992, p. 2), "in adverse cases, this process alienates the intellectual from the indigenous tradition and to a consequent ignorance of that tradition." Yet the African student of psychology cannot be ignorant of such a tradition and still seriously claim to be African. In Obiechina's (1992, pp. 2–3) view, such alienation ultimately "creates problems of vocalization, definition, and discourses when the African intellectual (read psychologist) assumes the role of interpreter of the African way of life or relates African realities to the non-African world." The opposite is the African student of psychology who is adequately formed in the African

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tradition before or while becoming educated in the Western intellectual system and enjoys a double advantage, becoming the best interpreter of the African experience, culture, literature, religion, ethics, philosophy, and psychology, while also being well-versed in the core contributions of European American psychology. The result is an African with a *globalectical* imagination as articulated by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2012). The inclusion of African psychology in our university curricula holds enormous potential for enriching and extending the contributions of the discipline of psychology and is a means of breaking away from the spells of colonialism and White-centeredness in the study of psychology in Africa. Thus, the introduction of African psychology as an academic discipline in African universities is perceived by many African students and scholars as a *process of decolonization* as well as reflecting one aspect of the ongoing process of entrenchment of Africa-centeredness in our university programs. Hence, its emergence asserts the need to analyze and resist any continuing colonial attitudes (Heleta, 2016; Mbembe, 2001, 2016).

Seventh, and finally, the Western (Eurocentric) psychology in which we have invested a lot of our resources and scholarship in the past has been considered largely insensitive to the stark realities confronting urban and rural populations of present-day Africa (Heleta, 2016; Mbembe, 2016). On account of its mechanistic or machine model of human mental life, mainstream (European American) psychology in Africa has been criticized as grossly inadequate and misguided in its continuing to conceptualize the person as individualistic and society as an external variable, a model that sees the individual and society as separate (Teo, 2009; see also Parker & Spears, 1996). Yet in a culture like that of Africa, where there is a belief in the principle of complementary duality and interdependent ontology in all that there is (Ngwaba, 1996) and where the individual and the community are seen in synergistic terms and considered mutually interdependent (Holdstock, 2000; Mkhize, 2004; Nwoye, 2006b), it is desirable that another psychology should emerge to call into question and blunt the individuocentric emphasis of the mainstream (Western) psychology paradigm imported to Africa. In this way, African psychology, has come into being as a discipline interested in studying the benefits of the recognized interdependent nature of the individual and society in Africa. And this observation is made without prejudice to the important and valued contributions of social and community psychologists in contemporary Africa who operate against the norm of the

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one-person and *intra-psychic* paradigm valorized in mainstream (European American) psychology (Holdstock, 2000; Mkhize, 2004).

These observations taken together demonstrate that the emergence of the study of African psychology in African universities is a product of the deeply felt inadequacy of our reliance on mainstream, Euro-American, White-centered psychology as the sole means of achieving effective understanding of the psychological properties of African peoples and their cultures.

History of Delayed Arrival of African Psychology in African Universities

Now, the greatest irony is that despite the constitutive and cumulative influences of the these factors, African psychology as a postcolonial discipline did not emerge into the limelight until quite recently. The reasons for this delay are summarized here, all of them perceived from the context of the larger history of university education in Africa (Obiechina, 1992; wa Thiong'o, 1986, 2012/2014). This effort at contextualizing the problem within a larger frame is necessary because, as indicated elsewhere (Nwoye, 2012; Obiechina, 1992), following the impact of colonialism, African universities arose as a product of Africa's contact with Europe. Most of them started in the 1960s and 1970s, after each of the countries gained political independence from their erstwhile colonial masters (e.g., Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, and Portugal). In this way, some, like the Universities of Ibadan (Nigeria), Ghana (Ghana), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Makerere (Uganda), and Nairobi (Kenya), originally started as off-shore colleges of the University of London, with each initially flying the flag of their "mother University" in London and offering courses, such as psychology, that were developed abroad and imported to Africa.

Thus, with roots firmly planted in Europe rather than in Africa, most universities in sub-Saharan Africa largely operated as clones that were forced to model their systems, including their curricular provisions and traditions, along the lines of already existing and well-acclaimed Western universities (e.g., London, Oxford, and Cambridge in Britain; Paris, Ecole Normale, and Sorbonne in France; Cologne, Bonn, and Leipzig in Germany; and Harvard, California, and Stanford in the United States, to mention but a few; Nwoye, 2012, 2015). And these foreign universities, believing in the superiority of their systems and Western (Eurocentric) worldview generally, fully

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entertained a paternalistic, proprietorial attitude toward African universities (Nwoye, 2012, 2015).

The situation at that time, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, was not helped by the paralyzing influence of a "colonial mentality" and the accompanying inferiority complex that engulfed the whole of the peoples of Black Africa in the aftermath of European colonial contact and who, on account of the crisis of cultural denigration that Chinua Achebe made reference to in one of his writings (Achebe, 1973), started to look down upon and doubt themselves and their cultures, thus affirming the superiority of Western knowledge systems, its worldview, and its way of life (Nwoye, 2001, 2015).

These observations taken together demonstrate that African universities (with the exception of some few in South Africa) came into being already intimidated by the painful and humiliating colonial experience that caused the whole continent and its peoples to lose belief in their cultures and traditions, philosophy and religion, psychology and medicine, names and stories, and rituals and ceremonies (Nwoye, 2015).

A Postcolonial Theory of African Psychology

Given this, African psychology as a postcolonial discipline (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tifflin, 1989; Nwoye, 2017) has emerged essentially in response to the trauma of colonial representation of Africa and the need to correct the false, negative, and destructive depictions that many Western scholars, travelogues, missionaries, and writers of colonial fiction made of Africa and the Black people of the world. In this chapter, I use the expression "postcolonial theory" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1989) of African psychology to refer to the deconstructive and reconstructive attempts by scholars of African psychology to come to voice and call into question, among other things, the assumption that Western psychology imported to Africa is a universal psychology that should center the academic study of psychology in Africa, with Africa as a continent being understood by colonialists as a place without history or a psychology of its own. Hence, the ultimate vision of the postcolonial theory of African psychology is to combat the residual negative effects of colonialism and neo-colonialism in the context of psychological education within the continent. In this way, African psychology as a postcolonial discipline entails a process of counter-reformation of the colonized African mind. Indeed, as an Africentric psychological discipline, African psychology

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operating within the postcolonial dispensation aims to demonstrate that the challenges facing Africa lie not only outside Africa but also within it. The objective of the discipline in this case is to project African psychology as not just an external critique but also an internal critique of negative African cultural traditions and political practices (Mgbeadichie, 2015). In this regard, African psychology as a postcolonial discipline follows the framework of the *Sankofa epistemology*, which urges us, among othe things, to look back into the African past and its traditions in search of alienating practices that need to be jettisoned as having lost their usefulness in contemporary Africa. Here, I argue that African psychology as an Africentric enterprise and a postcolonial discipline should critically challenge discriminatory external (Western) and internal (indigenous African) practices if the focus is to eradicate systems of oppression in contemporary Africa. This is because as long as there are certain foreign or local practices and debilitating cultural traditions (e.g., the Osu caste system, the Oro festival and ritual suicide that exist in some Nigerian and other African indigenous communities) that continue to oppress and dehumanize, marginalize, and displace Africans (Mgbeadichie, 2015), the task of African psychology as a postcolonial discipline must be directed toward the challenge of such repugnant traditional systems rather than simply functioning as a critique of Europe and Eurocentrism in an era when Africa and Africans have been liberated from direct European rule and dominance. Thus, perpetuating the interpretation of African psychology as a postcolonial discipline as simply an anti-Eurocentric discipline would render the discipline an enterprise that cannot effectively meet the demands of Africans in the contemporary context. To remain relevant, African psychology as a postcolonial discipline must operate from the perspective of the Africentric paradigm. It has major tasks to achieve: to challenge Eurocentric dominance in the study of psychology in African universities and to investigate, understand, and challenge repugnant and debilitating/negative African cultural practices while promoting ennobling ones (Mgbeadichie, 2015).

Operating in this regard, African psychology (along with other emerging postcolonial disciplines in African universities such as African literature, history, archaeology, philosophy, religion, politics, music, and drama) emerges to contribute its own quota toward the task of "negation of negations"; that is, toward participating in the restitutive task of challenging the denigrating perspective of colonialist and cultural traditions and restoring the self-esteem and mental liberation of the African (Nwoye, 2015, 2017). Understood

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in this perspective, one of the primary objectives of African psychology as a postcolonial discipline is to work toward reclaiming the dignity of the African past with the ultimate aim of helping our society "to regain belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self abasement" (Achebe, 1989/1990, p. 44; Nwoye, 2017).

Of course, this attempt by African psychology and its other sister postcolonial disciplines to work toward re-establishing, through reconstructive procedures, the lost dignity of the African person in all its dimensions is grounded on the belief that there is something in our psyche that was destroyed during our colonial and apartheid contact with Europe. This relates to the notion of the loss of our self-confidence as Africans that was brought about by the colonial pathology of depicting Africa as a place of negations or as a place without culture, trapped, as it were, in the primitive stage of human civilization and where Western categories are used to advance the negative idea of African otherness.

Consequently, in its attempt to reject this negative image of Africa and replace it with a more constructive and realistic one, African psychology as a postcolonial discipline, in collaboration with other postcolonial disciplines, sees as one of its fundamental concerns the need to develop a new narrative or counterdiscourse and, ultimately, a new order of psychological knowledge about Africa and Africans. In this way African psychology, through its upcoming students and scholars, works to create a coherent and dignified platform in which contemporary Africans can claim through deconstructive, reconstructive, and constructive processes a new agency that will empower them to have a voice (Danziger, 2006; Fanon, 1967; Nandy, 2010; Nwoye, 2017) with which to speak for themselves in communicating with the world about the nature of the life of the mind and the complexities of the human condition in Africa.

Major Stages in the Evolution of African Psychology

We turn now to identifying the major stages in the evolution of African psychology as a postcolonial discipline. In addressing this topic, a brief account of the four action-processes that marked the evolution of such a postcolonial academic discipline in some progressive African universities is presented here. These processes include *Immersion*, *Protest*, *Deconstruction*, and *Reconstruction* (Nwoye, 2017).

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Immersion

Under the theme of immersion, the point to be developed is the view that for several years following Africa's political independence from her erstwhile colonial masters, the study of psychology in universities across various African countries, including South Africa, involved the immersion of psychology students and scholars into the mainstream Eurocentric psychology imported to Africa. Thus, the term "psychology in Africa" as noted in the previous chapter came to be taken as a synonym for the term "Western psychology." This was because then, and even today, in some African countries, going through a university psychology degree program was equivalent to going through a psychology degree program in any university in Europe or North America: there was no significant difference in the course content and perspective offered in both contexts because in each case the governing paradigm was Eurocentrism. Through such immersion, psychology students and scholars in Africa became thoroughly acquainted with Western-derived psychologies and epistemologies, at the expense of their systematic exposure to psychologies from Africa and other cultures. Of course, during the early years of modern university education in Africa, this anomaly was not peculiar to African psychology students and scholars. The same was the fate of their colleagues in such sister disciplines as philosophy, literature, religion, history, and politics. In each of these disciplines, the Western canons of the curriculum were assumed to be carriers of universal civilization, exportable to members of colonized societies (Danziger, 2006; Nwoye, 2015). Corroborating these assessments, Dr. Kofi Busia powerfully commented on the negative impact of this experience:

> Over the years, I felt increasingly that the education I received taught me more and more about Europe and less and less about my own society. At the end of my secondary school . . . I went home . . . and on that visit, I became painfully aware of my isolation. As I went through college and university I understood our community far less than the boys of my own age who had never been to school. (as cited in Rodney, 1981, p. 246)

However, a major point of interest to mention here is that this negative state of affairs has since changed for the better within these other disciplines. This is because, within them, there has emerged postcolonial disciplines of African philosophy, literature, religion, history, and politics. In contrast, with

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the discipline of psychology, the situation has mostly stagnated. For many universities in Africa the same hegemonic dominance of the received psychology curricula emanating from the West has continued to hold sway, particularly in West Africa.

Protest

In response, and galvanized by the incessant clamor of university students for the Africanization and decolonization of the curriculum in higher education in Africa (Heleta, 2016), we (scholars of African psychology) quickly seized the initiative to register some decisive protests against the alienating forces of the Eurocentric hegemonic presence in our university psychology programs. In this regard, our key argument has simply been that the mainstream psychology curriculum dominant in university programs in Africa, as highlighted in the previous chapter, is no longer acceptable because it has tended to make Africa an appendage of Europe and North America. And yet, as indicated in the previous chapter, that psychological system has been found to be incomplete. To correct this anomaly, the vision that emerged placed Africa at the center of whatever psychology African students study. The result is the current effort by some scholars to engage in a revolutionary appraisal of our present psychology curriculum with a view to introducing a balance of traditions (African and Western) within it.

Deconstruction

In pursuit of this effort, African psychology as envisioned by many scholars in Africa was conceived as much more than a protest psychology. It also came to be viewed as a critical/deconstructive psychology directed at challenging not only the negative images about Africa and its peoples propagated in Western psychology (Nwoye, 2015), but also at a self-critical interrogation of troublesome aspects of some African indigenous cultural practices (Mgbeadichie, 2015). In the main, however, this particular angle in our vision impelled the need to deconstruct much of the distortive aspects and false assumptions about Africa and its peoples embedded in some key components of the mainstream psychology dominating our curriculum. In this context, the relevant image of deconstruction that influenced our practice was aptly captured by

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Barbara Johnson's (1981) notion of the term, according to which, "deconstruction" is not meant to be understood as a synonym of "destruction." Rather, for Johnson, as for many scholars of African psychology, what must be destroyed in a deconstructive reading (as in our own case, of the mainstream Western psychology curriculum we have inherited),is not the text, but the claim to unequivocal domination and universal relevance of that curriculum in the African context. Operating from this perspective, the 1980s and 1990s emerged as that period in which we came to see the need for selective interrogations of certain unjustifiable components of Western psychological tradition (Nwoye, 2015).

Reconstruction

Inspired by this conviction, our orienting assumption was that for Africa to forge ahead in her attempt to reclaim and promote her cultural identity, a new perspective was needed. And, in my view, that perspective is *hybridity* (Bhabha, 2004) or *globalectics* (wa Thiong'o, 2012/2014), which refers to the achievement of a harmonious coexistence of the best of the two psychological traditions (African and Western) we have inherited, in which neither should oppress the other. This understanding implies that the anticipated impact of the deconstructive effort in our search for a postcolonial discipline of African psychology was not meant to result in a total rejection of all of Western psychology (both traditional and progressive). But it generated the recognition in many African psychologists of the importance of adopting the "both and" philosophy of appropriation in our approach to our dual (African and Western) heritage in the study of psychology in Africa (Nwoye, 2015). Consequently, with the proposed flattening of the colonial hierarchy in our psychology curriculum, which had for a long time favored the centering of Eurocentric content and perspective, we saw the need to reconstruct and rewrite the curriculum in such a way that the long dismissive disregard and protracted absence of the African perspective was firmly corrected and replaced with something more positive and relevant to the promotion of effective understanding of African realities and day-to-day experiences. This measure is in accord with the vision of the Council on Higher Education (CHE, 2016), which expects any attempt at reviewing existing professional psychology degree programs in South African universities to ensure that the curriculum reflects the living or existential realities of Black African

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students. Thus, at this stage in our postcolonial response to the two psychological traditions (African and Western) we have inherited, we aim to see ourselves as people with a voice to reorder and reconstruct the curriculum in the study of psychology in Africa. And we engage in this in such a way that we will serve "as makers of culture and formulators of theories and values of psychological civilization" (Obiechina, 1992, p. 19), to fit the new people of Africa (Nwoye, 2015). Following this understanding, we (scholars of African psychology) struggle to place ourselves in an agentic position to reassess and appropriate relevant epistemologies and methodologies, wherever they are found (whether foreign or local), for effective study of the discipline of African psychology (understood) as a human science.

And So, What Is African Psychology as an Academic Discipline?

In response to this question, we begin with a related question: How is African psychology defined in the United States? In doing this, the first point to emphasize is that, even up to the present moment, there is no unanimous agreement about the meaning of this term among African American scholars. However, some important definitions of the field now exist in the conceptualization of the term as an academic discipline in the United States. The first is the one given in the foreword to a jointly edited book, *Handbook of African American Psychology* (Neville, Tynes, & Utsey, 2009, p. xi), where it was pointed out that

> African Psychology, . . . is an invention, a social construction hammered out by Black intellectuals in the Americas. . . . a formulation derived from the *imagination* of Blacks living outside Africa—descendants of slaves lacking direct contact with Africa for over 100 years—who are looking "back" to Africa for solutions to predicaments, problems, and dilemmas enveloping Blacks throughout the Diaspora and especially United States. . . . African Psychology is critical to a comprehensive analysis of the Black condition in the United States.

Although this can be seen as a good guide for the road toward understanding the meaning of this concept in American universities, it provides no clear indication of its contents and dimensions *as a field of study* or what people

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would focus on when they study it. Obasi and Smith's (2009, pp. 47–48) definition rectifies this omission by asserting that the African Psychology Institute of the Association of Black Psychologists in the United States sees African psychology as synonymous with "African-centered psychology," which is defined as a "dynamic manifestation of the unifying African principles, values and tradition . . . the self-conscious centering of psychological analysis and applications in African reality, culture, and epistemology." This definition suggests that African psychology is an Africentric enterprise which aims to make the study of Africa and its traditions a subject of psychological scholarship.

A similar definition also emanating from North America is credited to Jamison (2008, p. 96; Nwoye, in Teo, 2014). According to Jamison, African psychology can be taken to refer to a field of study interested in investigating and understanding the key psychological costs of being an African and a Black in America. Jamison also suggests that African psychology encompasses the study and understanding of the positive qualities of the African American people and the powerful influences in their daily struggles and triumphs. Jamison's (2008) clarification of the term also implies that, in the United States, the term "African psychology" can be used as a substitute for the terms "Black psychology" and "African American psychology."

These definitions of African psychology emanating from Black scholars in the United States, although largely descriptive in content, can be seen to represent a radical redefinition of psychology (as understood in mainstream psychology) that make reference to and takes into account the African worldview and Black experience and the "metaphysical humanity of African people." Taken together, they suggest that African psychology has a social mission and "rejects the Western doctrine of materialism and embraces the possibilities associated with a spirit-based ontological system" (Obasi & Smith, 2009, p. 48).

Now, the other source of definition for the term "African psychology," the one that is adopted in this book, emanates from continental Africa. I proposed this definition in my entry on "African psychology" published in the *Encyclopaedia of Critical Psychology* edited by Teo (2014, pp. 57–65). As highlighted in that definition, African psychology "can be taken to refer to the systematic and informed study of the complexities of human mental life, culture and experience in the pre- and post-colonial African world" (Nwoye, in Teo, 2014, p. 57). My point of departure for conceiving of the field in this way was to show that African psychology is much more inclusive

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and complicated than the term "African indigenous psychology" with which it is most often confused; unlike the latter, it has both a pre- and postcolonial reference and goes beyond attention to the study of human subjectivity under a *one-person* paradigm. Thus, when a comparison is made between the definitions of African psychology propagated in North America and my own formulation, some areas of difference can be seen to stand out. One such difference is the noticeable tendency by our North American colleagues to equiparate the notion of African psychology with that of Black psychology. As I hope to demonstrate, the validity of such a perspective is difficult to prove. Indeed, another area of difference between the two approaches to defining the term also derives from the tendency of Black psychologists in North America to lean toward seeing African psychology as synonymous with African indigenous psychology. This view, although important, is, as I plan to demonstrate, something like mistaking the part for the whole, or trying to imply that African psychology is a psychology of the dead.

For, although I am quite aware that there is currently a contestation in the literature (Allwood & Berry, 2006; Kim & Berry, 1993) that all psychologies should indeed be understood as indigenous psychologies, this may not totally be accurate when applied to postcolonial societies like we have in Africa where, due to the impact of colonialism and African contact with Europe, African experience has become more complicated than in our pre-European past. Hence, African psychology, in my view, should be understood as a *both-and* psychology; that is to say, as an inclusive psychology encompassing not only the study of African indigenous psychology but also the study of the human condition and culture and the life of the mind in contemporary Africa as well as the exploration and adoption, where necessary, of aspects of Western psychology that appear relevant in enabling us to confront the challenges of our present African predicament.

In particular, when studied closely, there are three major themes of interest in the definition of African psychology as encompassed in my (Nwoye, 2014, 2015) definition of the field. The first is the aspect that draws attention to the fact that African psychology as understood in continental Africa is a postcolonial discipline interested in the study of the complexities of human mental life or *human subjectivity* of the African individual. The angle of vision in that part of the definition suggests that African psychology is first and foremost concerned with the study and understanding of the African mind and its desires, beliefs, assumptions, worldview, values and aspirations, fears and challenges, and attitudes, patterns of thought, and spirituality; in short,

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an African human subjectivity. It shares this dimension with the notion of scientific psychology as understood in Europe and North America, namely, the systematic study of human subjectivity.

The second theme mentioned in that same definition is one that makes it unique when compared with the way psychology is defined in Western textbooks; namely, the idea that African psychology entails the systematic and informed study of the contributions of *culture* and *community* in the development and growth of the African human being. This angle is important since, in the field of African psychology as a human science (Nwoye, 2017), a human being is understood as a cultural being or a product of the culture and community in which the individual is born and raised. The study of African psychology thus must include the study of the influences of culture (both positive and negative) in the life and well-being of the human individual (Kirschner, 2012, 2015).

The third theme encompassed in my definition of African psychology (Nwoye, 2014, 2015) is the notion that African psychology entails the systematic and informed study of Black experience in the pre-, colonial, and postcolonial African world. This particular angle means that African psychology is, by implication, concerned with the systematic study of the psychological impact of the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, the European superiority complex imposed on Africans as colonial subjects, and the apartheid system in the culture and mental health of the great African peoples.

Of course, apart from defining the term in this threefold dimension, it is also important to mention that the term "African psychology," as currently understood in universities in continental Africa, has both a pre- and a postcolonial reference and, therefore, is in no way limited in scope to the study of African indigenous psychology. This is another way of saying that African psychology, as defined in this book, is much broader than the term "African indigenous psychology." African indigenous psychology is only one component of African psychology as a postcolonial discipline. The other component is contemporary or postcolonial African psychology.

For instance, in its precolonial emphasis, African psychology refers to the scientific study of the assumptions, beliefs, and practices of African peoples and their cultures in pre-European Africa. Such a study is engaged in for the purpose of understanding those ways and rituals, practices, and beliefs invented in indigenous African communities to address the psychological needs and problems of living in the indigenous African world. Understood

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in this way, scholars of African psychology aim to investigate the following questions:

- What practices do indigenous Africans have for helping their members in grief and loss? And what is the psychological capital encompassed in such practices? How do they effect healing?
- What are the conditions for divorce in traditional African societies?
- What is the psychological importance of African spirituality and ancestor veneration in the life and mental health of the typical African individual?
- What is the relationship between the person and the community in traditional Africa?
- How is a human baby made a person by other persons in traditional Africa?
- What is the psychological value and disadvantages of the extended family system as practiced in Africa?
- How does a girl grow into a woman in indigenous Africa?
- And how does a boy grow into manhood in indigenous Africa?
- What is the intended psychological gain for the practice of female circumcision in indigenous Africa?
- What is the psychological value of the ritual of naming the child in Africa?
- What are some of the psychological mechanisms employed in trying to instill a sense of responsibility in the African child?
- What is the psychological value of sibling teaching in the developmental economy of the Africa child?

In its postcolonial or contemporary emphasis, African psychology has expanded in scope and focuses on correcting all discriminatory practices from within and outside Africa that oppress and dehumanize contemporary Africans and their world (Mgbeadichie, 2015). Contemporary African psychology also aims at filling the gaps and correcting the distortions created by Western psychology's limited understanding of the human condition and the life of the mind in Africa (e.g., it explores the difference between Western and African approaches to dreaming). In particular, in its postcolonial emphasis, African psychology explores the challenges of the human condition in Africa and the expanded opportunities and models for being a successful man or woman in contemporary Africa. It is equally concerned with exploring and

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understanding the conditions for achieving the "distinctions of worth" in present-day Africa. For instance, in the past, it was easy to be somebody by accumulating cattle and land or by having many wives and children. These days, something more complicated is required. Hence, under this postcolonial emphasis, African psychologists ask and research such questions as the following:

- To what extent is African self-esteem damaged by the experience of colonialism in Africa?
- What discriminatory African practices must be called into question for having lost their value and relevance in improving rather than damaging the mental health of contemporary Africans?
- What are the conditions for achieving meaningful success in contemporary Africa?
- What is the basis for the mass exodus of the youth to the cities in contemporary Africa?
- What are the legitimate routes or career paths through which a girl can grow into a woman of worth and substance in contemporary Africa?
- What fertility management devices are in use by contemporary young African women?
- Do White Africans truly feel proud to be called Africans? What can research establish for giving either a yes or no answer to this question?
- In particular, what are some of the identity concerns of non-Black South Africans in the post-Apartheid dispensation?
- What do young people in Africa believe makes one an African?
- What are some of the identity challenges of being an Asian or a European born and raised in South Africa?
- Why do people, both Black and colored, engage in the risky practice of skin bleaching?
- If one wants not to have many children but still wants both boys and girls in the family, what does one do?

In raising and researching these questions, the study of African psychology as a postcolonial discipline promises to help contemporary African citizens understand and appreciate the dilemmas and opportunities of living in, and the means of successfully finding their way through the complicated and difficult terrain of contemporary African environments (Nwoye, 2015). Hence, part of the clinical aim of African psychology presently is to promote the

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"widening of vision" of postcolonial African peoples, with the goal of enabling them to see the world through new eyes and investing them with liberative and inclusive ideas and frameworks by which to live.

Over and above what has already been said regarding the meaning and scope of African psychology, one can equally say that African psychology in its postcolonial emphasis also focuses on investigating the joys and frustrations of African immigrants in various countries in Europe and North America. And, in that way, the following questions typically come to the fore: What problems and disappointments do African immigrants face in America? For those who achieve success, what factors help them to succeed?

These indications strongly suggest that, at the core of its meaning, African psychology is concerned with the task of making the thoughts and practices; the culture, beliefs, and assumptions; the ways of knowing and of questioning misfortune; the fears and uncertainties; the interests and needs; and the behaviors and experiences of the African peoples and their societies, past and present, a subject of academic inquiry (Nwoye, 2014).

African Psychology and Related Movements in Contemporary Western Psychology

One can say that African psychology, particularly as understood in its postcolonial emphasis, has important affinity with other specializations in contemporary psychology, such as cultural psychology, indigenous psychology, ethnopsychology, international psychology, psychological anthropology, and sociocultural psychology. Like African psychology, these areas of study recognize that psychology is a human rather than a physical science, one influenced by the local context and culture in which it is situated. Yet African psychology is very clearly distinguishable from each of these emerging psychological traditions in Europe and North America due to its Africanity and the comprehensive coverage of its subject matter, which embraces the study of both visible and invisible realities, including the natural and the supernatural as well as the real and the miraculous in people's lives. In particular, African psychology is different from indigenous psychology that focuses attention specifically on the study of the psychology of ancient Africans and their worlds (Nwoye, 2015), thereby disregarding the contemporary component of African psychology. On the other hand, African psychology has affinity with aspects of progressive Western psychology that recognize other

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ways of knowing, beyond those endorsed in traditional experimental psychology and critiqued by many prominent Western psychologists (Freeman, 2014; Kirschner, 2012, 2015).

What African Psychology Is Not

Although I have already noted that African psychology is not synonymous with the notion of African indigenous psychology, I would like to reiterate that point. While African psychology encompasses the content and emphasis of African indigenous psychology (Mkhize, 2004), it is more than the psychology of the ancient Africans and their thoughts and ways. African psychology is rather a much broader subject field, one concerned not only with studying and understanding the past African peoples and their worlds, but also the psychology of present-day Africans (Black, White, and colored) and the complicated multicultural and globalized environments in which they live and work. Thus, *African psychology is not synonymous with Black psychology*. For although the study and understanding of the psychology of Black Africans in continental Africa and in the Diaspora is part and parcel of the notion of African psychology, African psychology is also the psychology of the non-Black African citizens and their worlds. In this way, the human subjects in the study of African psychology encompass not only members of the Black African populations, but also those of Indians and White Africans for whom the land of Africa is their original place of birth and upbringing (Nwoye, 2015).

It is expected that as the field begins to grow in the future, more themes of pertinent interests to Africans of Indian and European extraction within continental Africa will grow in intensity as themes of interest to African psychology. Even the psychology of African migrants and their challenges, as mentioned earlier, is also part and parcel of the coverage of the topics of interest in African psychology.

African Psychology as an Academic Discipline: Goals and Distinctions

Like every serious academic discipline, African psychology is a field with a four-way concern: theory development, research and documentation,

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critical engagement, and clinical and professional practice (Nwoye, 2015). Here, we clarify what is involved in each of these dimensions.

The Goal of Theory Development

When I say that African psychology is interested in the task of theory building and development, I mean two things. First, that it aims to generate vital vocabularies or "the tools to think with" and the conceptual frameworks for explaining and summarizing the nature of the human condition in contemporary Africa. And, second, that through its theories and conceptual formulations, African psychology proposes to uplift the literature in the field from the level of mere description that it inherited from anthropological and ethnological studies in colonial Africa to that of scientific conceptualizations of the phenomena of interest to scholars in the field.

Considered from these perspectives, African psychology is still a very young field of study, with few theories available in its "savings account." Fortunately, some efforts are being made by some illustrious students and scholars to correct this shortfall.

Research and Documentation Goals

In its research emphasis, African psychology is interested in engaging in field studies with the potential to generate relevant data for addressing the psychosocial needs and problems of the people of Africa, particularly those intended to help to bring to the fore the African indigenous knowledges deemed vital for attending to the peculiar challenges of living in the contemporary African world. In some cases, African psychologists engage in the exercise of *restudying* some of the themes and problems earlier studied but wrongly understood and coded or conceptualized by foreign researchers due to lack of expertise in the language of the people they studied. Because of these language barriers, researchers were unable to penetrate to the details and discover the accurate meanings and significance of some of the issues studied, such as the psychological significance of the mortuary practices and naming rituals of the people of Africa.

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Given this, one can then say that African psychology has come into being to move beyond the boundaries and paradigm of psychological research and practice erected by mainstream Western psychology.

The Critical Engagement Goal

In its critical practice, the key emphasis is, among other things, to investigate and re-evaluate some contested African cultural beliefs and practices, like social parasitism, that appear to have outlived much of their usefulness and relevance in contemporary times and to fashion new roles for women in Africa as well as protect modern African women from the trammels of tradition (Nwoye, 2010). Indeed it is believed that much African critical psychological scholarship is needed if we are to lose the blinkers of our past. And our critical aim is to help young people in the modern African context grow up without the prejudices of their forebears. In addition, some negative local practices in some ethnic groups, such as the problem of the Osu caste system among the Igbo of Nigeria, must be mentioned among negative practices to be destroyed. Others include the negative beliefs about and dangerous practices against albinos in some ethnic communities in Africa.

The Clinical and Professional Practice Goal

African psychology is not only a theoretical discipline. It is also a clinical discipline. Thus, through its clinical component, African psychology works toward bringing healing to the distressed in society, investing such clients with important ideas and perspectives for returning order and meaning to their lives (Nwoye, 2010). But, over and above this reactive aim of its clinical practice, African psychology is also interested in improving our understanding of the conditions for successful living in contemporary Africa, including the forestalling of "apemanship" (p'Bitek, 1973, pp. 1–5) of the West by some educated African men and women.

Given this, one can then say that African psychology has come into being *not to displace but to move beyond* the boundaries of psychological research and practice erected by Western mainstream psychology—clearly a late nineteenth-century invention, but presently firmly Americanized as a discipline. In addition, African psychology is both like and unlike the project

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of human self-reflection, a preoccupation found wherever human beings exist. It differs from the scientific project of a psychology created in the late nineteenth century. Hence, over and above the idea of African psychology as entailing the project of human self-reflection is its further social-cultural mission to promote a systematic understanding of the human condition and culture in post-Apartheid Africa.

African Psychology: Debate About Its Subject Matter

Under this theme the point to be emphasized is that the subject matter of African psychology consists of the past and present peoples, cultures, and experiences of life in Africa, with priority given to their individual and collective experiences; joys and losses; hopes and impediments; frustrations and challenges; needs and preferences; attitudes to place, life, and land; death and the after-life; marriage and family; war and peace; spirituality and the supernatural order; morality and ethics; and African cultural institutions and practices (including African healing traditions and psychotherapies).

This means that African psychology is, among other things, concerned with the study and understanding of the psychological significance of the oral traditions and metaphors of the great peoples of Africa, which Obiechina (1975, 1992, p. 2) has referred to as "the encyclopaedia of African values, attitudes, history, and ethical models," traditions, worldviews, and ways of knowing. African psychology is also a psychology of human significance or the psychological capital of African written literatures in which are embedded a variety of mind-shaping categories and from which can be sourced the truths of human and social behavior that nurture individual and communal attitudes and values in Africa.

African psychology is similarly the psychology of "limits and boundaries" invented in indigenous African communities for instituting behavior management and control in adults and children (Obiechina, 1975) for purposes of enhancing people's mental health. African psychology is equally the psychology of the disillusionment of the post-independence African world and the traumas that result from the double-edged gaze of Western media in contemporary Africa. African psychology is again the psychology of African feminism and women's concerns, including the psychology of the sources of complexity and friction in contemporary African families.

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It is also concerned with the study and understanding of the psychological consequences of the African's love of having children and the associated stresses and strains of childlessness in an African marriage (Nwapa, 1966, 1970).

African psychology also encompasses the study and understanding of the psychology of African immigrants in Europe and North America (Oguine, 2000; Nwoye, 2009) as well as the crisis of transcultural identity in African narratives of childhood (Priebe, 2006). It also encompasses the psychology of the "hard surfaces" of human existence in contemporary Africa, such as the enduring problems of war and refugee conditions and the ironies and paradoxes, contradictions, and humiliations of the complicated present African environment.

Of course, it is impossible to exhaust the list of themes that come under the legitimate object of study for African psychology. But those mentioned are enough to show that African psychology as an academic subject field is an emerging postcolonial discipline within the larger field of disciplinary psychology in African universities specifically designed to champion the proper and holistic understanding of ancient and present Africans as psychological subjects, with the aim to contribute its own perspective toward the promotion of improved human understanding.

What Is African in African Psychology?

My view is that African psychology's claim to Africanity derives from the content of its worldview, one that is holistic in depth and range and in which the African universe is understood as an alive, circular, and dynamic universe, a universe of multiple realities (natural, abstract, and spiritual) in close proximity and complicated transactions with one another. In this way its *biopsychosocial-spiritual* (BPS-S) model of explaining sources of psychopathology in human beings is deemed more inclusive and aims to advance the prevailing *biopsychosocial* model valorized in mainstream psychology, which fails to factor in the impact of religiosity and the place of mystery in peoples' mental health.

Apart from being grounded in the African worldview, African psychology is also typically African on account of its emphasis on the pragmatic theory of truth (or the notion of truth in action) as well as its belief in the complementarity of contraries in human existence.

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African Worldview as Anchor

African psychology is African in that its principles are anchored on the African's view of reality. Fundamental to that view of reality is the idea that nothing in life is absolute. This view goes hand in hand with an acknowledgment in African psychology of the existence of the phenomenon of interdependence between the individual and the community, reflected in the basic principle of *Ubuntu* or the belief that a human being is made human through other humans.

The African Roots of African Psychological Concepts

Apart from being grounded in the African worldview, another thing that makes African psychology typically African is that its important conceptual edifice is drawn from the African concept of nature/world; the notion of the human being; life and the origins of death; the view of knowledge, reality, and truth; the concept of perception and time; the nature of consciousness; and rationality/reason, as well as the notion of mystery. These concepts and their African perspectives are clarified here. The descriptions are adopted with some modifications from my earlier formulations highlighted elsewhere (Nwoye, 2013a, 2015).

Nature/World

African psychology conceptualizes nature and the world from the perspective of the African cosmovision, in which there is a belief that the entire universe is composed of three interdependent planes: the physical (material), the metaphysical (abstract), and the spiritual (transcendental). In this perspective, humans are believed to live in the midst or under the shadow of obscure forces to which they stand in a dynamic moral and spiritual relationship and with which their destiny is involved. This framework goes with the belief that, when provoked, these invisible forces can visit them with anger and adversity but, when appeased, or well-served and disposed can bring them good fortune and blessings. And this belief can be linked to the current upsurge of *prosperity religions* in many corners of the continent, in which the attempt is made to use the resources and other rituals of religion to enhance in members feelings of optimism and the assumption of being in firm secure hands (Nwoye, 2002).

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African Concept of the Human Being

Another crucial thing that reflects the Africanness of African psychology is that in it, unlike in Western psychology, a human being is conceived of as a complicated organism, simultaneously physical and spiritual in nature and constitutive of multiple and interdependent dimensions that encompass biological (the bodily), social, psychological (the heart, the emotional), spiritual (the religious), and metaphysical (the liminality, hopes, and beliefs) aspects (Nwoye, 2006b, 2013b). Indeed, the common understanding in the African perspective is that there is a dialectical interpenetration of the individual and the community in which neither has full primacy (Nwoye, 2006a). Based on this, the Western notion of the self as a self-contained, imperial, and value-free agency in control of its fate in the world (Cushman, 1990) appears foreign to African psychology.

Notion of Life and the Origins of Death

African psychologists, unlike their counterparts in Western psychology, recognize and work with the view that the average African holds a precarious view of the universe (Ekwunife, 1997; Kalu, 1978; Mbiti, 1969). This means that they tend to attribute many forms of misfortune, illness, death, and failure to the activities of ubiquitous malevolent spirits, vengeful ancestors, and forces of destiny operating through nature and some evil human beings (Nwoye, 2013a). This implies that, in African psychology, unlike in Western humanistic psychology, there is recognition of the fact that although humans are contributory to, they are not in full control of their fate in the world. In this way, the outcome of their urge for full self-actualization is not under their sole control (Nwoye, 2013a).

Theory of Reality

Again, the theory of reality recognized in African psychology is one with an African root, in which there is acknowledged the existence of two major levels of reality, visible and invisible or material and spiritual realms, both of which are interdependent in their relationship to one another. In this perspective there is a belief in that scheme of reality which binds the everyday to the extraordinary in a lively reciprocity. Thus, as understood in general African thought and recognized in African psychology, the perfect combination of the two levels of reality (material and spiritual) ensures the harmony and ordered progress of the members of the human world (Nwoye, 2013a).

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Theory of Knowledge

Another thing that is African in African psychology is the recognition emphasized in African psychological research, theory, and practice that human knowledge is partial, historical, and evolutional in nature and changes with time. For this reason, African psychologists believe that there are multiple sources of human knowledge. And, as in mainstream psychology, they derive some of their working knowledge from direct research on a given problem.

Theory of Truth

African psychology is typically African in perspective in that it acknowledges and respects, as in the general African thought, the existence of multiple perspectives to truth, including the existence and significance of the phenomenon of complementary duality in human contexts (Nwoye, 2006a, 2007/2008). By this is meant that, in human life, nothing exists in complete isolation from another and that when one thing stands, another stands beside it (Achebe, 1989/1990). In this perspective, the understanding is that there is no single road to truth, no royal road to success or to the good life.

Theory of Perception

This is another concept that is typically African in African psychology. African psychologists recognize and work with the view that human behavior is influenced by the way things seem or feel to the individual or group concerned. Consequently, in African psychology, human perception is understood as phenomenological/perspectival or personal in nature and thus subject to human errors. In this way, African psychologists believe in the evolutional nature of perceptual competence in human beings. That is, it gets better with age due to the influence of experience in the evolution of people's cognition; hence, the saying in most parts of Africa that "what the elders may see while sitting down, the youth may not see even while standing up" (Nwoye, 2013a, 2013b).

Capacity for Synoptic Time Consciousness

Again, as in general African thought, African psychologists recognize that a special constituent of the African human being is the capacity for the abstract attitude, reflected in the individual's power to live and move in the shadow of the "thick present." This orientation refers to an African individual's capacity to hold in his or her present time consciousness the three dimensions

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of time: the "past present," the "present present," and the "future present" synoptically (Nwoye, 2006a). In this way, the present state of the African individual continually reminds him or her not only of the present situation (good or bad) confronting him or her but also of a past that has gone before and a future that is yet to come. Many African psychologists work with the assumption that this capacity for the abstract attitude, which promotes the African's capacity for a synoptic time consciousness, is a foundation for good mental health. It enables many people in contemporary Africa to live beyond the decadence and tribulations of the contemporary African situation (Nwoye, 2006a).

Concept of Culture-Bound Rationality/Reason

African psychologists, like their counterparts in the West, fully recognize the place of rationality/reason in human life. But in African psychology, the understanding is that the *African's universe is not an Aristotelian universe (that underpins mainstream psychology), but essentially an interpreted universe*, implying a world in which people come with meaning influenced by local knowledge into their personal experiences and in that way go beyond the direct events that confront them. For this reason, African psychologists acknowledge that in the experience of practical human living, life can, at times, be larger than logic. And what things might look like to foreign observers, may be seen in a different light by natives of Africa.

Human Condition and Mystery

Another thing that marks the African roots of African psychology is that, in African psychology, there is a belief in the existence of mystical causality (Nwoye, 2006a) in the human world. In that way, reasons for failure or success are often blamed on the deliberate agency of inscrutable forces, which at times operate through the agency of evil-minded persons to cause disasters to targeted victims. This aspect of the African understanding of the human condition is meant to suggest that, in the African imagination, physical nature is not dead but alive, imbued with immanent vitality and spirit force which animates and infuses nature with mystical potency (Nwoye, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c).

African Spirituality

One additional theme in African psychology that illustrates its African roots is the recognition given to the influence of spirituality in the life of African

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clients. This notion coincides with the important assumption in Africa that God is involved in the details of our human experience and that things do not happen unless God approves them. The same attitude encourages the great principle of resignation to God's will when confronted with problems that one can neither handle nor alter (Nwoye, 2013a, 2015).

Future Directions and Expectations

In commenting on the nature of the future prospects of African psychology the first point to make is that the development of the field will continue and intensify. The hope is that with time more universities in Africa and abroad will see the need to mount courses on African psychology at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. And it is expected that more research funding agencies (such as the National Research Foundation in South Africa) will come out in support of research chairs to promote the production of basic research and theories to enhance the study of African psychology as an academic discipline. Finally, it is envisaged that, with time, the current "protest character" of the field will give way to other more positive themes that can uplift the field and make it more responsive to the needs and problems of contemporary African clients.

Expanding the Frontiers of African psychology

Compared to Western or European-American psychology which possesses both interior (located in Western universities) and exterior frontiers (located in African universities), African psychology has so far got only an interior frontier (located in African universities) in the advancement of its contribution to psychology and improvement of human understanding. It is yet to establish an external frontier in foreign universities (in Europe and Asia, for example). In this way, only the first stage of its frontier formation has been accomplished. In this regard, its future prospects will, among other things, be along the lines of trying to establish external frontiers for the study of African psychology (in its broad, inclusive, and transracial perspective) in the wider world.

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Conclusion

With the discussion to this stage, I conclude by saying that African psychology is the scientific study of the psychology of the past and present African peoples and their cultures and societies, one aimed at producing important and emic-based knowledge of the human psychological situation in continental Africa. In particular, African psychology has emerged as a response to outgrowing the scientific positivism of the nineteenth century. In its inclusive epistemological perspective, it recognizes with philosophy and art the notion of discontinuity and indeterminism that is found at the bottom of everything that exists in the world. Hence African psychology represents a new way of approaching the professional study of psychology in African universities, in which opportunity is created to explore and account for the *real* and the *miraculous* in people's lives. In this way African psychology can be understood to embrace both a psychology of the ordinary and of the extraordinary; a psychology for something, rather than for its own sake.

Having said all this, I now end with the question: Who is an African? Or rather, what makes an African an African? In response to this question, Chester Higgins (1994) in his book *Feeling the Spirit* states that "We are not Africans because we are born in Africa; we are Africans because we have Africa born in us." This poignant statement is in line with the important observation on the same theme made by Thabo Mbeki in his famous speech "I am an African," in which he noted that "The constitution whose adoption we celebrate constitutes an unequivocal statement that we refuse to accept that our Africanness shall be defined by our race, colour, gender or historical origins. It is a firm assertion made by ourselves that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white" (1998, p. 34). It is not enough to call yourself African merely because you are Black or born in Africa: to call yourself African you must, at least, manifest some sufficient understanding, appreciation, and respect for the progressive and empowering cultures and traditions of the great African peoples and try to live by them.

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3

African Psychology and Archaeology

Looking Through the Mirror of the African Past and Worldview

In this chapter, I plan to take the following steps. First, to highlight by means of textual analysis and archival or desk research the negative images of Africa and its peoples found scattered in the literature of colonial psychiatry. Second, to present archaeological evidence from Thurstan Shaw's (1978) finds at Igbo-Ukwu, Nigeria, that challenge the undeserving, disparaging portraits of Africans and their cultures advanced even by so-called professional scientists (in the field of psychiatry), the aim of which was to poison the world's opinion against Africa and its peoples. Third, I will use the same archaeological data and other confirmatory evidence found in other parts of Africa, such as the artistic style of *uShaka* Marine Resort in Durban, South Africa, to demonstrate that African peoples are one and share a holistic, sociocentric, interdependent ontology, and a curvilinear worldview.

In implementing the first step, which entails highlighting aspects of the negative image of Africa found in Western scholarship which I plan to challenge, I intend to draw specifically on the account of the image of Africa depicted in colonial psychiatry, which constituted the substance of Jock McCulloch's important (1995) book *Colonial Psychiatry and "the African Mind."* My overall aim is to use the context of this chapter to generate an evidence-based counterdiscourse to dispute the unfounded colonial theory of African inferiority that has been peddled since colonial times.

Image of Africa in Colonial Psychiatry

According to J. McCulloch (1995, pp. 46–63), the following are among the most dangerous Western psychiatrists to issue negative statements and

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conclusions about Africa and its peoples: R. L. Gordon, formerly senior physician at Mathari Psychiatric Hospital, Nairobi, Kenya; F. W. Vint, formerly of the Pathological Research Laboratory, Nairobi, Kenya; and John C. Carothers, formerly at Mathari Hospital in Nairobi and thereafter appointed a Consultant on the African Mind for the World Health Organization (WHO).

As stated by McCulloch (1995, p. 46), R. L. Gordon's views on the African mind first appeared in 1934, in the *Journal of Mental Science*, in which he offered a number of observations about the mentality and culture of the African. At the end of that article, Gordon observed that, "The most serious problem for the physician in dealing with the African was distinguishing between normal and abnormal behaviour." Furthermore, according to McCulloch, Gordon stated that "the African had no regard for the sanctity of life, no sense of decency; and by European standards, was simply abnormal."

During his period of service at the Mathari Mental (Psychiatric) Hospital in Nairobi, Kenya, Gordon conducted a study of the inmates (Gordon, 1934, 1936), in which he noted the frequency of certain disorders and the absence of particular illnesses common among Europeans. On the basis of the study he concluded negatively that "The evidence today is against our Natives being as well-equipped in the frontal brain as the average European" (McCulloch, 1995, p. 47).

McCulloch (1995, p. 48) observed that in addition to these views, Gordon gave a number of lectures in Nairobi about the brain of the East African, and, over a 2-year period, carried out thousands of measurements and physiological tests on Kenyan subjects. Similarly, according to McCulloch, Gordon encouraged and invited F. W. Vint, then of the Pathological Research Laboratory, in Nairobi, to research the cranial capacity and brain weight of selected Kenyan subjects. He used material obtained from autopsies of Africans carried out in Nairobi Hospital, and his sample totaled 351 brains. He weighed the brains immediately after removal from the skull and found the average weight to be 1,276 grams, which, according to him, compared unfavorably with the average weight from five major studies of the European brain, which was 1,428 grams.

Vint's study (Vint, 1932–1933, 1934), of course, did not stop at just measuring the weight of sampled brains, but also included evaluating the cortex, a process that, according to him, is meant to give a better guide to intellectual capacity than simple measures of brain weight. He studied the five layers of

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the cortex of his Nairobi sample and came to the damning conclusion that, in terms of cortical development, "the brain of the adult African corresponded to that of a European child of seven or eight years of age" (McCulloch, 1995, p. 48). Gordon, supporting Vint's study, claimed that almost half the inmates at Mathari hospital were mentally deficient, while another physician colleague, named Anderson, remarked that in his 32 years in Africa he had never met a native who had achieved the intelligence of a normal European.

His findings, according to him, showed that, on average, "the samples were 152 grams, or 10.6 per cent lighter than the average European brain" (McCulloch, 1995, p. 48). This was interpreted to mean that "the native brain reaches its full weight prior to the age of eighteen years and that there was evidence of decrease after the age of forty" (McCulloch, p. 48). He also indicated that the African brain had a flattened appearance and that a failure of development was evident in its height. The cortex, according to him, was undeveloped and weighed on average almost 15 percent less than that of European subjects.

The incalculable damage generated by these racist observations on the nature of the African mind, according to McCulloch (1995), was that it gave a false scientific backing to a majority of lay White settlers who depended on the guidance of professionals to confirm or disqualify their initial "frames" or prejudices on the notion of "African inferiority." Such negative reports from the so-called professionals and scientists about the inferior quality of the African mind solidified the White settlers' convictions.

The worst damage in this regard, of course, emanated from the report by John C. Carothers submitted to the WHO. After his appointment by WHO in 1952, he wrote a monograph on mental health in Africa. Carothers's first publication of his report on this theme appeared in the *East African Medical Journal* (1940), but his work was widely read by colleagues all over the world since he was recognized as the most prominent psychiatrist in the field at the time (Carothers, 1947, 1951). On the whole, his WHO report "The African Mind" was as horrific and psychologically poisonous as the studies by Gordon, Anderson, and Vint earlier cited (Carothers, 1953). One of the key questions addressed in his report was whether the African's mentality was fundamentally different from the European's, and, if so, how the difference could be explained.

In his response he linked the research by Gordon and Vint with American studies, all of which showed that the brain of the Negro is inferior to that

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of the European. In addition, he (Carothers) explored the intellectual development of the African child. In this, he relied on the work of Jean Piaget to organize his conclusions, particularly the aspect of Piaget's theory focusing on "the child's conception of physical causality." But he applied Piaget's schema not just to the African child but also to the African adult, in whom he believed the powers of cognition were deficient.

In his conclusion, he observed that "until the age of seven or eight years, the African developed in the same way as the European, but then the process of development suddenly comes to a halt." In his view, "the adult African mind only attained up to the level of Piaget's second stage, the Pre-Operational stage."

McCulloch (1995), commenting on Carothers's report, asserts that his damning conclusion again gave the sanction of scientific truth to the view already held by many White settlers in Kenya and then South Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), to the effect that "the adult African was simply a child" (p. 60). Furthermore, Carothers agreed with Piaget that full intellectual development does require the availability of certain forms of infantile and childhood experience, all of which, according to him, were not available to Africans. Carothers capped his report with the grim observation that "The African, accordingly, has been described as conventional; lacking in spontaneity, foresight, tenacity, judgment and humility; inept for sound abstraction and for logic; given to phantasy and fabrication; and in general, unstable, impulsive, unreliable, irresponsible and living in the present without reflection or ambition."

Indeed, as McCulloch remarked, the most disheartening thing about Carothers's negative view about the African mind was that the influential anthropologists at the time who reviewed and made comments on his report were not able to challenge his prejudiced conclusions.

My principal argument in this chapter is that such negative views about the African mind, all emphasizing the notion of African inferiority, were based on bad science and the hidden conspiracy of Western colonial scientists as professional handmaidens of the colonial project.

Unfortunately, believing their reports as issuing from the authority of good scientific research, lay White settlers who were fed all these lies about the African believed their prejudiced suspicions validated—an attitude that made them feel uncompelled to question the impropriety of relating to Africans and their cultures in the undignified way they were known to have done.

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In the rest of this discussion, I argue that contemporary Africans, judging by the great achievements of ancient Africans (shortly discussed) have no reason to feel ashamed of themselves and their culture on account of the lies that have been peddled in Western literature on African inferiority.

In support of this observation, I present some primary data on primordial Africans contained in Professor Thurstan Shaw's archaeological excavations at Igbo-Ukwu, Nigeria, all of which provide enormous evidence of the unsung, unique cognitive complexity and achievements of pre-European contact Africans and their cultures, findings that contradicted Carothers's views that adult Africans are "conventional; lacking in spontaneity, . . .; inept for sound abstraction and for logic; unreliable, irresponsible and living in the present without reflection or ambition."

African Archaeology as Witness Against Colonial Theory of African Inferiority

Thurstan Shaw's finds firmly illustrate the ingenuity of ancient African artists and sculptors whose bronze works has been dated to as far back as 800 AD, in which plain expression and plastic arts, as well as the language of mathematics, were used to "externalize" the nature of the African imagination and worldview. I draw attention to them in this chapter to lend support to the deconstruction efforts already going on in the fields of African literature and music and African archaeology and history, all of which aim at dismantling obsolete notions about Africa and its peoples and replacing them with corrective data that arise from archaeological finds. And so, what are the contents of Shaw's archaeological finds?

Contents of Thurstan Shaw's Finds at Igbo-Ukwu, Nigeria

The contents and variety of Shaw's finds at Igbo-Ukwu, all of which have been preserved in the Museum of the University College, London, encompass the items shown in Figures 3.1 through 3.7.

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Figure 3.1 A complicated bronze pendant decorated with fish and frog motifs.

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Figure 3.2 Decorated vessel of leaded tin bronze in the form of a water-pot.

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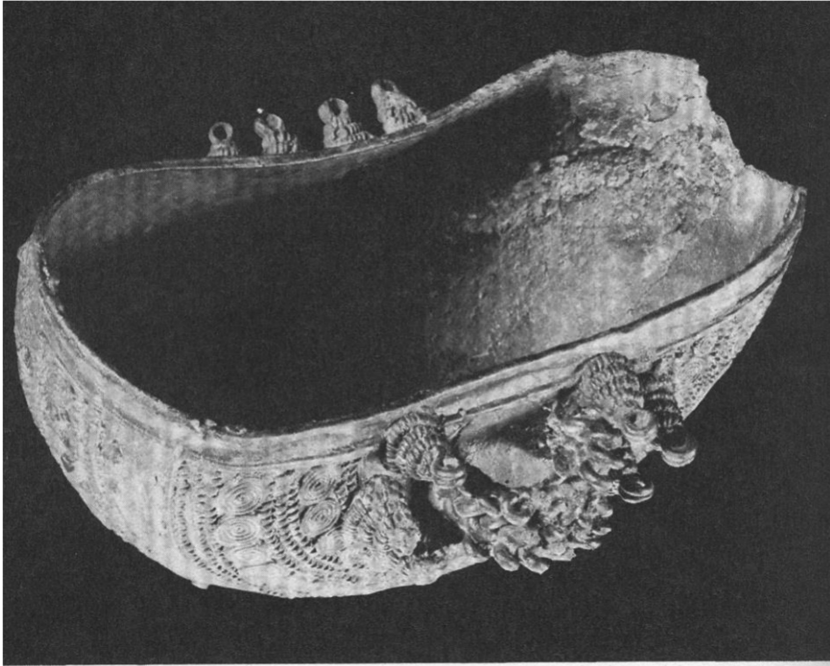

Figure 3.3 Examples of large bronze bowls imitating the form of calabashes.

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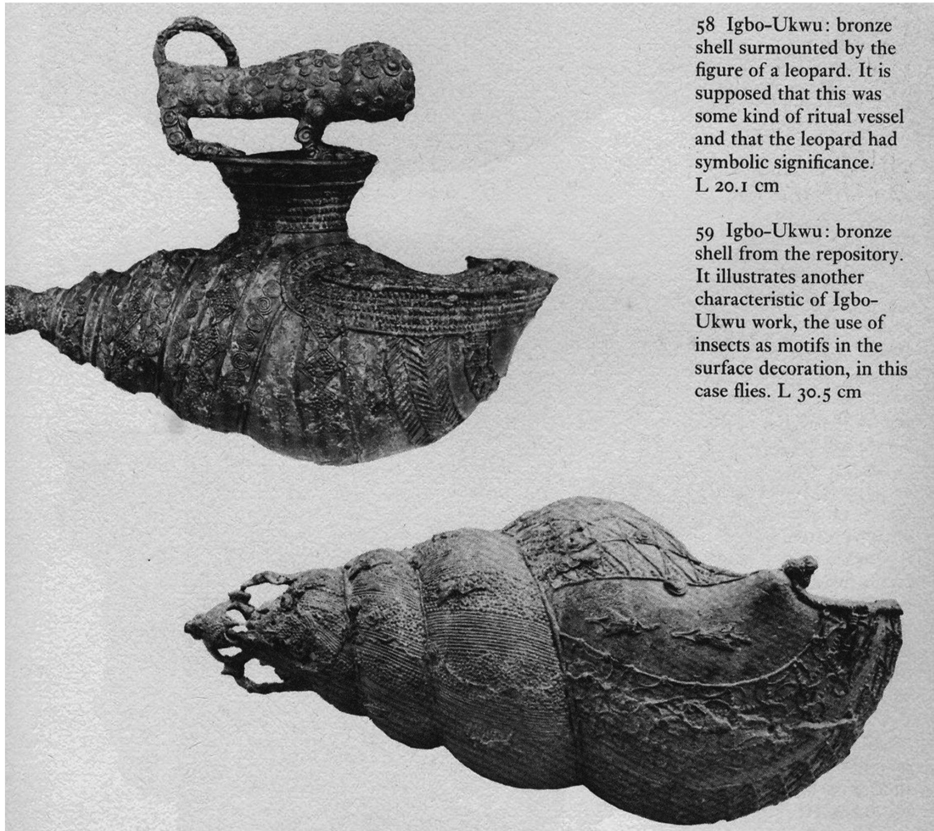

Figure 3.4 Bronze shell surmounted by the figure of a leopard, which supposed to be a kind of ritual vessel, plus bronze shell with a flies motif.

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Figure 3.5 Bronze "altar stand." On one side is a male figure and on the other side, a female figure.

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Figure 3.6 Reconstruction drawing of burial chamber, based on Igbo-Ukwu excavation finds.

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Figure 3.7 Large pot excavated from a disposal pit at Igbo-Ukwu.

Hypothesis

After inspecting these finds, I came up with the hypothesis that

> H1: The dominance of the curvilinear form (circles, spirals, cross-roads) in Shaw's finds is not unique to Igbo-Ukwu, Nigerian Africans but is, indeed, a general characteristic noted in other finds and artifacts from other parts of Africa.

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Multi-Site Methodology

To test this hypothesis, a comparative research design was chosen. A poly-methodological research strategy was used in the study. The first is the purposive multisite *contact chasing methodology* used to gain access to data for testing the hypothesis of a study. Through this process I tried to gain contact with other African artifacts in other parts of Nigeria and other parts of Africa to determine the extent of dissemination of the curvilinear motifs that dominate the space of Shaw's finds.

The second component of the methodology was the *interpretive research strategy*. In using this, I engaged in the following steps:

1. Study closely the observed dominant artistic style found in the Igbo-Ukwu artifacts and those that might corroborate it from other parts of Africa.
2. Make psychological interpretations and draw conclusions on the nature and characteristics of the African mind and worldview from the implications of the study.

Target Confirmation Artifacts

Two confirmation artifacts sites were used for the study. The first is the terra-cottas found in a grove in Ife, Western Nigeria, including brass heads dug up from the Wunmonije compound at Ife. The second confirmation site for testing the hypothesis of the study is the *uShaka* Marine Resort, in Durban, South Africa.

The results from these confirmation studies have been fascinating; they are presented in Figures 3.8 through 3.10, starting with the Ife terra-cottas and brass heads' samples.

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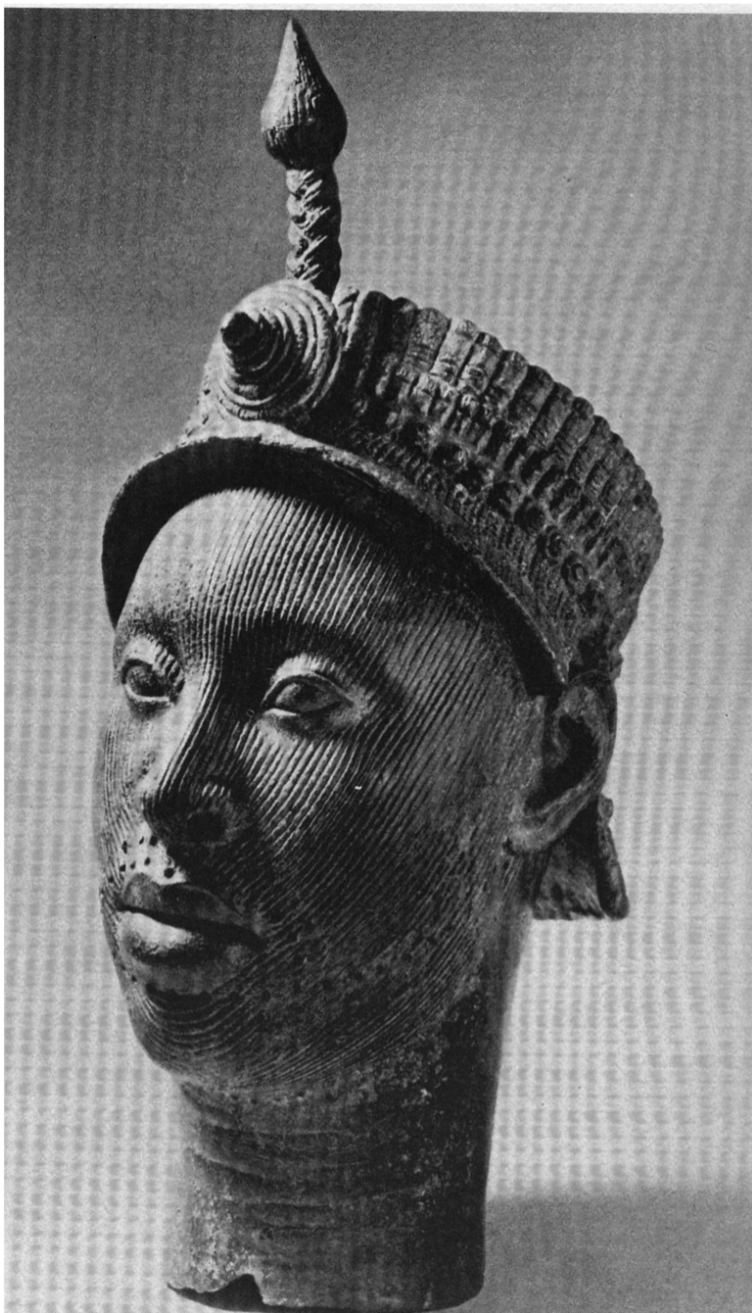

Figure 3.8 Brass head dug up from the Wunmonije compound, at Ife.

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Figure 3.9 Crowned brass head, found in the Wunmonije compound, Ife, Western Nigeria.

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Figure 3.10 The findings from *uShaka* Marine resort (modern representation of the structures found in the Zulu Kingdom).

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Figure 3.10 continued

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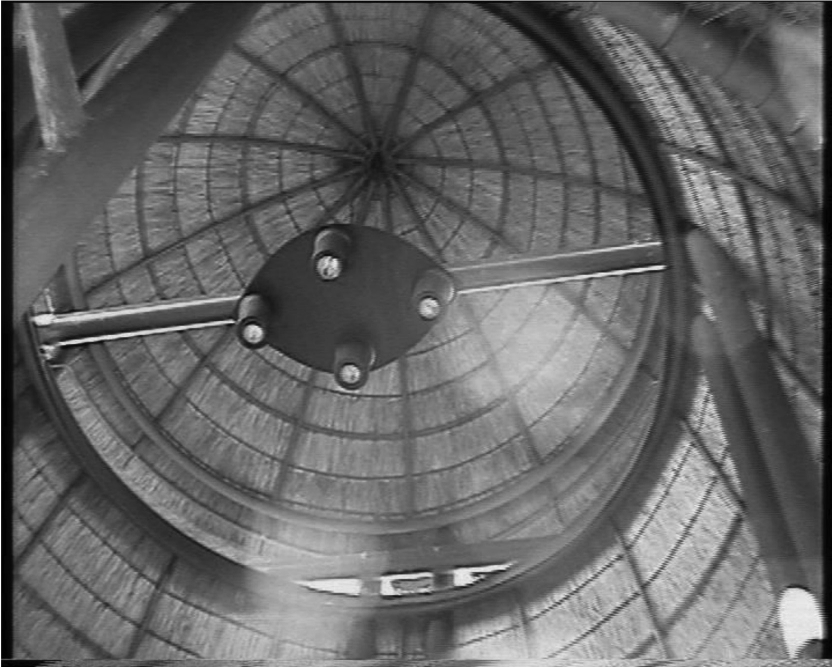

Figure 3.10 continued

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Results and Conclusions

These finds, all of which are the products of meaningful and symbolic agentic (Bandura, 2006) human actions of Africans of many years ago, psychologically speaking, strongly contradict the view that the typical African mind is simple or equivalent to that of a child of 7 or 8 years of age, as Carothers suggested. The trend rather suggests that the African imagination is indeed complicated, oriented to outstanding qualities of cognitive complexity. Hence, in Africa, as Ben Enwonwu (1949) lucidly put it, "Art . . . is not a quality of things, but an activity" that "objectifi[es] . . . the artist's beliefs, his feelings, meanings or significance, and volition" (cited in Nzegwu, 1998).

The terra-cottas provide evidence in support of the view that the African individual, psychologically speaking, is blessed with the capacity for self-reflective consciousness and agency. The presence of assorted ornaments in Thurstan's finds demonstrates that Africans, right from antiquity, engage in complicated human activity and produce intricate artifacts and other works that prove that each is endowed with subjectivity or the ability to imagine goals different from those imposed by custom or instinct.

The burial chamber excavation provides support for the view credited to Professor John S. Mbiti (1969) that, for Africans, the ancestors, though dead, are still living and therefore should more correctly be referred to as members of the "living-dead." The dead Eze Nri buried in sitting and upthrust positions attest to the authenticity of this view.

Similarly, the presence in these finds of a diversity of objects (e.g., humans, animals, ornaments, and abstract representations) suggests that, essentially, in the African worldview, our universe is one of multiple realities (including explicative and implicative beings or the physical and spiritual, seen and unseen) in which there is opportunity for an intermingling of forces. Also the idea of a leopard surmounting its victim in one of the finds, plus the presence of snake motifs, points to a clear recognition in the African worldview of the tragic sense of life, a world susceptible to human vulnerabilities.

In addition, the presence of fish and fly motifs shows that the African universe is not a universe of concretes and plastic but one inhabited by humans, animals, insects, fish, trees, sands, and seas; in short, a situated universe, and a shared universe.

Evidence of a crowned terra-cotta head at Ife proves that the African world, even as far back as 800 AD and before Africa's colonial contact with Europe,

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had settled and organized cultural institutions and citizens who were responsible as well as governable by socially approved office holders.

Similarly, the equal representation in body shape and size of male and female figures in one of these finds demonstrates the view that, essentially speaking, the notion of sexual inequality and the idea of conflict between the sexes is an imported construct in the African worldview. On the other hand, the presence of the two figures—both at the circumference, none at the center—suggests a recognition of the harmony of opposites and the belief in the principle of complementarity of forces, including that of the sexes, in the African worldview.

Selective Implications: A Holistic Theory of the African Mind and Worldview

A number of theoretical principles about the African mind and worldview can be drawn from these findings. These include:

1. *Emphasis on self-inclusion and interdependent ontology*. These archaeological findings show that the African individual and his or her surrounding environment are implicitly and inseparably intertwined, dialectically related or mutually implicative, since one has no meaning when treated independently. Hence, the African person and his or her world co-constitute one another.
2. *The African worldview as a curvilinear worldview*. The conspicuous absence of rectangles in the artistic style of the finds demonstrates the rejection in the African worldview of the rectangular or basic linear orientation in human life in preference to a curvilinear sensibility entrenched in the various symbols presented in these finds. As I see it, the difference between rectilinearity and curvilinearity as cultural worldviews is that while a rectangular worldview promotes the spirit of opposition and difference, the curvilinear worldview promotes the civic values of tolerance, capacity for negotiation, flexibility, rotational sensitivity, respect for inclusiveness, accommodation of diversities, and the spirit of the curve and mutuality in the context of human living. Hence, the curvilinear motif that predominates these finds points to the presence in Africa of the curvilinear view of life, one that implies the belief that we inhabit a universe in which possibilities exceed

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actualities; in which any given "reality is just but one of many realities," neither arbitrary nor inevitable.

Also the curve in African worldview is the symbol for individual struggle and survival in the world, a world in which the use of the curve is related to the idea of digression as a means of progression (Nwoye, 2007).

3. *Emphasis on engaged thinking in the African worldview*. The motif of spirals and crossroads in these finds suggest the recognition in the African worldview of the importance of *diagonal vision* and the spirit of flexibility, as well as the need for engaged thinking in relating and adapting to the complexities and mixed promises of living in the human world.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I demonstrated that contemporary Africa is a continent with a respectable ancient heritage, a continent with illustrious and creative ancestors, who, by the intricate cognitive signature embedding their artifacts, show that their minds and imaginations are not abnormal but normal, and not simple but rich and complicated. With this conclusion emerges a liberated and synthesized African self and the urge to repossess an African identity that we were taught to despise. The overall aim of this chapter is not in the least to convert you to believe in the integrity of the humanity of the African because I trust that as a critical and impartial reader you already do. The primary message I wish the reader to take home after reading this chapter is the important view that African psychology can draw from the field of African archaeology to challenge the strange representations that have been made of Africa and its peoples by colonial artists and scientists.

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4

Epistemological and Cultural Perspectives in African Psychology

This chapter highlights the philosophical, epistemological, and cultural perspectives in African psychology. The principal goal is to illustrate some of the efforts that scholars of continental African psychology are making to unbind themselves from the restrictive ways of doing psychology as propagated in mainstream Western psychology. In addressing these issues, I aim to provide a warrant and direction for considering continental African psychology as a legitimate and autonomous postcolonial academic discipline, endowed with its own epistemological, philosophical, cultural, and critical orientation to psychological scholarship.

I begin by discussing the epistemological stances of African psychology, showing how it differs from the mainstream Western perspective. I then highlight the methodological philosophy of constructive alternativism that advances the processes of research and scholarship in African psychology. Also discussed are the notion of African psychology as a human science, the notion of human beings as cultural-historical beings, and the idea of the modern African child as a child of the "middle ground."

Epistemology of Open Philosophy of Psychology and the Principles of "Epistemic Disobedience" and Selective Pluralism

African psychology, unlike mainstream Western psychology, favors an open philosophy approach to the study of psychology. This means that students and scholars of African psychology, epistemologically speaking, are not guided or restrained by what Bachelard (1968/1975) has aptly referred to as "The philosophy of 'NO' which constrains, sets limits, attempts to legitimate

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the notion of fundamental foundations to thought beyond which we must not stray" (Shanks & Tilley, 1987, p. 103). Such a restrictive epistemology propagated by mainstream Western psychology (see Arnett, 2008; Battiste, 2000; Christopher, Wendt, Marecek, & Goodman, 2014; Nwoye, 2021a, 2021b) is rejected as a limiting framework for promoting effective understanding of the complex subject matter of African psychology, which embraces the scholarship of engagement with the various realms of beings recognized in the African worldview that encompasses the visible and the invisible, or natural and supernatural realities.

This indication means that, unlike traditional Western psychology that emphasizes the notion of a realist ontology (or the existence of one reality out there that can be known objectively) and restricts itself to the study of physical, quantifiable, and observable reality (Nwoye, 2018, 2020, 2021a, 2021b), the study of African psychology allows for the existence of multiple realities, or a pluralistic and interdependent ontology that embraces not only the pursuit of naturalism but also the study of the phenomena of extranatural perception in its approach to generating psychological knowledge. Operating from this broad-based standpoint, African psychology goes beyond the task of the systematic and controlled study of the natural and observable human realities to include the task of a hermeneutic or an interpretive science of the lived experiences of the great people of Africa. Thus, in contrast to the model of explanation developed in natural science, African psychology, in line with the hermeneutic tradition, rejects the logical positivist idea that there can exist a single method for both the natural and the human sciences.

This means that the central point of difference between the open philosophy approach to the study of psychology on which African psychology stands and the practice of "the philosophy of NO" that is characteristic of mainstream Western psychology is that "the philosophy of NO" embodies an epistemological stance rooted in the closed philosophy of scientific empiricism. Corroborating this observation, Shanks and Tilley (1987) powerfully remarked that

> empiricist discourse is a closed philosophy. This means that it supposes that there is only one correct and proper manner of approaching, describing and explaining reality—by granting primacy to the empirical object of study through sense-perception . . . (and) through strategies leading to verification or falsification. (p. 103)

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In contrast to this one-dimensional and restrictive epistemology characteristic of mainstream Western psychology, African psychology, along with several strands of progressive Western psychology (such as cultural psychology, sociocultural psychology, narrative psychology, and international psychology, including Soviet psychology, etc.), is fundamentally understood by its students and scholars as equally an interpretive and historical rather than an exclusively empiricist science.

In this regard, African psychology's refusal to follow rigidly in the footsteps of the exclusively empiricist brand of traditional Western psychology is consistent with the tradition proposed by Hountondji (1995) and recently emphasized by Walter Mignolo (2009), as reflected in the latter's article "Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and De-Colonial Freedom." Mignolo's position arises from his conviction, shared by most scholars of African psychology (Nwoye, 2015, 2017; Mkhize, 2004; Holdstock, 1999, 2000) as well as by many prominent progressive Western psychologists, that all human knowledges are situated and constructed. In that way, for him (Mignolo) and others (see Christopher et al., 2014; Gergen, 1996; Gergen, Josselson, & Freeman, 2015; Kirschner, 2015; Kirschner & Martin, 2010), it makes little sense for anyone to believe that there is one universally acknowledged window or path to Truth (wa Thiong'o, 1986, 2012). Hence, African psychology, in both its epistemology and ontology (Nyamnjoh, 2015, 2017), shares much in common with the many strands of Western psychology that champion the importance of the qualitative, multiple, context-dependent approach to knowledge generation (Christopher et al., 2014; Gergen et al., 2015; Nwoye, 2021a).

Yet, unlike many models of progressive Western psychology, African psychology also recognizes the relevance of adhering to the philosophy of extranaturalism and the epistemology of extranatural perception in its study of human experience. The philosophy of extranatural perception refers to the recognition and affirmation by many scholars of African psychology and other human sciences in continental Africa that some humans are able to understand the world through "eyes" other than the realist, objective way of perceiving the world (Nyamnjoh, 2015, 2017). Proponents of extranaturalism, in particular, tell their stories from the perspective of people who live in our world but are capable of experiencing a different reality from the one we call objective. In this way they portray the phenomenon of extranatural perception as a natural path in an otherwise realistic or mundane environment (Okri, 2011; Zamora & Faris, 1995). This observation implies that,

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among other things, scholars of African psychology both in continental Africa and in the Diaspora, recognize and acknowledge the existence and impact of supernatural forces and other invisible influences in people's life-worlds (Nyamnjoh, 2015, 2017). Corroborating this observation, Morrison (1984, p. 342) highlights that "the black reality involves supernatural and a profound rootedness in the real world at the same time with neither taking precedence over the other."

Based on this understanding, the overall aim of study in African psychology is to promote a wholesale rethinking and rejection of the restrictive colonial epistemologies we have inherited as postcolonial subjects. Commenting in this regard, Nyamnjoh (2015, 2017) points out that with adherence to restrictive colonial epistemologies, " whole societies, countries and regions have been categorized, depending on how these 'others' were perceived in relation to Cartesian rationalism and its empiricist, disembedded expectations of modernity."

Indeed, as Nyamnjoh (2015, 2017) sees it, capitulating to the exclusive use of empiricist epistemology is tantamount to submitting to a way of knowing that claims the status of a solution, in which there is little room for introspection or self-scrutiny. In Nyamnjoh's (2012) view, such messianic qualities have imbued practitioners of this epistemology with an attitude of arrogance, superiority, and intolerance toward creative difference and appropriation. In contrast, for Nyamnjoh (2015, 2017) and for myself, given "the intricacies of popular conceptions of reality, and in view of the frontier reality of many an ordinary African, nothing short of convivial scholarship would do justice to the legitimate quest for activation of African potentialities" (Nyamnjoh, 2015, p. 16; 2017). According to Nyamnjoh: "A truly convivial scholarship is one which does not seek a priori to define and confine Africans into particular territories or geographies, particular racial and ethnic categories, particular classes, genders, religions or whatever other identity marker. Convivial scholarship confronts and humbles the challenge of over prescription and over standardisation. It is critical and evidence based; it challenges problematic labels, especially those that seek to unduly oversimplify the social realities of the people and places it seeks to understand and explain" (p. 16).

Following Nyamnjoh's (2012, 2015, 2017) and Morrison's (1984) observations, within the epistemology of African psychology, the real is not only what is observable or what makes cognitive sense; it is also the invisible, emotional, sentimental, intuitive, and inexplicable (Nyamnjoh 2012,

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pp. 131–132; Nwoye, 2015). All these are part and parcel of the pluralist ontology studied in African psychology.

Methodological Decolonization and Adoption of the Philosophy of Constructive Alternativism

African psychology as a postcolonial academic discipline (Nwoye, 2017, 2021b) aims to loosen itself from the master narratives of traditional Western psychological methodologies. Taking this position, however, does not imply that African psychology seeks to work from a kind of idealistic methodological *tabula rasa* (Nwoye, 2021a). It rather means that, as a postcolonial academic discipline within the larger field of psychological scholarship in continental Africa, with a broad-based subject-matter (encompassing both natural and spiritual realities) in its research agenda, it endeavors to set itself free to explore and appropriate different perspectives and research methodologies wherever they are found that can allow it to do justice to the study of the complexity of human experience in the African world. Consequently, scholars of African psychology are not afraid to adopt any methodological approach (no matter which region of the world it comes from) that is relevant to the study of human subjectivity, culture, and experience in pre- and postcolonial African world (Nwoye, 2015, 2021a). Seen in this perspective, when scholars of continental African psychology adopt, for instance, the *contrapuntal reading* approach proposed by Edward Said as a fitting strategy for exploring the psychological capital embedding some of enduring African cultural traditions and spiritual and religious practices, they do so not minding the fact that this approach has not been legitimated within the psychological literature of the West. Rather, they adopt that approach and others similar to it largely because they have seen that, in comparison to some conventional methods in the study of Western psychology, they come closer to serving their research needs as psychologists and scholars operating from a continental African perspective in the study of psychology.

Here, of course, it is important to note that the principal meaning of Said's concept of contrapuntal reading entails an attempt to bring various interpretive voices (particularly the silent or hidden meanings making up a given discourse or artifact) into the study of any text (or, as in our case, a cultural practice) to illuminate its subterranean or hidden rationale or thought processes which might not be apparent otherwise. Hence, the contrapuntal

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reading approach is a methodology that insists on exploring *the unsaid* or *the glossed over* in any dialogue of human civilizations and experience, such as that between Africa and the West.

This clarification demonstrates that African psychology currently operates from the decolonized conviction that there are multiple methodological standpoints from which viable human knowledge can be produced. This emphasis on an adoption of plural or multiple perspectives in the study of continental African psychology encourages the further assumption among the majority of continental African psychologists and scholars that it is not possible in linguistic, conceptual terms to give any final or absolute account of what there is, particularly when the issue under study is located in the past or, as often occurs in the African context, in the supernatural world. Thus understood, scholars of African psychology and other areas of the social sciences have chosen to operate from the methodological philosophy of *constructive alternativism* (Kelly, 1955; Nyamnjoh, 2012, 2015), which underscores the wisdom of adopting from among available alternative methodological approaches the most viable options to move the African psychology field forward.

This tactic of following a multiple approach for sourcing viable knowledge of human beings and the human experience in continental Africa encourages the attempt by many African psychologists and scholars to endogenously engage in an epistemological rebuilding of African psychology—that is, to promote a new mapping of the epistemic domain in our context and promote in our research and disciplinary practice what Nyamnjoh (2015) has referred to as convivial scholarship. Hence, part of the program of research in African psychology involves a greater openness to local premodern traditions, both scholarly and folk. It also includes turning our attention to hitherto unrecognized sources for achieving human knowledge, such as the study of the African sages (Presbey, 1999), in trying to understand certain aspects of indigenous African practices and experiences often grossly misrepresented by earlier anthropological studies in Africa. Many scholars of African psychology thus now direct their efforts at previously neglected or overlooked problems or themes, such as the basis for people's search for "yellow bone" through skin bleaching practices and the continued practice of polygyny as well as female circumcision in many parts of Africa. Their attempt in this regard similarly embraces replacing some traditional Western psychological categories and concepts, such as in the context of child rearing methodologies, with alternatives, such as instructional parenting and the practice of

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child "responsibilization," which refers to the exercise of starting early to engage the child in responsibility training (Danziger, 2006; Nsamenang, 1992; Nwoye, 2006; Mweru, 2011).

These indications imply that African psychology represents an important shift of discourse from those introduced by foreign researchers in Africa (such as the colonial anthropologists and ethnologists) and their local collaborators who tended to see Africa as a place of the "exotic Other," or a continent where primordial human beings suspended on the first rung of Darwin's evolutionary ladder can still be found (Kirschner, 2015; Nyamnjoh, 2015). In effecting this shift and the resistance that goes with it, most scholars of psychology in continental Africa draw inspiration from what is often referred to as the "combative ontology" of Professor Archie Mafeje, one that entails the act of negation of negation.

In commenting in this regard, Adesina (2008) remarked that "(a)gainst the prevailing (mis)representations of Africa and the Africans, an important aspect of Mafeje scholarship was devoted to a vigorous process of negation of negation or the combating of what he referred to as the 'epistemology of alterity.'" According to Adesina, no discipline came up for harsher rebuke from Mafeje in this context than anthropology, the field of study in which he received much of his graduate education. But beyond "protest scholarship," Mafeje's works equally involved a resolute affirmation of endogeneity—or that kind of scholarship grounded in and driven by the affirmation of and the return to the study of African experiences. In this regard, the following passage by Mafeje himself puts the whole idea of the search by African psychologists for endogenous methodology in very clear perspective.

> As I conceive it, ethnography (or any other social science research in Africa) is the end product of social texts authored by the people themselves. All I do is to study the texts so that I can decode them, make their meaning apparent or understandable to me as an interlocutor or the "other." What I convey to my fellow-social scientists is studied and systematised interpretations of existing but hidden knowledge. In my view, this was a definite break with the European epistemology of subject/object. . . . It was simply a recognition of the other not as a partner in knowledge-making, but as a knowledgemaker in her/his own right. Whether I discover this through conversations as Griaule and Dumont (did), through interviews, recordings, participant observation, oral traditions, artistic expressions, or written accounts, it is immaterial. Because all these are so many different

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> ways of reaching the same objective, namely, understanding the (African) other. (Mafeje, 1996, p. 35)

Inspired by this conviction and coupled with our refusal to continue to see Africans in the way in which Europeans and researchers from Europe had tended to see them (as "it," or passive objects), scholars of African psychology reject the prevailing tendency in the field of cross-cultural psychology to see psychological research in Africa largely as a process of using the African context as a laboratory for testing the "universal applicability" of externally generated psychological theories canonized in Western psychology, such as those proposed by Piaget, Rawls, Festinger, Vygotsky, Eysenck, Lewin, Tajfel, Sternberg, and Gardner (Nwoye, 2015).

In contrast to this exogamous approach to the study of psychology in Africa, scholars of African psychology, in line with Mafeje's perspective, strive to study Africans as people in their own right, as knowledge-carriers; that is, as full-fledged human beings with some important knowledge to share with the world. To accomplish this aim, they (African scholars of psychology) strive to evolve relevant home-grown theories grounded in direct African experience and practice. Such creative attempts are not only consistent with the philosophy of African scholarship as enunciated by Mafeje (1971, 1996). They are also in line with Hountondji's (1995) view on how an original and creative African scholarship should be pursued. Thus commenting in this regard, Hountondji remarked that

> The logic of marginalization, as developed through centuries of forced integration, including the slave trade, colonization and neocolonization, has not succeeded in blowing out our age-old heritage of knowledge, both practical and theoretical. If this had been the case, we should no longer have any handicraft, any weaving, any pottery, any basket-making, any cooking, any metallurgy, any rainmaking technique, any "traditional" medicine and pharmacopoeia, any divination system, any counting system, any botanical and zoological taxonomy or any original teaching methods and procedures. (p. 7)

Hountondji (1995), after making this point, concluded that all of these practices and much more still exist and need to be discovered or rediscovered through research. Yet it must be noted that African psychologists' attempt to affirm endogeneity does not imply any nostalgia or a yearning on their part

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for the recovery of African ways of life in their pure state, unaffected by the vagaries of change and external influences. What is emphasized instead is the need to approach African research subjects as people who have some knowledge that is worthwhile to share, a story to tell about their lives as lived, and that they should be allowed to tell these stories in the best way they can: in narratives or in writing, in dance or in song, or in their day-to-day rituals and ceremonies. Hence a *performance* research paradigm can be exploited as a technique of research in African psychology.

These indications mean that African psychology, particularly as understood in continental Africa, at bottom represents a *mode of postcolonial psychological study whose aim is to take more things into consideration than is usually the case* (such as the seen and unseen realities and the language and culture of the people) in its study of Africans as psychological subjects. Thus positioned, African psychology as a postcolonial academic discipline within the larger field of psychological scholarship in African universities represents a more inclusive, globalectic (wa Thiong'o, 2012) approach to the study of human reality and the politics of knowledge in Africa than the traditional Western approach to psychology could allow. Hence, in their analytic mode, African scholars of psychology respect people's experience and differences and, in their field research, respect people enough to believe that they are in the best position to tell where the pain pinches them.

African Psychology as a Human Science

On account of its avowed commitment to making a connection to realities both within the visible and invisible worlds, and due to the importance it gives to the study of culture and experience as a means of achieving effective human understanding in the African context, including the value it attaches to listening to people's "claims of experience" (Freeman, 2014), African psychology is simply and squarely a human science. In operating as a human science, African psychology places enormous emphasis on the role of the interpretive paradigm, case studies, and the phenomenological method and psychobiography in its study of human beings as psychological subjects and objects of history. For example, consistent with its use of the phenomenological research approach, African psychology, based on the subjective perspective, recognizes the value of promoting mutual participation between the researcher and the research participant in the process of conducting

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psychological research with humans as subjects. It also appreciates our involvement in the tradition and the life of culture in which both we and the individuals whom we study are immersed. For this reason its phenomenological approach to the study of life of the mind in Africa is an attempt to give recognition to this important aspect of itself as a human science.

One important implication of seeing African psychology as a human science is with regard to the value it attaches to the role of human language and spirituality (Myers, 2012) as a means of understanding what is inside the individual being studied. For this reason, in African psychology, it is considered important that the person being studied and the researcher him- or herself should be able to access each other in a common language. Indeed, recognizing that the subjective lives of others and the culture and history within which they live and work are the very phenomena most central to the human condition, the general orientation of researchers in African psychology is consistent with the current burgeoning of qualitative research approaches within the progressive arm of Western psychology (Gergen et al., 2015).

The Notion of Human Beings as Cultural Beings

So, what kind of philosophical anthropology is championed in continental African psychology? One quick answer is that it is the kind that sees human beings as cultural-historical beings. This means that, as far as I am concerned, the study of African psychology in continental Africa must be guided by the assumption that one major way of understanding the key characteristics of human beings is to study them in terms of how they differ from other created beings, such as animals and angels. Seen from this perspective, one way in which humans are unique in relation to both angels and animals is their possession of culture. This is because while, on the one hand, like the angels, humans are spirit-directed beings, they are yet more than angels: they are beings endowed with embodiment and a culture. Similarly, while humans, like animals, are biological beings, they are unique in comparison to animals in that, unlike animals, they have not only a body, but also a spirit and a culture (Myers, 2012; Sodi, Bopape, & Makgahlela, 2021).

Seen from this perspective, the phenomenon of culture and the culturalization of people, in my view, should be understood in African psychology as one of the great windows through which scholars of African psychology can understand the nonbiological assets of each human being.

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Hence, when I proposed that one key distinguishing characteristic of human beings in comparison to other beings like animals and angels is that they are cultural beings, I mean that humans, both Africans and non-Africans, are not only subject to biological laws but also are informed and bound by cultural influences and indigenous traditions and conditions in the course of their lives. In that way, humans are not just natural or spiritual beings, but are also beings that live under the shadow of a culture—without, at the same time, this notion of the cultural shadow jeopardizing the idea of "the basic unity of humankind."

Given this understanding, the question may then become, what indeed is culture? In the context of this chapter, the first point to make is that the term "culture" has been defined in many ways. Thus, some people define it as a sign of one being civilized or rather as what makes a person distinguishable from his or her fellows through the influence of learning or education. Following this definition, being cultured is understood as a product of training or humanization. Thus conceived, however, even when it is said that a dog is a trained dog, it cannot be said that dogs are cultural beings because their training is given to them by humans, not by dogs themselves. This particular way of understanding the notion of cultural education and training that is peculiar to human beings suggests that, as I see it, a cultural being is one who can formulate a training program for him- or herself or for his or her fellows—that is, one who can plan and envision the importance of such a program and undergoes such training or gives it to others for some expected results.

Contributing to this debate, Odora-Hoppers (2001) remarked that, unlike the biological qualities of human life that are transmitted genetically, culture is learned, transmitted by tradition. Indeed, according to Hoppers, culture can be seen as that body of learned behaviors or practices common to a given human society. This is a particular way of understanding the term "culture" that is consistent with the view given by some ethnographers and anthropologists, particularly Edward B. Tylor, who many years ago introduced the term "culture" as the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought typical of a population or community at a given time. Specifically, according to Tylor (1924), "Culture, or civilization, taken in its broad, ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (p. 1).

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This definition refers to a *product* notion of culture. However, apart from the product concept of culture, the term "culture" in our context can be defined as the *process* through which a normal human being comes to learn the way of life of their people and, in that way, are helped to work toward achieving the full realization and maturation of their potential as human beings. Seen in this perspective, the term "culture" explains why the process of cultural education can be understood as an undertaking through which a human baby is initiated into the accumulated stock of local knowledge available in his or her community and cultural group. Hence, the notion of culture in the context of the study of African psychology, to my mind, is to be understood as a process which enables the individual to grow from the state of ignorance of the cultural idioms of his or her people into a mature adult human being, as understood in the society of which he or she is a part.

Of course, it must be mentioned that in the course of the twentieth century, the concepts of nature and culture have tended to be seen as different and opposed to one another. In that regard, culture was distinguished from nature and taken to refer to all man-made aspects of the environment, such as the works of human hands, customs, and conventions. Culture in this sense was understood as a human creation, and, as such, it was taken to stand for the products of the human mind and the exercise of the human will.

However, considered from the point of view of the present discussion, a human being is considered a cultural being not in the sense that he or she is opposed to nature, but that, at the moment of his or her birth, nature gave him or her only the necessary minimum for surviving in the world. In other words, at the time of birth, the natural biological state is not enough to guarantee the status of being designated as a full-fledged human being without the imprint of the culture of the society to which that newborn belongs. Rather, the understanding in the kind of philosophical anthropology that I envisage to ground the study of African psychology is that each individual child comes into the world with the necessary conditions of possibility for being transformed from the position of being a raw biological human being to the state of being regarded as a full-fledged human being, influenced by the thoughts, values, and moral visions of his or her culture and community (Nwoye, 2017, 2021a).

The implication of this understanding is that while an animal is fully equipped by and acquires everything from nature for its overall existence in the world, and so does nothing more than merely instinctively and mechanically execute or live out that which was inscribed or programmed in its DNA,

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a human being as understood in this discussion receives DNA from nature but also is endowed with an enormous flexibility founded on the ontology of *basic incompleteness*. That condition of fundamental incompleteness that nature assigns each human being at birth goes with the comparative advantage and opportunity for working out the full realization of him- or herself, assisted by cultural mediation throughout the course of his or her life in the world. Seen in this perspective, every human being is born dependent and incomplete and can only be made whole through the nurture and support of members of his or her culture and community (Nwoye, 2020, 2021a). This notion of the human being as incomplete at birth explains why, in many indigenous communities in Africa, the understanding is that human beings are made humans through other humans (Nwoye, 2017), or, which amounts to the same thing, that a person is made a person through other persons (or, as the Igbo people of Nigeria will say, "*Obu madu n'eme madu, obulu madu*").

Hence, when in the context of this discussion it is emphasized that a human being is a cultural being, what is implied is that, in the state in which each individual child is born, each must submit to the resources of his or her culture and people to achieve the complete fruition and blossoming of his or her basic potential as a human being. Concurring with this observation, Bloch (1996) remarked that "The problem with (Western) psychologists' approach to memory in the real world comes . . . from their failure to grasp the full complexity of the engagement of the mind in culture and history, and, in particular, their failure to understand that culture and history are not just something created by people but that they are, to a certain extent, that which creates persons" (p. 216). Seen in this light, a human being can be said to be a cultural being in two broad senses: first, as a product of his or her people's culture and, second, as a producer of culture. Hence, although African scholars of psychology generally relate with the human individual as a thinker who produces thought, his or her thought should not be approached as simply an individual product. This is because, as a human subject, the human being must be seen as one whose creativity, as T. S. Eliot remarked, is the fruit of tradition as well as the expression of individual talent. This means that when we say that, as understood in African psychology a human being is understood as a cultural being, this does not in any way mean that in African psychology the understanding is that human autonomy is canceled out by the determinisms of culture and the circumstances that impinge on it. On the contrary, what is argued is that these determinisms and circumstances are constitutive of the very creativity at hand.

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These indications mean that, from the perspective of the philosophical anthropology that, in my view, grounds the practice of research and scholarship in African psychology, the primary aim of culture (and its agents, such as parents, elders, social teachers, and professional psychologists) is to cultivate each human baby with the aim of allowing him or her to become a well-rounded human being. This is another way of saying that the act of transforming the human baby from the raw biological entity in which he or she came into the world is a job of *humanization* of the child through the process of *culturalization*. Indeed, the culture of a given human group must always be concerned with the task of converting a raw human being into a person, one composed of a fully developed spirit with the stamp of a given culture and endowed with the opportunity to bring to realization those talents and gifts which Providence has bestowed on the individual for the improvement of the human condition. Seen in this way, culture is understood in continental African psychology as an *important basic need* in the life of a human being (Nwoye, 2020, 2021a).

The Modern African Child as a Child of the "Middle Ground"

Given this notion of culture, the emerging challenge becomes how best to understand the situation of the modern African child who is born at the crossroads or "between and betwixt" contending cultural traditions: African and global. The notion of the modern African child as a child of the "middle ground," as articulated by the Chinua Achebe, comes directly to mind. The notion was first introduced in Chinua Achebe's 1993 article entitled "The Education of a 'British-Protected' Child," published in the *Cambridge Review.* In that article, Achebe offered the reader a summary image of his growing up experience in colonial Nigeria and inhabiting its "middle ground," highlighting that the time and place in which he was raised was "a strongly multiethnic, multilingual, multireligious, somewhat chaotic colonial situation" (p. 39). In closely reading that article, I found his use of the notion of the "middle ground" as the best way of expressing the synthesis of experience of many modern African people who were privileged to be exposed to both the opportunity and risk of colonial education over and above the native African education which they received from members of their family and the larger village community. For Achebe and members of his generation, as well as

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those of the current global village (wa Thiong'o, 2012), the basic and first round of education that the African child gets is African education, delivered through an oral tradition in the form of stories, proverbs, and folktales, and where parents and senior siblings serve as social teachers to the child. It is this very point that the famous Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1982) was alluding to when he remarked that

> I was born in a peasant family: father, four wives and about twenty-eight children. I also belonged as we all did, in those days, that is, my generation, to a wider extended family and to the community as a whole. We spoke Gikuyu as we worked in the fields. We spoke Gikuyu in and outside the home. I can vividly recall those evenings when we sat around the fireside and grown-ups and, the children, would tell stories in turns. It was mostly the grown-ups telling the stories to us, the children, but everybody was interested and involved. The stories with mostly animals as the main characters were told in Gikuyu. Hare being small and weak, but full of innovative wits and cunning was our hero. We identified with him as he struggled against the brutes of prey like Lion, Leopard and Hyena. (pp. 1–2)

This reflection by Ngugi wa Thiong'o is very revealing in the context of the present discussion. It illustrates the fact that every African child, particularly those born and raised in rural settings, emerges from childhood already loaded with a cultural background and a subjectivity that is constituted through basic traditional education, plus a linguistic capital and oral tradition and moral vision that impress upon him or her the view that making headway in life does not depend so much on one's physical size as on one's "innovative wits" and constructive cunningness. This basic traditional cultural education of the child is compulsory and starts right at the moment of birth. In most rural environments even today (particularly among the Nubians in the North, and other groups in South, East, and West Africa), African children have no other access to education until they are of age for primary education, which introduces them into the Western (colonial) type of cultural education and linguistic tradition (Dangarembga, 1988/1989).

The following attestation by Paule Marshall confirms that even among the children of the African Diaspora, the same process of cultural education takes place. As Marshall (1983) powerfully reports,

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> When people at readings and writers' conferences ask me who my major influences were, they are sometimes a little disappointed when I don't immediately name the usual literary giants. True, I am indebted to those writers, white and black, whom I read during my formative years and still read for instruction and pleasure. But they were preceded in my life by another set of giants whom I always acknowledge before all others; the group of women around the table long ago. They taught me my lesson in the narrative art. They trained my ear. They set a standard of excellence. This is why the best of my work must be attributed to them; it stands as testimony to the rich legacy of language and culture they so freely passed on to me in the workshop of my mother's kitchen. (p. 30)

This observation reveals that even before African children of Achebe's and the current generation inhabiting the rural settings become formally exposed to Western (foreign) educational programs, they were already initiated (to borrow R. S. Peters [1963] idea of *education as initiation*) into the cultural wellsprings of their society's way of life, beliefs, values, rituals, and ceremonies, and duly instructed about how to handle the day-to-day tasks of home and life. In this way, African boys learn, through their father's *obi* (living room) as their word-shop, a lot about how (old) adult men of their culture talk and exchange views with one another and the proverbs, idioms, and metaphors they use, not by joining the conversation directly, but just by being present among these adults as the father's friends come to exchange views on a given problem. And just as with the boys, so also the girls (as Paule Marshall attests) learn a lot about African life and its traditions from the discussions or dialogues going on between their mothers and mothers' friends, not by direct participation, but by virtue of their just being allowed to be there, listening (Nwoye, 2021a).

Situations like these suggest that a good part of African education is informal and does not require the child's actual conversational participation in adult discussions for such education to take place. By just being there in a sort of deceptively passive mode, each boy child learns a lot about life by means of his ears and eyes. And the same is equally true of the experience of the African girl child's education through the mother in the company of other mothers at the women's section of the traditional African family home.

However, when introduced into a Western type of education, the same children gain access to foreign cultures and traditions in addition to the earlier learnings about the African heritage they gained at home and in their

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mother tongue (Dangarembga, 1988/1989). As Hamidou Kane showed in his classic novel, *Ambiguous Adventure*, this kind of double experience of education (African and Western/Arabic) can present certain conflicts (in values and manners, particularly with the colonial school rule that the mother tongue should not be spoken while in school) to some African children. But through the power of *personal direction* most of the children are able, either by native intelligence or by the observation of their progressive age mates, to discern and come to a *middle ground* and be in a position to see the value of each type of education in responding to the day-to-day needs of their contemporary lives (Nwoye, 2021a). In that way, for example, they are able to use their mother tongue when at home with their parents, grandparents, and relatives, but can easily switch to the relevant foreign (English, French, or Portuguese) language when the need arises.

These observations mean that African children's contact with other civilizations brings with it both the risk and the opportunity of exposure and appropriation to more than one perspective and approach to facing life. This phenomenon of the *double* or *multiple socialization* of the modern African child (Nwoye, 2006) is a privilege associated with the power of the "middle ground," which the so-called colonized African children possess but which most of their counterparts from Euro-American countries appear to lack.

Now, what is the fundamental role of African psychology in all this? It is to make African children aware of their special privilege of being at the "middle ground" of civilizations, which history has been kind enough to entrust with them. In this way, they will be made to see their situation from the perspective of a strength to be appreciated, rather than to bemoan the loss of pure engagement with their African cultural tradition. This is the privilege that being born at the crossroads of cultures holds out to them (Nwoye, 2021a). This, in my view, is another way of saying that a well-bred modern African child is one with a "liberated and synthesized self" (Kane, 2011).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I highlighted the epistemological, philosophical, and cultural perspectives in African psychology. The chapter argued that, owing to the inclusive nature of its subject matter, African psychology in continental Africa must adopt an open philosophy approach to scholarship. The principal themes discussed point at the effort that scholars of African psychology

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are making to liberate themselves from the restrictive ways and exclusivist orientation to doing psychology propagated in mainstream Western psychology, which dominates space in many psychology degree programs in African universities. The chapter also drew attention to some African cultural perspectives that ground critical and clinical scholarship in African psychology. In closing, it is important to mention that although African psychology is found among Blacks located in two different continents, each group enjoys both distinct and common political and cultural realities that must inform and drive their specific approaches to the study of their respective African psychologies. In studying African psychology in continental Africa, four important critical methods of research and writing are proposed: deconstructive, reconstructive, constructive, and multidirected partiality approaches. The first is relevant when the aim is to point out the errors and distortions about Africa and its peoples found in mainstream Western psychology. The second is crucial when the aim goes beyond the exercise of identifying and correcting distortions about the image of Africans and their world, and also moves to replace such distortions with more correct information about Africa and its peoples. The third approach is needed when the aim is to create new theories and concepts required to generate new freshness and originality in the study of African psychology as an academic discipline (Nwoye, 2021a, 2021b) endowed with its own epistemologies, principles, and assumptions that are grounded in African cultural and philosophical thought and practice. This procedure will guarantee the birth of a new dimension in the study of psychology in Africa. The fourth, the methodology of *multidirected partiality*, shows that African psychology is not afraid to learn from and draw on all relevant human knowledge traditions and theoretical and conceptual perspectives (local and foreign) found within and outside the field of psychology as long as such knowledge traditions from the various African groups and the wider world do not contradict or distort African reality and humanity but instead enable us to better understand and explain the life of the mind and some cultural practices and experiences in continental Africa (wa Thiong'o, 2012; Nwoye, 2020).

This chapter reveals that African psychology is a full-fledged postcolonial discipline with multiple epistemological and methodological approaches in its research and scholarship.

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5

Endogenous Principles and Concepts in African Psychology

In this chapter, I provide an example of the kind of dividends that emerge when the aim of research in African psychology is driven by its emphasis on constructive methodology. In implementing this aim, the specific objective is to highlight some of the home-grown fundamental concepts, principles, ideologies, and perspectives that populate the life of the mind in continental Africa. In this regard, I hope to demonstrate that a number of basic concepts and principles emerging from African cultural phenomenology constitute an important segment of the knowledge base of African psychology. Among such principles and the concepts embedding them are (1) the principle of bifocality, (2) the principle of duality and interdependent ontology, (3) the principle of diunital rationality, (4) the principle of the guinea-fowl mentality, (5) the principle of endotropism or kienyegism, (6) the Sankofa paradigm or the principle of putting the past ahead, (7) the principle of the "seed yam mentality," (8) the concept of multilayered consciousness, (9) the ideology of the chameleon perspective, (10) the detached attachment hypothesis, (11) the theory of the limits of language, and (12) the notion of prophetic pragmatism.

These principles and the important concepts embedding them together demonstrate that African psychology is culturally situated and derives most of its assumptions and theoretical perspectives from the mentalities, worldviews, moral visions, and orienting frames of reference of the people of Africa, past and present. And all of them are put forward in this chapter in response to the concern about the crisis of theoretical extraversion in African scholarship generally (Adesina, 2001; Hountondji, 1995, 2009). Hence, part of the objective of this chapter is to highlight some of the emerging principles and concepts utilized in the practice of scholarship in African psychology that could enrich the study of psychology in the wider world.

Having said this, I first delineate and clarify what each of these principles and concepts entails, starting with the first, the principle of bifocality.

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The Principle of Bifocality

Three senses in which this principle is being used in this discussion deserve explication. The first relates to the idea captured in the notion of *bifocality*: African psychology is interested in the impartial study of *both* the physical *and* the spiritual, the mystical *and* the ordinary, and the social, psychological, cultural, *and* moral sides of human beings in continental Africa (East and West, North and South) as well as in the deployment of applicable quantitative and qualitative methodologies in its research and scholarship. Thus, the principle of bifocality, implying the recognition by African psychology of the simultaneity of realms of being, is one of the orienting principles in the general practice (research and clinical) of African psychology. The second dimension for understanding the relevance of this principle in the study of African psychology relates to the fact that African psychologists, being members of the postcolonial dispensation, are legitimate heirs or inheritors of a double civilization—African and Global—and therefore entitled to draw from the best that has been thought and said in the knowledge traditions of both civilizations (Nwoye, 2015b) in enhancing their research and scholarship. Through this principle one is able, for example, to study African psychology not only with the aid of one's indigenous language and cultural idioms and expressions, but also with the aid of major foreign languages such as English, French, and Portuguese, into which most of us have been inducted.

The third dimension for understanding the application of this principle is with regard to the factor of time perspective in the study of African psychology. Here the point is that we are influenced by the principle of bifocality in the sense that African psychology is interested in the study of people of past and present Africa as psychological subjects. In line with this principle, African psychology goes beyond the study of indigenous Africans (pre-European contact Africans) to include the study of colonial and postcolonial Africans and the challenges and complexities of the contemporary African environment and the globalized culture in which they live and work. Hence, as indicated earlier in this book (Nwoye, 2015b), African psychology is a *both-and* psychology, encompassing not only the study of indigenous African psychology but also the study of contemporary African psychology as a postcolonial discipline.

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The Principle of Duality and Interdependent Ontology

This principle is a derivative of the worldview of the various peoples of Africa (Julien, 2018; Nyamnjoh, 2015; Tutuola, 1952). It proposes that there are always at least two sides to every story or, put another way, that multiple interpretations exist side by side on any issue under consideration. Or, that there is never just one facet to looking at any matter (Julien, 2018). Commenting on this, Achebe, in an interview cited by Julien (2018), remarks that

> there is no one way to anything. The Ibo people who made that proverb are very insistent on this—there is no absolute anything. They are against excess—their world is a world of dualities. It is good to be brave, they say, but also remember that the coward survives. (Achebe, quoted in Moyers (1989, p. 333)

This principle implies that, in order to develop deep understanding of anything, one point of view is never enough because knowledge is not one-sided. Following this principle, the same Chinua Achebe highlights elsewhere that "if you have five religions in your village, there's no reason to insist that there should only be one and that the other four should be wiped out" (cited in Whittaker, 2011, p. 7).

Indeed, the dominance of this principle in the life and mind of an African individual was first articulated in an essay by Francis E. Ngwaba, in his important article "Complementary Duality as a Principle of Characterisation in Achebe," published in 1996. In that article, Ngwaba shows that Achebe, through his writings, attempts to demonstrate that in the African view of reality, the principle of duality or the phenomenon of interdependent ontology prevails because nothing in life (including the sky above and the earth below, night and day, hot and cold, body and spirit, male and female, marriage and maternity, natural and supernatural, success and hard work, beginning and ending, rise and fall, open and close, smoke and fire, left and right, mother and child, up and down, high and low, etc.) lives in complete isolation from another. Rather, as Achebe himself put it, drawing on an Igbo (Nigerian) proverb "where one thing stands another stands beside it" or as the Igbo language equivalent puts it: "*Ife kwuru, Ife akwudebe ya*," a pithy local idiom which draws attention to the idea that fundamental to the African view of reality is the notion that nothing in life, whether human or spirit, the living or the dead, the self or the other, can live in isolation from another (Achebe,

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1990; cited in Nwoye, 2015a). Hence, the governing principle of natural and supernatural existence, at least as understood in Africa and other non-Western cultures, is the belief in the important *logic of inclusion* based on the spirit of dependence and interdependence (Animalu, 1990; Mbiti, 1969; Nwoye, 2007/2008; Webb, 2012).

It is this same point that Holdstock alluded to when he (Holdstock, 2000, p. 91) remarked that "The revised model of the self challenges the notion of the self as a demarcated entity, set off against the world. Power and control are not considered to rest predominantly with the individual, but within the field of forces within which the individual exists." Continuing, Holdstock remarks that "This revisioned concept of self has invariably been described as sociocentric-organic, bipolar, extended, communal, interdependent, open, ensembled, contextual, collective, embedded, embodied, dialogical, indexical, connected, constitutive, personalised, allocentric, relational, a decentralized non-equilibrium structure, a vital force in participation, oscillating, . . . and holistic" (see Holdstock, 2000, p. 91). Influenced by such a principle, scholars of African psychology reject the tendency rampant in Cartesian metaphysics to draw a categorical distinction between people and their complex environments—physical, social, natural, cultural and spiritual/supernatural—in which they are embroiled (Freeman, 2014; Kirschner, 2012, 2015; Nwoye, 2015a; Nyamnjoh, 2015).

Similar to their belief in the effective operation of the principle of (complementary) duality and the phenomenon of interdependent ontology in the mind of the African (North, South, East, and West), scholars of African psychology challenge, in line with other prominent scholars in contemporary Western psychology (e.g., Freeman, 2014; Holdstock, 2000; Kirschner, 2012, 2015), the dichotomous opposition of mind and body, self and the other, and the individual and the community as emphasized in traditional Western psychology. Consistent with such a principle as well, African psychology, as earlier mentioned, rejects any attempt to stay isolated from any useful font of knowledge tradition that exists anywhere (e.g., African, Western, African American, Australasian). Similarly a critical reading of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by Richard Priebe (1976) shows that people who fail to recognize such an important complementarity principle (the principle of duality) in knowledge traditions will end up with the error of absolutism, as Okonkwo, the chief character in Achebe's novel did and paid for it with his life. In the African and Asian cosmologies, the notion of "to be" involves the idea of "to belong" (Bomoyi & Mkhize, 2016; Cheung, 2012; Holdstock, 2000).

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The Principle of Diunital Rationality

Closely related to the principle of duality and interdependent ontology is the principle of *diunital rationality* (or the notion of the unity of opposites or the blending of contraries) that constitutes an essential thrust of the African imagination. It was Linda James Myers (1987) who, to the best of my knowledge, first formally drew attention to the operation in the African psyche of this important principle (further explicated and extended by Nyamnjoh, 2015, 2017), which challenges the Aristotelian principle of the law of excluded middle (Nwoye, 2015b). This is because, consistent with the law of excluded middle, Aristotle teaches that nothing can be two things at the same time. In other words, according to the Aristotelian law of excluded middle, one can only be one thing at a time (e.g., young or old and not both at the same time). In the African context, however, the law of excluded middle does not always apply. For in the African context one can be understood to be young and old at the same time depending on the perspective from which one is speaking (see Nwoye, 2015b). Similarly, in the African context, we can call somebody "mom" even though she is not directly our mother but is related to our mother or plays the role of mother in our lives. It is this same principle of *diunital* logic that gives all people of African descent the audacity to believe that our ancestors, though dead, are still living and retain the power to influence our lives in some manner (Mbiti, 1969). Thus conceived, the principle of diunital logic encourages scholars of African psychology to believe that the people they study or work with as clients cannot easily be represented in "either/or" terms, as dichotomous thinking tends to eliminate the inner contradictions that make up the essential fabric of people's humanity (as humans are both body and mind at the same time, for example). The application of the principle of diunital logic thus urges students and scholars of African psychology to remember that people are in the general run of things composed of a dialectic of opposites.

Given this, it becomes easy to see why opportunity for psychological disturbances can come in those who fail to understand that no one is an island unto him- or herself, that life is larger than logic, that the world is larger than what often meets the eye (Cheung, 2012; Nyamnjoh, 2015, 2017), that people can be several things to several people at a time, and that adherence to the economy of mutuality and interdependence is the key philosophy of life for a human being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1937/1962)—all aspects of a

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phenomenon depicted by the practice of conviviality among the various peoples of Africa (Nyamnjoh, 2015).

The Principle of the Guinea-Fowl Mentality

This principle derives from the Igbo (Nigerian) oral tradition of the guinea-fowl (or the Igbo wild fowl *okwa*) mentality. As given in the Igbo oral tradition, the notion of the *okwa* or the guinea-fowl mentality refers to the ethic of survival through embracing the dual perspective which the mother *okwa* instills in her children. The key point of this ethic is the need of the baby guinea fowl (*umu okwa*) to learn to embrace complexity of their animal environment by diversifying their eating habits through avoiding the unwise tendency to focus only on yam crops or tubers as food. In place of such a one-dimensional orientation to fending off hunger, the mother *okwa* enjoins her children to learn to survive by eating not only the unharvested yams in the fields, but also by eating tender tree roots as well. The governing idea here, according to the Igbo oral tradition, is the need to ensure that, in maintaining this dual perspective in their eating habits, when the yam farmer happens to harvest and take away all his or her yams, the little guinea fowl or *umu okwa* will not starve but will survive through the use of tender tree roots as their major food alternative while yam tubers are not available in the fields.

Drawing insight from this principle, it could be speculated that part of the reason why some African students who come into the university fail to achieve the expected throughput is because of their inability to follow the wisdom of the guinea-fowl or *okwa* mentality and embrace the complexity of the academic environment. Students who err in this regard are those who, after gaining entry into the university, tend to settle only for the enjoyment and relaxation part of the university environment, ignoring attention to the important demands and responsibilities that go with being a responsible and hard-working university student. Thus, people who follow a one-dimensional orientation to living often find themselves embarrassed, as the mother *okwa* or guinea fowl predicts, by their lack of a dual perspective that allows them to give adequate attention to other things that matter in their lives, whether as children, students, or adults. For, in each case, one cannot just engage in sleeping all day long or in eating one kind of food and believe that the negative repercussions that come from so doing will not catch up with those who live their lives in this way. Thus the principle of the guinea-fowl or *okwa*

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mentality as used in this discussion should be understood as an important principle in African psychology, endogenously derived, for understanding the negative effect of an inability in the life of human individuals or groups to embrace complexity or to "see things in poly-dimensional perspective."

The Principle of Endotropism or Kienyegism

The notion of *endotropism* is a neologism used in this discussion to describe the contemporary Black African peoples' tendency to return to reappropriate their ancient African mores and traditions which they had initially distanced themselves from after their contact with Western education and religion. This phenomenon of a return or re-emergence of interest in the suppressed African mores and cultural traditions in the life of contemporary Africans is understood by many scholars (starting with the negritude poets such as Leopold Sedar Senghor and Aime Cesaire in Africa and the Diaspora) as a sign that colonialism and the global culture may have its place in the *habitus* of the people but, at the same time, has not been able to totally displace or completely dismantle some of the enduring basic African orientations to living. In other words, the principle of Kienyegism is used in this discussion to recognize the current phenomenon of resurgent interest among contemporary African peoples toward things African, such as the renewal of interest in the use of indigenous African languages, dress style, foods, names, religion, culture, tradition, etc. they had once disowned and abandoned.

Two important incidents in my professional experience in East Africa drew my attention to the operation of this principle of endotropism or kienyegism among many African peoples in contemporary Africa. The first came from my experience during my period of service at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya, from 1996 to 2008. At that time, from the late 1990s onward, I came to discover that many Kenyans were no longer interested in the use of iron beds and the fluffy mattresses that go with them. Rather, given the choice, they prefer to own the modern form of solid cabinet wooden beds that go hand in hand with hard-core mattresses, the combination of which keeps the spine straight, not bent, with one's weight on it.

The second source of my experience in connection with the discovery of the operation of this principle came during my years of service at the University of Dodoma, in Tanzania (2009–2012), where I quickly noted among the generality of Tanzanian citizens the negative discrimination

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against poultry-farm grown chickens in favor of home-grown ones, popularly referred to as *kienyegi* (meaning, home grown or home breed). And it was from this experience that the concept of kienyegism as employed in this discussion took its origin.

Additionally, I equally discovered through my experiences across many countries in Africa other features characteristic of a new craving by contemporary Africans for things African, such as the resurgent desire for native foods and delicacies, including this preference for eggs from native chickens rather than those from poultry farms, the adoption of native names in place of Christian saint names, and the return to traditional African dress among Africans residing in the cities.

Against this background, I came to discover, in particular, that many women in Africa presently see it as being more meaningful and self-affirming to dress in their native costume on big occasions like weddings and other communal celebrations.

Concurring with these observations, Kolawole (2015) remarked that

> [e]xamples abound where immigrants in foreign lands crave and yearn for local food and delicacies wherever they find themselves. They seek satisfaction in local food at the expense of sophisticated Western cuisines that just would not appeal to individuals who are originally raised within certain local contexts. (p. 1191)

This interesting resurgence of interest in things African among contemporary Africans appears to imply the need for changing some rigid customs laws in various countries that restrict foreign residents from bringing their native food into their country of domicile. Drawing insight from the principle under discussion, it becomes clear why some of these laws often erected during the colonial period are hostile and ill-advised when dealing with transnational immigrants and should be reviewed.

Commenting similarly with regard to the noted current return of interest among contemporary African citizens in the use of indigenous rather than Christian names, Onyeneke (1987, p. vii) points out that African elites (e.g., Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi wa Thíong'o, Chimamanda Adichie, and Tsitsi Dangarembga, all of them famous African writers) "who had quickly been acculturated to the modern ways especially through the schools and Christian churches seem to be drastically reacting to the newly achieved styles. They want to be properly grounded by returning to the roots

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of traditional culture as the sure way to build an authentic future." In this regard, according to Onyeneke, "(t)he Igbo (or African) first names which were previously given up in favour of European saint names at baptism are now retrieved as a matter of style" (p. vii).

This new trend or resurgent appetite for things African is currently growing in intensity in many countries in Africa, which I here refer to as reflective of the emergence in the contemporary African psyche of the phenomenon of *endotropism* or *kienyegism*. And it can be speculated that such a psycho-cultural return to things African and the new attitude it represents emerged as a result of contemporary African people's ultimate realization that most of the Western products they had initially received with much enthusiasm in the past have not lived up to the high expectations placed on them in relation to the advantages they were supposed to hold in comparison with things African. In contrast, upcoming African citizens instead appear to have finally recognized that many classic African cultural products which they looked down upon in the past or threw away completely have managed to retain their enduring value, in comparison to their Western counterparts.

The principle of endotropism or kienyegism is therefore an emerging conceptual framework in the field of African psychology that very well reflects the contemporary African attitude to life in the globalized world. Its emergence and operation must be recognized as a sign that colonialism and the global culture do not appear to have an enduring dominant occupancy in the psyche of the people, to the extent of permanently erasing or displacing most of the enduring basic African values and cultural orientations to living.

The Sankofa Principle or the Principle of Putting the Past Ahead

The *Sankofa* principle came into the literature of African psychology from the Akan (Ghanaian) proverb which posits that we draw wisdom from our past in order to construct a better present and future for ourselves. This means that the *Sankofa* principle embodies a belief that in the African imagination the past is considered important as a base for pondering on the present and the future; and therefore that we cannot look forward intelligently to, or effectively plan for, the future without a careful review of the past because all events arise from the confluence of some kind of antecedents; failure to appreciate the past eliminates the possibility of foresight. Hence, the *Sankofa*

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principle in African psychology should be taken as being in sync with Mark Freeman's (2010) notion of hindsight as that process of looking back over the past from the standpoint of the present, an undertaking that can profoundly serve as an important source of understanding, insight, moral growth, and, in particular, self-knowledge, in people's lives. For, through the phenomenon of hindsight as through that of the *Sankofa* perspective, there emerges the opportunity not only to see the possible errors of our ways but also the opportunity for deciding to work toward transcending them and thereby ultimately shifting to better ways of being in the world. Of course, the *Sankofa* principle if not well used can present a counter-advantage to the individual concerned (e.g., if he or she only focuses on past failures and becomes unable to draw inspirational lessons from the positive stories of his or her own their or ancestors' past successes).

The Akan *Sankofa* symbol of this principle gives the image of a bird looking backward, and some traditions have it that the bird is flying forward while looking backward with an egg in its mouth, symbolizing the notion of the future at risk. In general, however, the key idea is that there is wisdom in taking an occasional reflective backward glance at one's past as a major means of preventing accidents in one's future or as an antidote to running into similar problems in one's present that one had encountered in the past.

Thus, the process of looking back to our past achievements or those of our ancestors invests us with inspiration and confidence about what we are capable of doing in the present and in the future. This is consistent with Freeman's (2010, 2015) observation that the trajectory of the past articulated through narrative bears within it a certain momentum, a directedness toward the future.

From the point of view of its implication in the context of African clinical psychological practice, drawing on the wisdom of the *Sankofa* principle will be particularly useful when working with clients with some personal problems to resolve in which there is the need to trace the problem to its roots. The application of the *Sankofa* principle in that case would entail the idea that unless some kind of genealogical accounting is undertaken to address the problem from its roots, getting at its comprehensive and permanent solution will always elude capture. And, with that, achieving a complete remission of the presenting problem will become but a mirage.

The same *Sankofa* principle appears to be part of the main sources of positive influence in the efforts noted among some brilliant sons and daughters of the African poor who, on getting into the university, for example, give

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every energy and opportunity at their disposal to achieve a higher grade performance through which, at the end, they would stand a better chance of gaining entry into prestigious occupations that will lift them out of their past experience of a disadvantaged family background. Such children engage in this *upward drive*, it may be speculated, based on the fact that while working in the present and thinking about their future, they take intermittently in imagination some backward glance on their past; an experience that helps to remind them of where they started, of their disadvantaged background, and of the need they have to move away from the poverty and constraints of that background through the application of the spirit of industry to everything they do. In that way, such children are able to take advantage of their present opportunities in search of a better future for themselves and their families. Put another way, it can be speculated that one of the powerful contributions of the *Sankofa* perspective in individuals who adopt it is enhancement in them of the *capacity for aspiration* (along the lines emphasized by Appadurai, 2013).

In this light, when drawing from the *Sankofa* (hindsight) principle, clinical work in African psychology must entail helping some African youth to avoid losing their sense of perspective and history in their new surroundings, a feat they can achieve only by always trying to keep their eyes focused on the conditions of their past and poor family background with their central aim in so doing being to better it through the correct application of themselves to useful work.

The Principle of "Seed Yam Mentality"

The notion of the seed yam mentality as used in this discussion was first introduced into the literature by Animalu (1990) in his famous Ahajioku Lecture, at Owerri, Nigeria. It is presented here as an important principle with enormous relevance in the study and practice of African psychology precisely because it is consistent with the traditional African idea of the laws of life and nature, particularly in the context of the people's relationship with and investment in their land and ancestors. Seen in this light, according to the African view of things, one does not reap without sowing or harvest without cultivating. Of course, it might be argued that there is nothing specifically African in this principle, but such a criticism does not in any way make it less African either.

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Indeed, the African understanding is that one cannot benefit from the support and protection of one's ancestors if one has not been able to make sacrifices regularly to these ancestors in the first place (Achebe, 1958). Similarly, in their relationship with the land as farmers, the same logic also holds supreme; namely, that unless one offers through the act of sowing seeds to the land that has been well tilled and cultivated (Achebe, 1958), the land cannot be in a position to yield any kind of meaningful harvest to the farmer. As members of agricultural communities, people in rural Africa are daily confronted with the poignancy of this principle.

Given this, scholars of African psychology must be aware of the presence of this kind of give-and-take attitude in the mind of the African people, urban and rural. It reflects the basic attitudinal orientation of the people in the context of their spirituality and day-to-day management of their life-worlds, such as in their politics. It is, for instance, on account of the influence of their seed yam mentality that they do not grumble against the giving of gifts (or tithes) to God during church services and why they spend money and energy to train their children with the expectation that when they (the parents) become old, these children will be able to take care of them as a payback for the services and sacrifices which the parents have made to take care of the children, in the first place. Hence the seed yam mentality is an important psychological principle, endogenously derived, that galvanizes much of the people's philosophy of life in both the African context and in the wider world. An African psychology worth its salt cannot but recognize and incorporate the knowledge of such a principle in its theory and practice.

The Notion of Double or Multilayered Consciousness

Two contrastive meanings have currently been associated with the notion of double or multilayered consciousness as a key element in the postcolonial African mind and experience. The first is the negative or paradoxical notion of it credited to W. E. B. Du Bois (1903) who, in his essay on the "the strivings of the Negro people," powerfully remarked that

> [T]he Negro is . . . born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in the American world—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking

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> at one's self through the eyes of others . . . of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body.

According to Du Bois, "the history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing . . . to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that the Negro blood has a message for the world" (Du Bois, 1903, p. 3).

Commenting on this paradoxical dimension of the notion of double consciousness as articulated by Du Bois, Lyubanksy and Eidelson (2004, p. 2) remarked that

> When Du Bois first described the Black experience of double consciousness 100 years ago, he clearly captured how alienation and disenfranchisement blended one identity that seemed inescapable with another that appeared unattainable. His words received immediate national and international attention and inspired several classic African American novels, including Zola Neal Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Richard Wright's *Black Boy*, and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man.*

In relation to the present discussion, I argue that this initial connotation of strain, paradox, and negativity associated with the Black experience of double consciousness has been deconstructed and reconstructed to accommodate a more positive notion of double or multilayered consciousness as understood in continental Africa. This is because, apart from Du Bois's conception of it as indicative of existence of alienation in the psyche of the African, there is another sense of double consciousness, or, in my own rendering of it, of *multilayered consciousness* within the Black psyche in which its value is presented in a somewhat more positive and constructive light. One pertinent example of this positive angle is that implied in Christie Achebe's (2010) important article which alludes to the existence in the modern African mind of a *multilayered faith* through which the complex lives of a typical African human being are daily negotiated. Commenting in this regard, Christie Achebe noted that Biafran women in the war years (1967–1970) drew strength and resilience

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from their multilayered faith in responding to the vicissitudes of the war experience. In further clarifying this phenomenon, she remarked that

> These women were . . . (d)eeply prayerful and religious, they can be characterized as simultaneously practicing what might be described as a "multilayered faith"—in the Igbo Supreme God (Chineke), in the Christian God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), in one's personal god (Chi), in the presence and intervention of one's ancestors (Ichie), and in a host of other deities, gods, and goddesses, depending on whom you talk to. One appeals to all simultaneously in order to harvest or benefit from the collective power of such complex and formidable forces. . . . By aligning oneself to each or "accommodating" to powerful cosmic forces, one is rewarded by feelings of vicarious participation in the power, wisdom or virtue of those forces. (Weisz et al., 1984b, p. 961)

I draw attention to these references to indicate that, at least here in continental Africa, a major construct that scholars of African psychology must work with is the notion of a multilayered consciousness that, from Achebe's (2010) account, benignly inhabits the typical adult African mind. This multilayered quality of the African mind is understood as an asset (rather than a liability or a source of alienation) for responding to the vicissitudes of existing in the complicated environment in which we live and work and having the capacity to identify with and draw simultaneously from the resources of the ancient and modern African world to attenuate these vicissitudes. From this understanding, the typical adult African individual sees him- or herself within the canopy of a multilayered consciousness. In that way one, can hold a multilayered consciousness of oneself as a black African, a Nigerian, an Igbo, a Christian, a Catholic, a university graduate, a male, married, and a believer in the existence of the supreme God and the presence and influence of the ancestors, all at once. Indeed, in the current dispensation, one would be deemed mentally unhealthy if one were to manifest a clear uneasiness at seeing oneself as one and the same person due to the presence of these dimensions of him- or herself.

Given this understanding, an interesting component in the study and practice of African psychology is that of exploring the extent to which contemporary Africans are at ease with seeing themselves in these separate but simultaneous dimensions of their identities.

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The Ideology of the Chameleon Perspective

This principle in the study of African psychology finds enormous relevance in the contemporary context of border-crossing, turfism, intersectionality, compromise, and accommodation which is demanded of living in a globalized world. In this regard, the psychology of the chameleon perspective refers to the cautionary perspective that is associated with the life of the chameleon. In the African cultural tradition, the chameleon is known to ordinarily walk with measured steps and caution. According to the Igbo (Nigerian) oral tradition, the chameleon is an interesting animal to watch (Nnaemeka, 2004). As it walks, it keeps its head straight but looks in different directions. It does not deviate from its goal and grows wiser through the knowledge gleaned from the different perspectives it absorbs along the way. If it sees prey, it does not jump on it immediately. First, it throws out its tongue. If nothing happens to its tongue, it moves ahead and grabs the prey. The chameleon is cautious. When the chameleon comes into a new environment, it takes the color of the environment without taking over the whole environment. This means that it adapts without imposing itself. The lesson projected in this principle is that whatever it is we do or wherever we go, we need to walk like the chameleon—goal-oriented, cautious, accommodating, adaptable, and open to diverse views (Nnaemeka, 2004).

This principle resonates with the message in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's (1965) novel, *The River Between*, which draws attention to the need that contemporary African Christian converts have to ensure that while accepting Christianity they must do so as citizens of the river between; that is, without doing a disservice to their identities as Africans. They must learn to behave like the chameleon, able to draw from the two cultures—African and Christian—in orienting their lives.

The Notion of Detached Attachment Hypothesis

In this discussion I use the notion of *detached attachment hypothesis* to refer to what happens when death occurs to disrupt the attachment economy that had existed between a husband and a wife before the death took place, and, following the bereavement, the successful performance by the bereaved of the culturally prescribed mourning rituals of leave-taking and breaking of bonds between the bereaved and the deceased (Nwoye, 2005). In this regard,

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as formulated by John Bowlby in association with Mary Ainsworth, attachment practices are said to take place between spouses when both are alive and typically live together and share proximity with one another. I use the seemingly contradictory construct *detached attachment* to stand for the effect of the alteration that takes place in the attachment economy of spouses following the death of one and, consequent on this, the successful performance by the bereaved of the mourning rituals sanctioned by the culture and community in response to the loss. In this instance, the term "detached attachment" encompasses the idea that with the death of a given spouse and the successful performance of the mourning rituals of breaking of bonds between the two spouses, the pre-bereavement attachment economy that both had hitherto enjoyed dissolves. However, this phenomenon of dissolution of the pre-bereavement bonds that existed between the two notwithstanding, the notion of a complete closure of every element of attachment between the two is not implied here. This is because, in the African context, one who dies is presumed to have died only in body and not in memory or spirit (Nwoye, 2015b). Hence, according to J. S. Mbiti (1969), our dead can only be understood as members of the living dead and not those who are completely dead. Given this understanding, the term *detached attachment* is used in this chapter to denote the idea that the psychobiological aspect of the attachment economy that had existed between spouses before death has dissolved with the loss of the physical life of the deceased and the successful performance of mourning rituals of leave-taking and breaking of culturally sanctioned bonds between the two. Yet because the deceased is presumed to have died but only in body and not in memory or spirit, the attachment that had existed between the two has merely been transformed to a rather different and more spiritual plane in which the notion of *detached attachment* is herein proposed as a better terminology for capturing the seemingly simultaneous liminal experience of the bereaved 'being no longer physically attached to, but still somehow having some lingering modicum of attachment (at least in memory rather than physically) to the identity of the deceased.

I venture to extend the use of the same expression of detached attachment for describing the effect of the alteration that takes place in the social relationship that exists between a father and his daughter in the African context, after the daughter has officially been given away in marriage to a suitor following the performance of the indigenous marriage ceremony of *lobola*. This situation leads to an automatic loss by the father of his hitherto

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caretaker role of the daughter and the social attachment bond that go with it before the marriage took place; as the daughter, following the marriage, will according to the dictates of the culture in which they were born and raised leave her father's home to relocate to the husband's home; a move that will lead to a shift in tension in the attachment economy that emerges between the two of them (the father and the daughter) as the father automatically relinquishes his previously caretaker role of the daughter to the husband, who now inherits that caretaker role and the attachment privileges that go with that responsibility. With this experience the relationship of *detached attachment* now emerges in the cultural economy of the father and her daughter from then henceforth. However, it needs to be remembered that even in this instance, like in the previous one, the notion of detached attachment must be used with caution in that because the same man still remains a father to her married daughter and vice versa, the marriage situation of the daughter notwithstanding, only a transformation in the attachment economy that had existed between them (the father and the daughter) comes into effect, not a total eclipse of that attachment; as the intensity of that attachment has reduced drastically given the distance separating the two of them consequent upon the occurrence of the daughter's marriage and exit of her father's home and subsequent adoption of the husband's home as her new home in the world.

These indications are intended to mean that the term *detached attachment* is a very important and elastic concept for describing a situation of dilution in the existence of bonding that had existed between two or more individuals arising from either the occurrence of death or marriage or due to the factor of the grown up children getting a job and graduating from their parents' home to establish on their own.

The Theory of the Limits of Language

One central message in the plays of most accomplished African artists is their theory of the limits of language in human life. A typical example of an illustrious African artist whose plays and other works (e.g., Soyinka's 1972 *The Man Died*), capitalize on and tend to propagate this theory is Professor Wole Soyinka of Nigeria, the first African Nobel Laureate. Supporting this observation and commenting on one of Soyinka's (1973) most important plays, *The Road*, D. S. Izevbaye (1976) notes that:

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> The Road is itself a dramatization of the limits of language. So a stylistic analysis in which we examine the relationship of characters deployed down a linguistic ladder from Professor the talkative one to Murano the mute one would tell us only part of the story, not only in the usual theatrical sense in which visual items complement dramatic speech, but because in this play *that which is heard is challenged by that which is seen.* (emphasis added)

This observation, from the point of view of African psychology, is a crucial point that warrants some reflection. It shows that, in the African context, an important conclusion from the commerce of human experience is that often the mouth is incapable of giving every account of what the eyes has seen. And that at times what the mouth says may flatly contradict or run short of what the eyes have seen. By means of this philosophy of African art and the principle of caution embedding it, it becomes easy to see why people ignorant of such a principle and the wisdom it contains will always be disappointed in their dealings with other humans who may say one thing to them today only to do completely opposite of what they have said tomorrow.

In particular, for a discipline like African psychology, this important understanding places emphasis on the need to give premium to the study of people's experience or what people have gone through, in which attention to visualizations and images rather than verbalizations must be accorded an important pride of place alongside what is said about the experiences being studied.

What this observations mean is that, unlike the Eurocentric approach to the study of psychology that places emphasis on people's verbalizations of inner experience, the Africentric approach to the study of psychology places emphasis on the need to go beyond language or verbalizations in its study of human beings to include attention to the anthropology of experience (Turner & Turner, 1986) or to the study of rituals and ceremonies and, therefore, to visualizations and images in its research and scholarship.

The Notion of Prophetic Pragmatism

This is an important construct first coined and introduced by the great African American philosopher and public intellectual Cornel West. West (1982, 1995, 1999) used that concept to describe the notion that the typical African American individual's life is suffused or permeated by the philosophy

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of positive hopefulness. Or, to put it another way, that the distinctive attribute of the African American individual is the ability to live a life imbued with the dynamism of the combative belief that there is always the possibility of ultimate triumph as long as one is endowed with the spirit of perseverance and patience and will make oppositional and courageous efforts in facing the odds and trials of human existence.

In this chapter, I use this same notion of prophetic pragmatism, infusing it with a wider meaning to describe the basic philosophy of life of the typical African. By this mean I mean that, as Cornel West has discovered among African Americans, the typical African individual regardless of country, age, sex, or class lives a life that is saturated or permeated with the ultimate conviction or prophetic hope that the "young shall grow," "that every life is endowed with a bundle of potentialities that must be harnessed to reap its benefit," "that the one that is born must engage in relentless positive struggles to better their own humankind," "that unless the tree roots die, there is always hope that the seemingly dry tree will live," "that in life the sun shines first on those who are standing than on those who are sitting or lying down (as the boon of greatness reaches first the hard-worker before the faint-spirited or lazy fellow)," "that the promise of tomorrow is greater than the toils of today" (or as the Igbo of Nigeria would say that "*Nkiruka*"), "that once there is life there is hope" (as the Igbo would say "*Nduka*"), "that the visit of a long illness is not a guarantee that the sick one must die in it" (or in Igbo language that "*na ejiro ayakam anwu*"), "that when faced with major trials of existence people must remember the advice of the mother bedbug to her children: that they should not worry when the owner of the bed in which they live pours hot water on it to kill them, since whatever is hot will eventually get cold and their life will continue"; that for the Igbo and therefore for the African, as one of the characters in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) has it, "Our ancestors do not pray for wealth, they pray for children because he who has children will also have wealth."

This far from exhaustive list of positive sayings and convictions is put forward to show that indeed, as Cornel West has discovered for African Americans in the United States, the typical African individual in continental Africa is essentially richly endowed and lives his or her life most of the time with visions of liberation and dreams of achieving ultimate emancipation from difficult circumstances constraining them. Or as Cornel West put it, in the spirit of prophetic pragmatism. Africans (past and present) derive from those sayings the ultimate guidelines and convictions by which to live.

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Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted and clarified some of the key principles and assumptions that influence the practice of scholarship in African psychology which are wholly derived from continental African cultural phenomenology and experience. The chapter works with the underlying conviction that scholars of African psychology operate from the basic assumption that all Africans have one common indigenous heritage over and above the diversity of cultural traditions found in the different ethnic communities that make up the continent. Yet the chapter equally makes clear the fact that modern Africans are living under the influence of both local and other cultures and traditions external to Africa (Western, Asian, Arabic, Judeo-Christian, Islamic). In this way, while African psychology does study and draw on the psychological underpinnings of its one common African heritage, it must also recognize and draw on the best thoughts and diverse local and foreign traditions accessible to postcolonial Africans as members of the globalized human community. The task of scholars of African psychology is to critically and with impartial scrutiny explore and interpret the importance and relevance for African consumption the psychological capital embedding those local and foreign cultural practices and traditions.

Hence, it would be more realistic to say that African psychology, though an heir of one fundamental African heritage, at the same time recognizes the influence of many traditions (local and foreign) in contemporary African people's lives. This point is corroborated in the following observation by the late Christopher Okigbo on the complex identity of the modern African human being as a meeting point of traditions. Commenting in this regard he, Okigbo (as cited in Moore, 1972), powerfully remarked,

> I belong, integrally, to my own culture, to my own society, just as, I believe, I belong to societies other than my own. The truth is that the modern African is no longer a product of an entirely indigenous culture. The modern sensibility which the African poet is trying to express is by its very nature complex; and it has complex values, some of which are indigenous, some exotic, some traditional, some modern. (p. 136)

Given this, the discipline of African psychology in continental Africa must draw its theories and principles of research and practice as suggested by Hountondji (2009) first and foremost from within Africa but should never

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stop there. Rather, after building its own concepts and principles endogenously, as suggested in this chapter, African psychology is expected to remain in constant communion or conversational dialogue and in the spirit of convivial scholarship as articulated by Nyamnjoh (2015/2017), with other knowledge traditions from Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia, Australia, and the Middle East. This is not a sign of weakness. It is rather a sign of confident recognition that the postcolonial African is a citizen not only of his or her village community, but also a member of the *civilization of the universal* as emphasized by Senghor (1970). Taking such a broad-based perspective is a mature recognition that enables the modern African child to embrace the complexity of living fully in the contemporary world of intersubjectivities, interrelationships, and complementarity of cultures. This is another way of saying that African psychology must entail a more comprehensive orientation to inquiry with the aim of bringing into the study of psychology in Africa "a pluralist orientation to knowledge and to practices of inquiry" (Gergen, Josselson, & Freeman, 2015, p. 1). African psychology is therefore to be understood as a postcolonial academic discipline with a culture of readiness to learn from its own and other knowledge traditions.

One final point that needs to be made before bringing this chapter to a close relates to the prominence that must be given in the study of African psychology to the phenomenon of bifocality earlier highlighted in this chapter. This is especially crucial in its task of adaptation to the multiple language of scholarship, one that embraces not only English, French, and Portuguese but also the use of African languages in this venture. To this effect, research in African psychology can be carried out in any language familiar to the research participants depending, that is, on the language tradition in which the persons being studied are more at home. This is crucial since the study of African psychology places emphasis on the need for and the "advantages of knowing *with* others in addition to (knowing) *about* them" (Gergen et al., 2015, p. 1). These indications imply that the study of African psychology in our context must strive toward accommodating a wide range of inclusivity in its approach to critical and clinical psychological scholarship. And all of these understandings together suggest that the postcolonial discipline of African psychology in continental Africa is unique in its provision of the opportunity for African psychologists to be in a position to open up to extended sources of inclusive scholarship in their study of human subjectivity, culture, and experience in the pre- and postcolonial African world. It is in this way that African psychology as a postcolonial discipline within the larger field

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of psychological scholarship in African universities can be saved from becoming insular and autolectic.

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6
An Africentric Theory of Human Motivation

In this brief chapter, I hope to demonstrate that although Abraham Maslow's (1962) theory of motivation that focuses on the notion of the hierarchy of needs in human beings is important and has its place, it is crucial to remember that as Africans we do have our own way of explaining why people do what they do or avoid doing certain things in their day-to-day lives and relationships with others—and with these others being not only the living but also the members of the "living dead," specifically referred to as the "ancestors" (Mbiti, 1969). The chapter highlights and delineates five sources of motivation recognized within the Africentric perspective which are intended to complement, not cancel out, Maslow's and other Eurocentric perspectives on human motivation, such as Albert Bandura's (1989) work on human agency in social cognitive theory. These motivational springs in the African context are as follows:

1. The need to protect against shame
2. The urge to overcome the limitations of one's birth or background
3. The need to compare favorably with one's age-mates
4. The urge to avoid angering the ancestors
5. The desire for membership in the human community and to avoid ostracism

What follows is a brief discussion of the motivational power of each of these five sources or influences in the life of the African individual. However, before engaging in this, I must mention that this list attempts to demonstrate that the motivational spring of the African human is not, as emphasized in Maslow's or the Eurocentric theory of motivation, individuocentered, but other-referenced; being grounded in "the poetics of the Other" (Freeman, 2014, p. 222). Having said this, we are set to take up the discussion of these items in the order in which they are listed.

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The Urge to Protect Against Shame

Here, the main point to be developed is the view that, in the African context, an important motivating factor in the life of every individual is the urge to promote one's "face protection" and the need to avoid engaging in behaviors that will either dent or tarnish one's own social image or good name or those of one's family and clan. This is a theme similar to Erving Goffman's notion of the human need for impression management (Goffman, 1959). Magesa (1998/2002, p. 158), commenting in this regard, remarked that in the African context we can distinguish between two kinds of shame: "shame of the face" and "shame of the heart or soul." In his view, "to come into unavoidable physical contact with one's mother in-law may be shame of the skin or of the face, but to commit incest is deep shame or shame of the heart that calls for confession and retribution." In this way, according to Magesa (1998/2002), in some ethnic groups in Africa, if a person is to become whole again after an incestuous infraction, the shame needs to be removed by specific rites. This typically takes the form of a cleansing ritual intended to reverse the individual's state of impurity arising from the offence committed in the eyes of the community and the ancestors.

Influenced by their inner urge to protect against shame, the past as well as the modern African person strives to control his or her passions, both sexual and emotional. This explains why incest or child sexual abuse incidents that might occur in an African family rarely get reported outside or are complained against openly in many African homes, although we are beginning to see some changing patterns in South Africa in this regard.

The reason for the common attempt to prevent such incidences from reaching the media or the police is because to do so will soil one's father's or cousin's (or the abuser's) name, as well as the name, face, and future welfare and potential for marriage of the abused girl child in the community.

The same urge to protect against shame or social disgrace is the reason that people in the past and to a good extent even today live a life of considerable restraint, avoiding involvement in socially prohibited activities such as stealing, being caricatured as lazy or a loafer, or "putting a girl in the family way" (i.e., impregnating or "ballooning" a girl out of wedlock). Some (teenage girls) who get impregnated before marriage try by all means possible to abort the child to avoid the shame that goes with this, which involves the idea of disgracing their parents in the eyes of the community. In some

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cases, this leads to premature death, particularly when they choose the option of abortion at the hands of quack doctors.

All these are socially discouraged infractions. And people avoid engaging in them to avoid losing their face in the community or to avoid the shame or social disgrace and negative sanctions that go with them.

This orientation shows that the making of an African person includes a concern with the state of one's standing in one's community and the quality of the relationship between the individual and the members of the spiritual world recognized therein (Irele, 1981; Kane, 2011).

The Urge to Overcome the Limitations of One's Background and to Achieve Distinctions of Worth

Apart from the urge to protect against shame, the next source of motivation in the African context is the urge to overcome the circumstances or limitations of one's birth or background. In some individuals, like Okonkwo in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), this urge can be very strong and compelling, acting as the prime center of inspiration and initiative in people's daily struggles and efforts.

In that case, the African perspective is consistent with that of Alfred Adler, who spoke of the operation of the spirit of *the great upward drive* in human beings. Influenced by such a psychological incentive, children of poor or humble parentage have this aspect as their greatest source of motivation or great upward drive in search of opportunities to regrade and reauthor themselves or better their chances or destinies in life (Nwoye, 2006). They try in every way possible, through dint of hard work and self-discipline, to turn around or cancel their deficient socioeconomic background and take themselves into a more promising life alternative.

Hence, as emphasized by one protagonist in Achebe's (1958) classic novel, among the Igbo (and, more generally, all African peoples), "a man's achievement is dependent on the strength of his arm (or his own effort)" and not on the wealth or achievements of his parents or on the type of family he comes from. The compelling influence of this basic urge forces an individual to not merely ride on the glory of their parents' achievements, but strive to make and build up their own worth in life.

In this way, children of the African poor succeed in transcending or outgrowing the limitations of their humble backgrounds or beginnings. The

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reverse motivation is, of course, the crisis faced by some wealthy African families when children fail to make a mark in life because the governing sentiment in many children of the rich is that there is no need for such effort given that the parents have already achieved all the wealth needed to make life worth living for generations of children yet to come.

The Urge to Compare Favorably with One's Age-Mates

The third source of motivation within the Africentric paradigm is the urge to compare favorably, in the major departments of life, with one's age-mates and other contemporaries. This point refers essentially to the often unvoiced fundamental wish in a typical African individual not to be seen to be left behind in the general hunt for distinctions of worth (Nwoye, 2006; Taylor, 1989/1992) recognized in one's community.

This urge promotes the spirit of industry (Erikson, 1950) in the average African individual. And this sentiment is facilitated by the culture of age-grouping and the initiation ceremonies through which each age-set or age-group announces its visibility and recognition in society. Once African children recognize themselves as a member of an age group, they tend to thread their way carefully in the various competitions of life by means of side-shadowing processes—that is to say, with an eye on what their mates are doing and how favorably or not they stand in comparison with them (Nwoye, 2006).

In African communities, people feel frustrated and therefore unhappy with themselves and their personal "destinies" in life when they discover that they are not able to accomplish most of the life tasks at the same "season" when their age-mates are fully involved in accomplishing such developmental tasks (see Sorokin & Merton, 1937, on "social time"). In this way, people value getting married when their age-mates start to get married. Similarly, they value going for further studies and being employed in gainful pursuits when their age-mates are doing so.

Even the urge to build their own homes or, these days, own a personal car when their age-mates are doing this is part of this trend. But the negative side of this dynamic is that it creates the opportunity for developing chronic envy when some of them discover that the success of their mates cannot be matched and that it has therefore become a reproach to their own failing destiny and effort.

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The Urge to Avoid Angering the Ancestors

The fourth motivational spring within the Africentric paradigm is the need to avoid engaging in things that will provoke the anger of ancestors and, in some ethnic communities such as among the Igbo of South Eastern Nigeria, the earth goddess and other forces of order in human society (Magesa, 1998/2002; Mbiti, 1969; Nwoye, 2005).

In this way, the social order in precolonial Africa, and even today in rural African settings, is preserved without the need for the presence of law enforcement agencies such as the police and prisons. In that way, too, people control themselves through fear of the anticipatory consequences of acting contrary to the prescriptions sanctioned by their ancestors and other spiritual agencies such as the earth goddess (among the Igbo of Nigeria)—in short, the moral code of the community to which they belong.

In this context, forces of fear, panic, and restraint are associated with the experience of behaving against the dictates of the ancestors and other designated communal leaders/elders, and this orientation gives rise within the Africentric paradigm to creative engagements and responsible living. Thus, in addition to Bandura's emphasis on the role of visible models in human personality formation, there is, in the African perspective, the added recognition of *invisible loyalty* in people's consciousness toward the evaluative judgments and policing roles of hidden forces and agencies, such as the ancestors, in their day-to-day decisions about what to do and what not to do with themselves, with their lives, and with others. In other words, the African psychological environment is peopled not only by visible and powerful human actors or models, but also by the recognized commanding hidden/metaphysical presence and concerns of invisible and non-human/spiritual agencies (Freeman, 2014) in the details of people's everyday experience (Achebe, 1958; Mbiti, 1969; Nwoye, 2005, 2006).

Hence, the making of the human person in the African context is influenced by the formative role of human and non-human agents in people's lives.

The Desire for Membership in the Human Community and to Avoid Ostracization

The typical African individual derives enormous strength of social motivation and psychosocial conviction from the philosophy of "I am because

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we are, since we are therefore I am" (Mbiti, 1969)—or, in the sublime truth of the highly poetic expression of Freeman (2014), in "the priority of the other." This is another way of saying that in the Africentric paradigm people are motivated to action by the pull of the priority of the community and the economy of investment in social support.

Through such various communal principles and ideologies, the African individual is made to awaken to the notion that humans come into the world, survive the helplessness of childhood, and ultimately become who they are through the contributions of uncountable assistance received from others (Freeman, 2014), such as from parents, neighbors, teachers, friends, age-mates, work-mates, spouses, and some benign spiritual agencies such as ancestors (Morrison, 1984).

Based on this understanding—namely, that no one can make it in the dance of life by living in isolation from the community—the African individual is strongly motivated to awaken to the consciousness and importance of "the priority of the Other" (Freeman, 2014) and the community of which he or she is a part.

Influenced by such a powerful motivational force, the individual considers it beneficial to submit to the life of reciprocity and mutuality and the phenomenon of co-responsibility in dealing with others, investing by so doing in the reciprocal support of others in times of need. Indeed, the fear of ostracism or social excommunication that follows the taking of an incorrigible antagonistic and isolational stance against the community is responsible for the absence of institutional law enforcement agencies like police in pre-European Africa.

In precolonial Africa, people who by their negative self-centered behavior worked against the social order of the community were rejected by the community through the sanction of ostracism. The effect of ostracism is that the person concerned is no longer part of, allowed to talk to or be talked to, or buy from and sell to any members of the community of which he or she is a part unless such a person is ready to do away with his or her anti-social orientation and reawaken to the community. This resolution can often be achieved by paying for the damages incurred by his or her antisocial attitudes or unacceptable misdemeanors and impudence.

Conclusion

This brief chapter has demonstrated that while Maslow's theory of motivation that focuses on the notion of the hierarchy of needs and the intrapsychic/

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individuocentric nature of human motivation is important and does have its place, it is crucial to remember that the Africentric perspective that gives anchor to this book recognizes five sources of motivation intended to explain why people do what they do or avoid doing in their day-to-day lives and relationships with others. The chapter places emphasis on the sociocultural and ex-centric (Freeman, 2014) nature of human motivation as understood in Africa (Sugiman, Gergen, Wagner, & Yamada, 2008). The core of the chapter highlights what these motivational springs in the African context are by name and discusses how each serves as an inspiration for human behavior and the maintenance of law and order in African communities.

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7

A Synoptic and Multidimensional Theory of the Modern African Self

My main inspiration for this chapter is the recognition that, until quite recently, the prevailing notions of the self extant in the literature of Western European philosophy—such as that proposed by Plato, Descartes, Locke, Hume, Hobbes, Kant, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Sartre, as well as by Euro-American personality theorists such as Freud, Adler, Jung, Maslow, Allport, Murray, Rogers, Kelly, and Kohut—is foreign to the African notion of the individual or self. As I understand it and hope to demonstrate, the Western model is less inclusive and extensive than the African view (Ogbonnaya, 1994). In addition, it is imbued with the privileging of instrumental reason and a denial of the significance of the body. Thus, unlike the Western view, which sees the self as essentially a substantive inner agency capable of choosing its own values, charting its own directions, and commenting on itself in the manner of a self-governor (Cushman, 1990), the African perspective contains, among other things, a pluralism of selves in one body (Ogbonnaya, 1994). In this way, the Africentric perspective grounded on the metaphysics of an interdependent ontology (Holdstock, 2000) sees the self as extensive, projecting with varying degrees of intensity into other realms of human existence: social, economic, religious, political, cultural, etc. (Chabal & Daloz, 1999). Consequently, judged against the notion of the African view, the Western idea of the self as a disengaged, atomistic, and monadic entity, essentially independent of the community, divests it of a background (Cushman, 1990; Taylor, 1989) and makes it too self-contained and exclusive to accurately reflect the notion of the self as understood in Africa.

My major aim in this chapter is to work out the African notion of the self. This entails the task of painting a synoptic image of the fabric of the African self of a type that would highlight its nature and principal constituents, sources, and crises, as well as the elaborate conception of it that will do more justice than is possible with our continued reliance on the Western model of the self as a standard for defining and understanding ourselves.

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In taking up such a task, I use the term "synoptic" in the sense in which critical historians do, namely, to refer to a pattern of making judgments in which the researcher is able to hold together in mind and take into account all principal factors in the case. And I use the term "multidimensional" to refer to the aggregate variety of quality endowments and constituents, including patterns of bodily presentation, orientations, beliefs, characteristic habits, customs, and shared meanings perceived in Africa as attributes of a normal and full-fledged African human being. I do not claim that none of the principal constituents of the African self is noticeable in the Western model. My emphasis is rather on a holistic representation of the African self, emphasizing not only its subjectivity and individualism but also its communal attributes and a host of its other elements unsung in the Western European/ North American account of the self.

Why talk of the African self in the singular rather than in the plural? I took this approach based on my belief that a generic African self proceeds from a common African cultural genius and a metaphysical unity. And I am supported in this judgment by the words of Jacques Macquet (1972, p. 16), who emphasized the unity of African culture south of the Sahara, inclusive of Nubian Egypt, saying, "Africanity, like every broad cultural synthesis, . . . is based on a similar experience of the world shared by various societies and on the dissemination of several cultural traits among these societies." This is made possible, according to him, by the "development of similar ways of adapting to the natural environment and the diffusion of culture traits. . . . These two mechanisms, each reinforcing the other, combine to create a common culture [and a common religion]," and, in the context of this chapter, a generic African self, the entire constituents of which will be highlighted and elucidated.

The African Self as a Synoptic Aggregate

Now, when I say that the African self is a synoptic aggregate I mean that it is made up of eight complementary constituents or dimensions, namely, the (1) *embodied self*, (2) *generative self*, (3) *communal self*, (4) *narratological self*, (5) *melioristic self*, (6) *structural self*, (7) *liminal self*, and (8) *transcendental/ spiritual self*. These eight constitutive dimensions blend together in an invisible manner to give the full image of the fabric of the self as understood in Africa. The rest of this chapter is concerned with identifying and discussing

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what is entailed in and contributed by each dimension in the making and mapping of the African self.

The African Self as an Embodied Self

This aspect of the African self—namely, that it has a body—is, until recently recognized by feminists like Martha Nussbaum (1995) and Moira Gatens (1996), the least emphasized by dominant existing Western self/personality theories. Yet in the whole of Africa and the Diaspora (Ogbonnaya, 1994), enormous attention is given to the idea of the self as an embodied subjectivity. This implies the notion of the African self as an identity (endowed with both visible and invisible characteristics) influenced in much of its overall destiny and accomplishments by the impact of the body he or she is and by the way he or she believes and people believe he or she looks or does not look (from the perspective, that is, of body or physical presentation).

Here the concept of *embodiment* is used to refer to the totality of the individual's unique observable physical properties including height, weight, skin color, hair, fingernails, fingerprints, foot prints, body tone, and symmetry and harmony of his or her overall external characteristics. In this list, even the fingernails are emphasized because the belief is that he who gets at my fingernails or body (i.e., pubic) hair has got me and not just my finger nails or hair; if he wants to deal with me, he can do so through these materials (Beattie, 1980; Kenyatta, 1938/1991).

Among the Turukana of Kenya, for example, an elder who wants to bless me on my journey to Cambridge (which I did in 2004, to take up my visiting scholar position) can do so by spitting a little of his or her saliva into my palm amid a prayer of blessing for my safety and success. This is meant to symbolize the idea that his or her spirit, and not just the saliva, is with me and supporting me. A similar logic is behind the belief in Africa that taking a few grains of sand or a bone from my burial site away from home, even in a mass grave, in order to rebury me in a more befitting place in my own native home symbolizes the *actual me* being transferred from the alien territory to my home place (Jahn & Wilhlem-Solomon, 2015). And this is believed to be so even though it is known that it is only but a part of me (i.e., my bone) that has been transferred.

These observations demonstrate that in Africa an essential aspect of the self is the one that sees it as *the body I am*. Hence the embodied self is the

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aspect of the self that is open to the comments and influence of society. Such comments can be complimentary or derogatory, affecting the emotional well-being of the individual concerned. Often these comments invite us to view our bodies and therefore ourselves as problematic objects and in that way cause us to lose confidence in the body and the self *we are*.

Indeed, concern with the quality of an individual's embodiment has, for years, been crucial both in continental Africa and in the Diaspora. In both contexts, the happiness or distress of a given African individual often depends on the kind of body he or she "is," such as whether he or she is black, tall, or brown in color or whether he or she is born whole or disabled. Hence, in many African communities such as among the Igbo (Nigeria) and the Kikuyu people of Kenya, it pays to be physically well-endowed. Thus, for example, the perfect Igbo woman, according to Obi (1970) does not as a rule include fat or short young girls with stout, brawny limbs (called *ukwu nchi*: grass-cutter's short legs). Obi (1970) observes that a certain element of folk wisdom appears to be behind such a prejudice in favor of those better endowed physically. Among the Igbo, for example, he discovered that a big woman (not necessarily a fat one) is the choice of most people in the community because such a figure is seen to have so many obvious advantages in the context of their peculiar life-world. Among the Igbo of Nigeria, West Africa, and even among the Zulu of South Africa, for example, such a woman commands presence and respect and is the pride of her husband. Among the rural Igbo, in particular, where farm work is still in vogue, she would be deemed able to do farm work. In childbearing, too, the prevailing belief is that a woman of such stature will be able to produce many children. Consequently, in their choice of a marriage mate, the Igbo give preference to a girl with long thin limbs, which are regarded by the elders as signs of fast growth and hugeness later on in married life. The same trend toward a preference for those well-endowed physically is also noted in the acclaim and recognition given to men like Okonkwo in Achebe's (1958) *Things Fall Apart*, whose enviable and imposing physical stature gave him a good start in life.

Similarly, among the Kikuyu of Kenya, East Africa, according to Kenyatta (1938/1991), girls with bowed legs easily lose out in the marriage market because the Kikuyu show a particular distaste for people with awkward physical endowments or presentations. In this way some women in Africa are often destined to remain single throughout life due to the awkward quality of their embodied self. That is to say, not by choice but because African society attaches special importance to the quality of people's embodiment and shows

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exceptional preference for people better provided physically. This emphasis on physical endowment partly explains why, in mate selection in Africa, the idea of just being in love is not enough. Thus the trends show that the physical endowment a person commands, or the idea of *self as body* (Kasulis, Ames, & Dissanayake, 1993) or *the body that people are*, is an important asset for a successful life in Africa and in the Diaspora. It is a great foundation for positive mental health.

Yet the distress of an awkward embodiment is externally imposed, not self-selected. It arises from the community's negative perception of the individual (Gergen, 1977; Mead, 1934; Mischel, 1977; McCall, 1977), which becomes owned or appropriated and internalized, thus causing distress and tension. The African's image of him- or herself is thus partly influenced by social construction. This externally generated negative self-appraisal of one's body is a worry, not only for women but also for men. A passage from Buchi Emechata's (1979) novel, *The Joys of Motherhood*, cited by Emenyonu (1988) alludes to this. Hence the physical presentation and endowment a person commands, or the notion of *self as body* (Kasulis, 1993), irrespective of whether the person is a man or woman, is an important asset for achieving success in life and therefore for the development of good mental health in the African context.

Indeed, in most cases in Africa, but particularly in the Diaspora, a critical source of stress is the color of one's skin. Those with black skin often see it as a limitation, a burden. Those ill at ease with their black color go to various lengths to achieve the color they consider as a mark of peace, pride, and opportunities: namely, white pigmentation (Blay, 2011; Dlova, Hamed, Gwegweni, Grobler, & Hift, 2014; Durosaro, Ajiboye, & Onive, 2012; Hunter, 2002, 2007, 2011; Keakile, 2017; Lewis, Robkin, Gaska, & Njoki, 2011). It is thus in this context that Fanon's observation can be seen to apply.

> For several years certain laboratories have been trying to produce a serum for "denigrification"; with all the earnestness in the world, laboratories have sterilized their test tubes, checked their scales, and embarked on researches that might make it possible for the miserable Negro to whiten himself and thus throw off the burden of that corporeal malediction. (Fanon, 1992, p. 221)

But the irony is that even with this reappropriation tactic, the end result is not often satisfactory. This is because those who try to reconstruct an aspect

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of their embodiment, such as their black pigmentation (as some famous musicians try to do), often remain haunted by the possible distress of secondary disfigurement that follows such a project.

In addition, in present-day Africa a successful and happy life is not automatically achieved just by being well-endowed physically or by having an impressive embodied self. Experience shows that for many young people in modern Africa, being blessed with very handsome or beautiful physique, and therefore a comfortable embodied self, paradoxically can be a source of tension and vulnerability. It is equally often a source of enormous anxiety and stress to the parents of such children. This becomes the case when those so endowed are not able to delay gratification and effectively manage such an asset. In that way, such initially well-endowed people are not able to learn to gain from, rather than being damaged by, their endowment. They get trapped in a self-imposed paradox through a life of recklessness in youth or in the risky habit of sexual promiscuity with its attendant consequences: premature pregnancy, HIV infection, etc. Some even become isolated as outcasts in the community due to their excessive pride and social arrogance. In that way, some youth in Africa easily lose their bearings through failure to take adequate care of their enviable embodiment. These are the kind of modern African youth who present with the painful image of people who began life with some promise only to end up before noonday as mere flashes in the pan.

These trends demonstrate that the quality of embodiment is an important component of the African self that can become either a wellspring of opportunities or one of distress and frustration and an assault on people's well-being in modern Africa. Consequently, a serious challenge to psychological practice in modern Africa is how to help the average African client regain belief in him- or herself and learn to *develop self-acceptance*, deriving pride instead of inferiority in their black skin.

The Generative Self

This is another important element or dimension of the mature African self. It refers to the agentic or enterprising component of the typical African self, one encompassing the seat of the self's personal ambitions, plans, and programs of life intended for its own betterment. The notion of the generative self is thus not much different from that found in Western capitalism, bearing in mind its important preoccupation with achievement and improving of one's

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status as indicated in Adler's (1926/1961) theory of individual psychology. As understood in this discussion, however, the principal aim of the generative self is the ability to clear away obstacles that hinder its expansion and ascent in the world and in that way win the individual a place in society. And in this, its basic orientation or generative script is to grow from subsistence to wealth or from receiver to provider. Hence its compelling motivation is to accumulate the *distinctions of worth* as perceived by one's community.

By the term "distinctions of worth" it is meant the individual's symbolic and noticeability value, social/visibility capital, or emblems of success characterizing the individual's own life. Such distinctions of worth make up the good life as perceived in Africa. In the past, such distinctions of worth differed from community to community. Thus, in the pre-colonial or pre-capitalist era among the Masai people of Kenya, emphasis was placed on having as many cows of one's own as possible, while among the Igbo of Nigeria at that time the emphasis was placed on being a successful farmer, having many successful children, and having many social titles (Achebe, 1958), and among the Luo people of Kenya emphasis was on having a big house, many children, and *shambas* of one's own.

Presently, however, important examples of distinctions of worth in many African communities have expanded and been modernized owing to changes in the socioeconomic history of the various people of Africa following the impact of colonialism, globalization, and modernization within the continent. And so, *for men* these distinctions now include

- Prosperity (including possession of lands, cows, goats, or sheep)
- Having financial *independence*
- Being blessed with good, healthy, children (of *both sexes*)
- Owning a personal home (preferably, a modern zinc roofed (not a thatched) house)
- Owning a personal car
- Being a successful parent whose children grow up wise and mature and are able to marry and establish their own homes and families

And *for women*,

- Being married and having a happy marriage
- Having the ability to produce children (male and female)
- Having well-bred children (male and female)

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- Having well-endowed/well-behaved daughters who will marry good and wealthy young men and in turn be blessed with their own children
- Having good and gentle sons-in-law

Supporting these items, Whyte (1998, pp. 54–55) observes that among the Nyole people of Uganda, East Africa, "The fundamentals of prosperity [include] the spouses and children that make a home." Continuing, she points out that among these people,

> Marriage brings respect for both men and women, but children are the fruit which gives meaning to marriage, . . . [C]hildren are keenly desired and dearly loved; they should be many, both boys and girls. Although a man may abuse and even beat his wife if she delivers only girls, it is also bad to have only boys. . . . People value women who have many children. . . . A barren woman, or one with few children, can be almost certain that her husband will take a second wife. Even if he himself is not keen to do so, his family will put pressure on him to bring a woman who will bear them children. A woman who does not deliver is a "dry tree" while children are sometimes referred to as "branches."

Thus, the generative self as proposed in this theory is that part of the African self that craves status and feels constantly harassed by the *dis-ease* of status-failure anxiety. Hence the agonies of the modern African individual, a bane on the well-being and pride of many poor people in Africa, emanate from the crisis of the *empty hand* or the problem of categorical poverty—heavily dreaded by the generative self. This crisis has worsened, with many young people in Africa tormented by protracted unemployment and the pain of the *empty present* confronting them.

Indeed one confronted with the problem of the *empty hand* feels pain not only when faced with misfortune but also when nothing—wealth-wise—has *greased* his or her palm. This gives rise to frustration, an opportunity for envy and jealousy among some, and corresponding room for accusations of witchcraft and absence of well-being.

Indeed to understand the distress of an arrested generative self in the African context we draw attention to Gabriel Marcel's emphasis on the importance of distinction between *being* and *having* in human existence. According to Marcel (1949), people are not happy with *just being alive* or with mere *naked* existence, but also with *having something of worth* to show

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for it. Hence in Africa, as in Marcel's framework, emphasis is placed not only on *who* the individual is (an ordinary human being) but also on *what* the individual *has accumulated in life, his distinctions of worth*. This means that, in the African context, the issues of politics and economics are important in the making of the self. In this way, the phenomenon of pure physical being, or *being for nothing* or *odi ndu onwu ka mma*, as the Igbo of Nigeria will say, is not enough. The goal is the search for significance and upward mobility in order to make a mark in one's society. For this reason, a bankrupt generative self is to be understood as an embarrassment to the self, crushing and shameful, and a disease of mental health. This is because, for the African individual, as we have seen, a good life and well-being implies a life blessed with prosperity/wealth, children, healthy life, peace, and joy (Ekwunife, 1997; Nwoye, 2005; Whyte, 1998).

In particular, an African individual is heavily distressed by the phenomenon of *negative difference* or the dread of being left behind in the normal competitions of life, particularly in comparison with how the majority of one's age mates (Nwoye, 2017) in a particular community (as highlighted in the previous chapter) are doing. Hence a certain habit of *side shadowing* or looking over one's shoulders to compare oneself with others is an inevitable attribute of the generative self.

These observations show that in many parts of Africa, as in Japan, other people (particularly age mates) provide the individual with significant frames of reference for self-appraisal and attitude formation. The African generative self is therefore influenced by a *reference-other orientation*. An important conclusion to make is that the desire to be crowned with an abundance of distinctions of worth gains emphatic stress in the life and mental health of a typical African wherever he or she is found. And this, in my view, can explain part of the basis for the upsurge of prosperity religions (or the winners' conventions) in contemporary Africa. Up and coming Africans attend such churches or conventions to be fed with some transitional objects (e.g., to be told they will get their hearts desire: jobs, children, money, good husbands, good wives, or pass their exams, etc.). All they need do is work hard and wait patiently for God's successful intervention and victory in their lives. In such prayer ministries, as highlighted in Chapter 15 of this book, the dominant motive is therefore a wish for God to move members from their horizontal, *failure,* or *dependant* vectors to the vertical or *victory* vectors (Umezinwa, 1996) as depicted in Figure 7.1.

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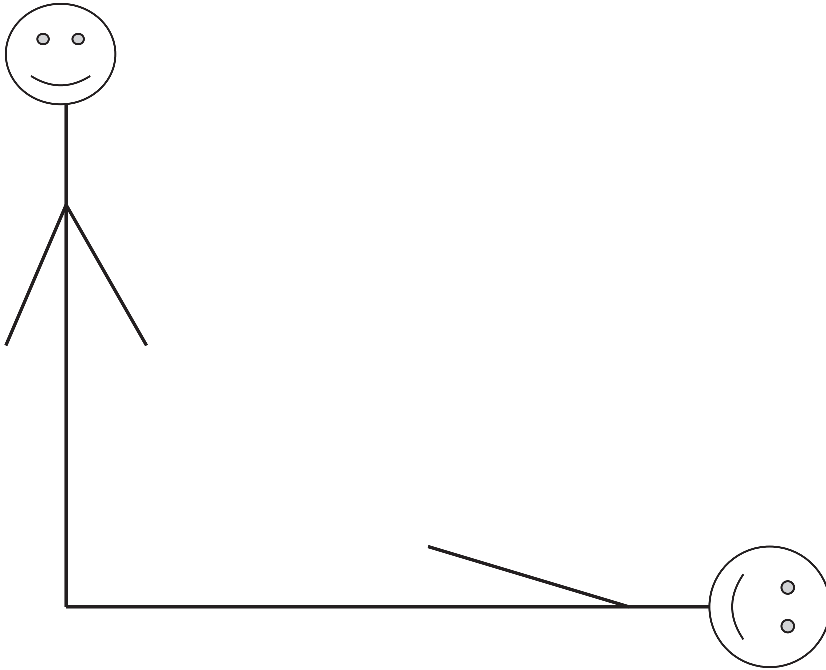

Figure 7.1 The vertical and horizontal representation of the African view of the generative self.

In Figure 7.1, the horizontal vector depicts the dreaded failure status in the African worldview. The vertical vector reflects the image of success; of being strongly on one's own two feet, which is the pride of the generative self.

The Communal Self

This component of the African self is better researched, particularly by anthropologists and African philosophers (Akbar, 1984; Asante, 1983; Mbiti, 1969, Wiredu & Gyekye, 1992). However, I use the term "communal self" in the context of this theory to refer to the relational or dialogical and *inclusive* character of the African self, or to the notion rampant in Africa of the self as a participant in the lives of others. With it, emphasis is placed on the phenomenon of social solidarity or the factor of mutual dependence of selves, including the living and the dead (i.e., the ancestors) in Africa (Mkhize, 2004; Ogbonnaya, 1994). It is also used to reflect the emphasis that is placed in

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Africa on the principle of complimentary duality (Ngwaba, 1996; Nwoga, 1984) in successful living. Thus, according to Whyte (1997, p. 54), among the Nyole of Uganda

> The word for poverty in Lunyole, *obutahi,* also means being without relatives. Conversely [among the Nyole], people are wealth.

This characterization implies that part of the existential center of gravity of the African self is a dialectics connecting him or her and members of his or her community. This observation is meant to draw attention to the close relationship that exists between the generative and communal selves in the African context. This can be seen from the fact that the pressures of the generative self are largely socially constructed since it is the distinctions of worth valorized in one's community that influence and give focus to the principal aspirations of the individual's generative self. In addition, it is the support of the members of one's community or village that often guarantees the strength of an individual's agency (Mkhize, 2008). And this support can come through the aid of relatives and fellow townspeople (Achebe, 1960), as well as political figures, including members of the living dead (ancestors) as emphasized by Mbiti (1969). This is contrary to the dominant Western view of the self, which focuses on its subjectivity/interiority and individualism, thereby marginalizing the force of its communal attribute.

In the context of the present discussion, on the other hand, a true African self is seen to encompass what Taylor (1989) refers to as a *decentering subjectivity*. It is not at all a demarcated or bounded entity, walled off from the rest of the world (Cushman, 1990). Rather, the relevant image entails an orientation, emphasized in Africa, that there is a dialectical *interpenetration* of the individual and the community in which neither has full primacy (Morrison, 1984). Thus, it is this particular aspect of the African self which Nyerere was alluding to when he observed that "In our traditional African society we were individuals within a community. We took care of the community and the community took care of us. We neither needed nor wished to exploit our fellow men" (quoted by July, 1987, p. 21). In this way, managers of rehabilitation homes in Africa fail in their jobs if they continue to disenchant their wards from members of their native community since, by nature, the human African self is a product of a relational ontology and thrives in being with others.

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However, although it is often said that the African individual/self is the mediated product of his or her society, there is a strong belief in Africa that people can transform themselves by transforming the structures by which they are formed. This belief encourages the practice of *reciprocal socialization* (in Igbo, *nne zuchaa nwa, nwa azua nne*) in most parts of Africa. This is the process through which the young educate the old in the values of the new age, just as the old share their wisdom with the young. Seen in this way, one can say that a true African identity is a spatialized identity, free of the spirit of excessive individualism and insularity often said to be characteristic of the Western self (Cushman, 1990).

But the communal impulse within the African identity has its own costs. It implies being confronted with multiple obligations and loyalties, both visible and invisible (Boszormenyi-Nagy, 1973), to the living and the dead in the course of one's life. It also is the basis for the existence of the important role of *othermothers* and *women-centred* networks (Collins, 1997) in the life and welfare of children among African American communities.

In addition, the African's feeling of belongingness to the larger community must not be exaggerated or understood as implying the belief that, in Africa, there is absolute priority of the cultural community over the individual. The emphasis is instead placed on the idea that, for the African self, *the locus of value is both within and outside the self*. This caveat implies that the African individual, despite his or her great sense of community, can set some legitimate personal goals unimpeded by the community and in that way participate in the determination or definition of his or her own fate and identity. This appears to be the point which Lee (1976, pp. 33–35) was making when she observed, referring to the nature of life in a non-Western culture, that

> The community does not protect itself against the autonomy of the individual. Somehow, just as individual dignity is taken for granted so is communal responsibility and concern; they are there, given. . . . The community was not just something, which demanded unidirectional concern and responsibility. It was ever present in the individual in its supporting aspects. . . . This intermixture of autonomy and community, then, is basic and so assured, that neither has to be on the watch against encroachment.

Such a moderate view means that personhood in Africa can only be partly, but never completely, defined by one's membership in a community. At the same time, it must be mentioned that the central psychology underlying the

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basic orientation of the African self is not the motivation to exclusive personal self-fulfillment at the expense of communal self-fulfillment. In Africa people are happy both to achieve self-fulfillment and to lift up their siblings and relatives who are not so blessed. But this creates many problems, such as *social parasitism* (Sembene, 1972), which promotes the entrenchment of the *economy of affection* that puts pressure on Africans in leadership positions to embezzle public funds to meet demands for assistance and support from relatives and friends.

The ethos of the *economy of affection* in Africa was first highlighted by Hyden (1983). Hyden defined it as the type of peasant economy where people count on the support and assistance of wealthy relatives, in-laws, friends, and friends' friends in handling personal or family projects they cannot finance alone. The danger of the pressure of the economy of affection, according to Sembene Ousmane in his novel *The Money Order with White Genesis* (1972), must thus be accepted as one of the negative consequences of the generally positive ethos of the communal self. And it is the first to be declared outmoded in a place like America, where "the common currency is that of a service for a fee" (Strupp, 2000, p. 111).

The Melioristic Self

Unlike the generative self that acts as the enterprising department of the African self, the melioristic component of the self acts as the self's resident therapist for questioning misfortune, responding to uncertainty, and coping with the ordinary challenges and adversities of the African experience. In this regard, it works to assist the individual to imbue his or her life with meaning, to situate one's present condition or crisis in a larger life perspective, almost in the manner emphasized by Frankl (1946/1984). Thus it is the aspect of the African self which, in difficult circumstances, enables the individual to maintain psychological serenity, helping him or her not to fixate on the decadence of the present but on his or her own greater meaning or improvement that is yet to unfold. It thus assists in the promotion of the self's active and larger self-awareness, enabling the self to confront a gap that is known to exist between what it is and what it believes it ought to be, between where it is and where it believes it ought to be; in this way, it can confront an embarrassing gap that often exists between our personal creed and our social fact. Thus, while the generative self is preoccupied with issues of *concrete achievement*

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of distinctions of worth valorized in the culture, the melioristic self is oriented to enabling the individual to seeing things in perspective, helping the individual to adopt some *constructive illusions* (Taylor, 1983a, 1983b; Taylor & Brown, 1988) to adjust to threatening events.

These characterizations show that the melioristic component of the African self refers to the self of the subjunctive mood (Animalu, 1990), or that aspect of the self that helps the individual set his or her eyes on larger possibilities and the ultimate meaning of events in his or her life. Taken in full, therefore, it encompasses the African self's capacity for *analogical thinking*, *negative capability*, *time condensation*, *the abstract attitude*, and its capacity for use of *constructive illusions* or fictional ideologies as important prerequisites for surviving the challenges of the human experience. In this way, if the generative self stands for the self of upward mobility and achievement in a person's life, the melioristic self stands for the hermeneutics of contradiction in one's life. In this way, it tends to resemble the Augustinian view of the self as an inner agency with the capacity to inspect, inspire, and give counsel to itself (Augustine, 1951).

The capability of the melioristic self for analogical thinking is manifested in the African person's basic assumption that nature is not discriminatory; that it gives air and sunshine to all without discrimination. The melioristic self is thus the African individual's major source of natural hopefulness in life, a resource that is a valuable antidote to endogenic depression. But it is also a basis for disillusionment and envy when the individual fails in activities (professions or businesses) where similar others have met with success.

Another important capability that emanates from the melioristic component of the African self is the African individual's power of negative capability, as enunciated by John Keats. Keats used the concept of *negative capability* to refer to the poetical ability to *experience mystery, uncertainty, or doubt without that irritable reaching after fact and reason* (Kearney, 1986). The African world is saturated with mystery and various contradictions in life, and the average individual's ability to contend with these contradictions (such as the belief that our ancestors, though dead, are still living or that "the young shall grow") is made possible by their power of negative capability. It also entails the African's capacity to see the absent in the present, or to see the prospects of greatness and, therefore, a cause for hopefulness, even in the child in one's lap.

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Indeed a special constituent of the melioristic self is its capacity for the abstract attitude, reflected in the individual's power to live and move in the shadow of the *thick present*. This orientation refers to an African individual's capacity to hold in his or her present time consciousness the three dimensions of time: the *past present*, the *present present,* and *future present*, synoptically. In this way, the present state of the individual continually reminds him or her not only of the present situation (good or bad) confronting him or her, but also of a past that has gone before and a future that is yet to unfold. It is argued that this capacity for the *abstract attitude*, which promotes the African's capacity for a *synoptic time consciousness*, is a foundation for great mental health. It enables many Africans to live beyond the decadence and tribulations of their "present present." This is because *meliorism*, unlike naïve or unrealistic optimism or pessimism, is the belief that a difficult situation has a way of giving way to a better situation in the end (e.g., as explicated in the Nelson Mandela story).

Yet the shadow side of the melioristic component of the African self is that it can at times be a danger to self and society. This is largely so when people start to draw more inspiration from it than it is meant to provide. For example, those Africans who prefer war to a peaceful settlement of differences are drawn to war by their naïve melioristic belief that, in the end, they will win. The same is true concerning the many political parties in many countries in Africa. Drawing from their melioristic impulse, each comes into existence with the melioristic belief that it will produce the winning president. And they do this even when common sense and good judgment would have counseled for a merger to produce a better result.

Thus, the melioristic component of the African self can both kill and heal depending on how it is appropriated.

The Narratological Self

I use the term "narratological self" to refer to that important dimension of the African self that reflects the sediments and influences of the cultural memory of the people in the modern African imagination. In traditional Africa, according to Obiechina (1994) and Achebe (1958, 1987), storytellers as social teachers and poets create fictional portraits for noteworthy human beings who lived in times past (Nwoye, 2017). In this way we absorb the

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correct moral values that prepare us to participate with social intelligence and positive psychological attitudes as we face life. The narratological self in the African context is thus that aspect of the self that demonstrates that even we (modern Africans) operate with a brain that is largely cultured by the traditional African imagination and therefore a product of discourse (Bruner, 1990). It also means that, in the African context, the story is seen as a vehicle for transforming human consciousness and, indeed, as an indispensable medium for cultivating virtue and ideal values (Moneke, 1994).

Through such inductions or discourses we learned about the tortoise and the spider, the great African trickster heroes. But, in addition to being fascinated by the bold cunning of the tortoise in such stories, we learn not to imitate him because he damaged himself in trying to achieve success through fraudulent means. Similarly we learned to be as prudent as the lamb that outmaneuvered much more powerful opponents like the tiger and tygrant (or *Agu di Ir*e, among the Igbo). We learned not to act like the chicken that ruined its destiny because of excessive greed and selfishness. We learned that it is evil to mistreat orphans or be envious of our neighbor's good fortune. We learned from these tales that the proud and conceited were soon brought low; that unchecked passions usually lead to ruins. And that the murderous would finally be found out and treated as such (Obiechina, 1994).

In addition to containing sediments from the lessons of these cultural stories and the moral wisdom that go with them in the service of the individual, the narratological self also contains some deposits of African cultural wisdom communicated to children and young people through the avenue of proverbial texts and motifs.

It is argued that a huge component of the modern African self is filled up with sediments of these induction processes began in childhood. It is also argued that although in the past such induction sessions were transmitted through traditional oral storytelling, their roles in the cultural induction of the present young generation of Africans are now taken over by written narratives and modern media such as radio and television. In that way the Africans of today come to retain some meanings shared with their counterparts in the older generation.

Such induction processes are important as a ready-to-hand memory to draw upon for interpreting and responding to life. Hence an important dimension of the African self is its story-centered consciousness. And it is in this regard that one can say that the narratological component of the African

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self differs from the Western psychological view of the self that is understood as essentially an inner agency, ahistorical and unsituated, and capable of choosing its own values, charting its own directions. It is also a departure from the existential concept of the self as a product of personal choice, born of the choices and actions we take in the course of our lives, or the idea of the self as personally authored and reauthored, working above the corruption and influences of the surrounding community. For, as we saw earlier, a great amount of the cultural values imbibed by a typical African child are overdetermined by the influences of the community and tradition.

Hence, such cultural acquisitions, unless they are flexible and dynamic, are not always advantageous to the self. They can be injurious when they become rigid or meant to be followed in a sheep-like manner. In that case even some African elites will end up dominated by the beliefs, fears, myths, and assumptions of the traditional African self.

The following anecdote reported by Presbey (1999, p. 5) on the subject of "coping with witchcraft and jealously" in Western Kenya makes the point clearer. During her field work, one of Presbey's informants told her that

> Upcoming young people, like young men who work in Nairobi, may want to initiate a development project in his village like putting up a shop in one of the local trading centres, or may want to put up a permanent house in their home. After getting some money, he buys the building materials, brings them home. The foundation is laid, and when the day for putting up the building comes and the man comes with the builders, he sometimes finds a chicken and a snake whose necks have been cut and thrown where a foundation had been built. Such a person either goes back to Nairobi abandoning the project or he goes and looks for another medicine person to protect him.

Anecdotes like this illustrate the continuing force of the traditional mentality assimilated in childhood in the lives and times of modern Africans. It also demonstrates that the African universe is not an Aristotelian universe but essentially an interpreted universe, implying a world of information and relationships dominated by the influence of local knowledge. Thus, although the narratological dimension of the African self is, in general, an asset in helping the average modern African retain connection with the tradition, it is also, in some cases, as Presbey's anecdote showed, a great source of distress and retrogression in some more gullible Africans.

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The Structural Self

The structural dimension of the African self refers to the inner seat of an individual's *thinking*, *emotions/sentiments*, including the *will*, as understood in Africa. It is thus the psychological counterpart to the embodied self earlier highlighted. It is the aspect of the African self which, among many traditional communities in Africa, is believed to draw from the genetic and biochemical systems located in three major organs of the body: the *head* (encompassing the hair, mouth, and eyes), the *heart*, and the *liver* (Harris, 1978) or the *stomach* (Magesa, 2002).

Thus, as understood among the Taita of Kenya and the Igbo of Nigeria, for example, the head is the organ for thinking (Igbo, *Uche*), remembering (Igbo, *Ncheta*), and speech (Igbo, *Okwu*), and it is also the abode of the eyes and mouth. Impairment in these functions (such as incoherent speech, poor thought patterns, and chronic forgetfulness) is understood in most parts of Africa as *illness of the head* (Igbo, *oya isi*). The heart, in this model, is the organ of sentiments. Hence good people, charitable and a joy to work with, are in most African communities referred to as people of "good heart" (Igbo, *ndi obi oma*). Those given to ill-mindedness, envy, jealousy, and other signs of wickedness or crookedness are designated as people with "bad heart" (Igbo, *ndi obi ojoo*) or people with the *evil eye*. According to Magesa (2002), when a person is referred to as having a *bad heart*, what is meant is that the individual in question is antisocial, perhaps greedy, and therefore readily capable of harming others. And Placide Tempels, speaking along the same lines, notes that anger induces *darkness before a person's eyes* (*Mu meso mufita fututu,* as the Baluba express it), making the destruction of life immediately probable. The liver, in this scheme, is the organ of character or the seat of the will. Consequently, the Taita people (Harris, 1978) see it as the fountain of courage, strength of character, straightforwardness, or their opposites: cowardice, irresponsibility, unreliability, and other disorders of conduct.

Supporting this, Magesa (2002, p. 151) points out that

> Just as vital power is diffused in all parts of the body and yet more concentrated in some, so is the power that leads to wrong-doing. In this latter respect the head, the heart, the stomach and the eyes are particularly significant. With various African peoples, harmful intentions originate from one or the other of these organs because once again, this is where the concentration of forces for possible wrong-doing is to be found. Intentions

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are translated from these human organs, voluntarily or involuntarily, into words, attitudes or actions that diminish life.

Drawing from Placide Tempels, Magesa (2002, p. 151) opines that, among the Baluba of Central Africa, the organs just cited (eyes, mouth, heart, etc.) are the seats of "enmity, hatred, envy, jealousy, evil speech, even false praise or lying eulogy."

Hence, according to him, it would be more accurate to say that they are seats of life forces that have been perverted, since enmity, hatred, envy, lying, and so on are nothing other than perversions of bonding, love, sharing, and honesty. Thus, hair (growing on the head), blood (pumped by the heart), fecal matter (coming from the bowels or the stomach), and saliva (also emanating from the bowels, according to African conceptions) all signify life. And it is not surprising that for many Africans they are also the materials most sought by those who wish to harm life. For, according to many Africans, to be able to manipulate these materials through mystical powers is to have power over the body and life of the person from whom they come (Magesa, 2002).

Thus it is only in the structural component of the African self that a basic similarity is found with the traditional Western psychological idea of the inner components of the person as the source of the self's principal actions (including attitudes, feelings, emotions, etc.).

The shadow aspect of this component of the Africentric theory of the self is that it generates an enormous language of bashing, lashing, and typing of people who fail to toe the line. In that process, a lot of interpersonal wrangling and discord arises in Africa due to people accusing each other of using bad and insensitive language (e.g., "I hate you, you have a bad heart" or "I hate your evil eye") instigated by the notion of the contents of the structural self.

The Liminal Self

The idea of a liminal self is used in this theory to draw attention to the fact that, basic to the nature of a typical African self, is the phenomenon of *liminality*. Arnold van Gennep (1960) was the first to recognize the existence of such a phenomenon in the making of a person within the African cultural world. He used the construct of liminality to refer to the idea of a self in the condition of a *transition between*. He therefore used the concept to designate the experience of a person inhabiting a world *in-between* the state of a *no*

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longer and that of a *not yet*. In borrowing such a concept, my aim is to show that occupying a huge space in the psychology of the typical African self is the phenomenon of liminality. Of course, by this I do not mean that liminality is absent in the West. What I mean, however, is that a typical African self regularly experiences the situation of being in crisis and transition. And, therefore, by nature, the history of the normal African self is not linear but circular. Thus although in the West it is true that people go through stages apparently marked by liminality and rituals as we do here in Africa, our own pattern tends to take a more intensified direction and is often full of contradictions and tensions. In particular, the idea of liminality of the self in the African context does not lay emphasis on the mere passing of the principal stages of life, but more so on the tendency to delay progression from one stage to the other, plus the crisis of possibility of some people having to contend with the shame of being returned by fate to a state that has previously been understood as successfully transcended. The case in point here is the experience of the world's oldest pupil from Kenya, Kimani Ng'ang'a Maruge, aged 85, who, with the encouraging policy of free primary education in Kenya, enlisted in primary education at a time when he was supposed to have transcended that stage of engagement in the course of his life.

Similarly, whereas in traditional Africa initiation or circumcision rituals typically accompany the experience of liminality, in modern Africa such practices have become problematized. But the experience of liminality continues to stay in the life and psychology of every African. Examples of Africans in liminality include

- Newborn children yet to be named and therefore not yet considered as full-fledged human beings
- African youth, no longer children, but not yet an adult or financially independent
- Refugees in camps, away from the danger of war but yet to return to the safety and comfort of their homes
- Unemployed graduates, some of them waiting in this in-between station for years on end
- Widows still in grief and mourning
- Parents with only male or female children, expecting a balance

Seen in these examples, the liminal self is thus the self of interstices, or the self inhabiting a world of in-between states. While in traditional Africa the

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condition of liminality is treated as a temporal interface between states, presently, particularly for youth and the unemployed, the experience of protracted and multiple conditions of liminality in one individual (no job, no wife or husband) has become the norm.

For some such a period can be taken with considerable equanimity, where the long wait is seen as a period of pure possibility/opportunity for something good to come. But for the majority it comes with heavy psychological costs: a sense of ambiguity/fragmentation, shame, and regrets for having graduated (for example) in a particular discipline that is not lucrative, that "does not sell." In extreme cases, it can lead to suicide, drug-taking, or other signs of desperation.

The worst thing is that, unlike in Western Europe and North America where some welfare programs are available to attend to people in protracted transitions, in Africa such services are still considered a luxury. Consequently, an important preoccupation for members of helping professions in Africa must include how to counsel and plan for a variety of African individuals in elongated states of liminality.

The Transcendental/Spiritual Self

This is another aspect of the African self that has been well acknowledged by previous researchers in African philosophy and religion. I use the term "spiritual self" to draw attention to the fact that at the core of the African genius is exceptional religiosity (Mbiti, 1969; Mkhize, 2004; Myers, 1987, 1985; Ogbonnaya, 1994). Such exceptional religiosity is grounded on the fact that a typical African self is greatly dominated by a number of internalized beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes reflecting the spiritual view of the people, a good number of which appear contrary to the Western notion of the self as a value-free agency in control of its fate in the world. These include, first, a belief in the existence of the Supreme Being or that power from whom all good things come. This notion goes with the important assumption in Africa that God is involved in the details of our human experience and that things do not happen unless God approves them. The same attitude encourages the great principle in Africa of resignation to God's will when confronted with problems that we can neither handle nor alter. The *spiritual self* is thus an aspect that is found reflected in the Western notion of the one high God, understood as the creator of heaven and earth.

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Second, a belief in the existence of other spiritual agencies and in the capacity of these agencies to influence positively or negatively the course of human welfare in the world. This belief goes with the notion that there is an intermingling of forces in the universe. This aspect of the African self is meant to prove that, in the African imagination, *physical nature is not dead*. It is rather understood as imbued with immanent vitality and spirit force. For, in the African view, behind nature there is super-nature, the spirit which *animates* it and *infuses* it with *mystical potency*. This means that, from the point of view of the spiritual component of the African self, everything in nature is either a manifestation of matter, tangible, physical, and responsible for sensible perception, or of super-nature, that which is nature's hidden power and life. The perfect combination of the two aspects ensures the harmony and ordered progress of the African world, which means that the earth will go on yielding its bounties, the sky will continue to let down its showers, the sun will bless and vitalize the earth in perpetuity, and the streams and brooks will perennially provide the fluid of life as well as life-sustaining food.

The same spiritual belief of the African self goes with the notion that the deities expect to be attended to with gifts and worship and that they punish those who renege on this. Thus, a key mentality in African spirituality is the *seed yam* mentality (Animalu, 1990; Nwoye, 2005). The seed yam mentality, as noted in the previous chapter, is the belief in the operation of the principle of reciprocity even in god–human relations. In this view, we reap from the gods only after we have served their needs. This is quite different from the biblical notion of God depicted in Mathew 20:1–6, where God is presented as a generous agency that does not pay us in reciprocity to what we have given Him, but according to the logic of His unfathomable generosity. This means that African religiosity may be based on a platform that is not completely in tune with the notion of God as understood in the West (Nwoga, 1984). In that case, it is possible that the notion of God in Africa and the West may not be very close.

Third, a belief that our ancestors and other deceased relatives, though dead, are still living (Mbiti, 1969). That, like the gods, they need only to be venerated to be of service to us in challenging the problems of living. This notion goes with the idea of *invisible loyalty* harbored in the mind of a typical African—that the voice or directives of the ancestors and dead parents must be respected and adhered to. This aspect differs from the Western existential notion of the self as an unbounded, imperial, or totalitarian subject that invests him- or herself with values and principles that are personally chosen.

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Other beliefs and assumptions that characterize the traditional African worldview and the spiritual view of the people, all reflected in the notion of the transcendental self, are that all events are caused; nothing happens by chance; every event is like a speech text, the meaning of which can always be determined by consulting diviners (Nwoye, 2015b); certain misfortunes are misfortunes of destiny arising from "the potency of the unpredictable in human affairs" (Achebe, 1993); and potions can be utilized to secure another's love (Kenyatta, 1938/1991). Thus, among the Akan of Ghana is a popular belief that women can secure potions to prevent their husbands from chasing after other women by causing their husbands to be impotent with any other women (including his other wives). Similarly, among the Akan of Ghana, the Yoruba of Nigeria, and the Akamba people of Kenya, there is a prevailing belief that a man may guard against the infidelity of his wife by employing potions (in the Yoruba language, *magu*). Such potions are designed to cause her lovers to become impotent, suffer pains or swelling of the penis, contract venereal disease, or make the couple unable to separate after intercourse. In some ethnic communities in rural Africa it is also believed that a rejected lover or spouse may seek revenge on either the person who rejects him and/or his successor by using sorcery that will cause the victim to become mad or make the woman into a prostitute. Hence, proper upbringing of girls in Africa entails the need to educate one's daughters on the polite formulas to use in refusing approaches from unacceptable suitors or love-seekers.

Finally, another important belief in Africa, one entrenched in the transcendental or spiritual component of the African self, is that *thoughts and words have power* to bring about the state that they enunciate or symbolize. This belief goes with the notion that evil thoughts or hatred against a relative or friend may cause him or her harm (Harris, 1978) and that justified parental curses have real effects on their offspring. The spiritual component of the African self is that aspect of the human individual that draws attention to the African's firm belief in the phenomenon of *mystical causality*, in the possibility of action from a distance, and in the belief that some people have the capacity to change into hyenas and other dangerous animals to harm others (Magesa, 2002).

These illustrations hugely demonstrate that the spiritual component of the African self places important emphasis on the sacred dimension of everyday life. They show that an average African individual has a tragic sense of life, or the sense of a life in which not all of a person's aspirations can ever be achieved. Hence, for the African as for George Santayana, *Life is not a*

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spectacle or a feast: it is a predicament, one requiring the intervention of some spiritual forces and other people to secure one's protection.

Conclusion

Having reached this point, how then do we conclude? What have we learned about the constituents, strengths, and crises of the modern African self? The following trends have come to light:

- The African idea of the good life is not synonymous with an absence of imperfection.
- Psychological health or happiness is an outcome of one being blessed with five major good things of life: life, prosperity, health, children, and peace and joy (Ekwunife, 1997; Nwoye, 2005; Whyte, 1997). These values are pursued by the mobile and enterprising component of the African self, referred to in this theory as the *generative self*.
- The normal African self is disturbed by problems that are largely socially derived and culturally constructed.
- A huge part of the African self is filled with narrative and proverbial texts consisting of injunctions, counsels, beliefs, assumptions, myths, fears, and conditioned attitudes assimilated through cultural induction. This particularly shows that the African self is essentially the product of a relational ontology (Freeman, 2014) rather than an archetypal system and draws attention to one area of major difference between my own understanding of the fabric of the African self and the notion of the inner pluralism of the self as formulated by Ogbonnaya (1994).
- An individual's externality (or the body the individual is) as perceived and rated by self and others is a significant dimension of the African self. Hence, schooling can become a site of pathology and shame for children with awkward embodiment, encouraging truancy as a means of escape.
- Yet the African self is not only in the skin, head, heart, or liver. As a pragmatic, multidimensional, and synoptic aggregate, it manifests itself in eight interpenetrating constitutive elements. Its nature is determined by the total pattern, and its various constituents or dimensions are subject to the principles of dialectics, transcendence of dichotomies, seasonal wisdom, interdependency, and creative self-surpassing (Berman, 1996).

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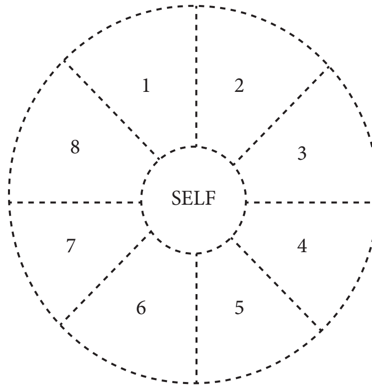

Figure 7.2 A spatial representation of the African self as multidimensional aggregate.

Figure 7.2 reflects a spatial model representation of the eight dimensional constituents of the African self. In it, the emphasis on equal distribution of spaces is intended mainly to show that each component is equally precious in the formation of a balanced and healthy African self and that there is no presumption of hierarchy among adjoining components. Consequently, although it may be argued that in some African cultures some aspects of the eight dimensions may become more palpable than the rest, I believe that in every African individual, all the components are there in some amount, the value of which cannot be measured in quantitative terms. The number in each cell refers to the number of the particular dimension of the African self as listed earlier. The broken lines reflect the idea of co-penetration of forces between the various dimensions, and the broken outer circle stands for the idea of interpenetration of influence between self and community.

In conclusion, therefore, one can say that although for years African students and scholars have been dominated by the idea that psychological distress is a product of factors internal to the individual, in the African context, the self is a product of factors both internal and external, visible and invisible, to the individual. The general significance of this outcome runs in line with the important observation made by Holdstock (2003, p. 245) that

> The major task confronting humanity is to create a new self, better suited than the model adhered to at present by psychology, in order to deal with the issues of our global and postmodern society.

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This must imply, among other things, the need we have to rise to the challenge of revisioning and remapping the individuocentric/interiocentric approach to the self informing most of the foreign theories and textbooks influencing our work.

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8

Dreaming in Africa

An Africentric Theory

In this chapter, I argue that there is a basic difference between the notion of dreaming in mainstream Western psychology and the idea of dreaming as understood in the African perspective. In mainstream Western psychology people dream only for themselves and are essentially self-contained in their overall mechanism of dreaming. Similarly, in the Eurocentric perspective there is an assumption that dreams originate from within the dreamer and generate messages that have relevance and meaning mainly for the effective interpretation of the life and concerns of the dreamer. My main aim in this chapter is to demonstrate that this Eurocentric paradigm of dreaming, while relevant and not to be ignored, needs to be opened up to accommodate other theories of dreaming which recognize that people can, at times, dream for or about the concerns of others rather than of themselves.

To clarify this theme, the chapter illustrates by means of a few concrete African dream narratives that the African dream perspective recognizes *not only* the one person or the individuocentric paradigm of dreaming that poses as a leading perspective in mainstream Euro-American psychology (Franklin & Zyphur, 2005; Glucksman, 2001; Revonsuo, 2000) but *also* the intriguing and interesting phenomenon of *triangulation of the other* in the context of dreaming and dream interpretation. In the African perspective, the notion of triangulation in dreaming refers to the situation where dreams are known to originate from another source to give messages to the individual for the benefit of others. This unique perspective on dreaming is examined in this chapter, and some emerging questions for further research and reflection, arising from the discussion, are highlighted.

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Methodology

To contextualize the discussion, three important methodological questions are raised and answered. The first relates to the issue of how the data on which the framework on dreaming in Africa presented were collected. The data that illustrate the theory of dreaming in Africa here discussed emerged from four sources. The first came from a qualitative (in-class survey) study of dreaming in Africa involving a purposeful sample of the author's graduate students from two universities in Africa (The University of Jos, in Nigeria, West Africa, from 1987 to 1996, and the Kenyatta University, in Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa, from 1997 to 2008). In the study, the sample students from Nigeria and Kenya were asked to respond to the following question:

> What account/s of dreams, either yours or by others, do you have and can share with us (the lecture group) which have shown you that dreaming in Africa is a significant and living phenomenon, entailing an important way of knowing, that causes changes in people's behavior and experience?

It is a sample of the *narrative account* (van Manen, 1990), not direct quotations from their varied verbal responses to this question, that gave rise to the first two of the three dream case vignettes examined in this chapter.

The second source of data came from the literature (F. S. Edwards, 1983, 1984; S. D. Edwards, 1985, 1986, 2011; Holdstock, 2000; Mkhize, 1998; Musi & Edwards, 1985; Mutwa, 2003; Ngubane, 1977; Sokhela, Edwards, & Makunga, 1984) on the role of dreaming among the Zulu and Xhosa people of South Africa and the Tanzanian people of East Africa (Erdtsieck, 2001).

The third source emerged as a product of qualitative (interview-based) field research which the author undertook during the course of the first World Council for Psychotherapy conference held at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. During that conference the author joined a group that visited a popular traditional medicine doctor in Kampala, Uganda who is popularly known to use the dream process as a diagnostic mechanism in his healing practice. The result of the study formed the third anecdote on dreaming, the details and analysis of which will be presented in the later part of this discussion.

The fourth source came from a review of some pertinent anecdotal records on the anthropology of dreaming in Africa. From such a review two pertinent anecdotes on the notion and content of dreaming in Africa emerged.

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The first refers to the one cited by Taylor (1963/1994, pp. 150–151) in his book, *The Primary Vision*. The report concerns the case of a young African in the Rhodesian copperbelt (now Zimbabwe) who offered to Taylor a narrative of the dream he had (Taylor, 1963/1994).

> My eyes became very, very bad. I was in hospital for three months and during that time my wife never visited me. The doctor failed to cure me and then he wanted to do an operation. The pain was then so fierce I agreed with him. But that night my (dead) father spoke to me. And he said to me: There is no cure for you in this place, but African medicines will cure you. The next morning the doctor came and wanted to syringe my eyes and do the operation. But I refused. So I was discharged. . . . After two weeks they tried the African medicines but the pain was terrible. But then my father came and said "My son, Benedict, wake up. Go over to that side and cut down the tree standing by the road. Then come home and burn it and look at it as it burns. Burn it also with a castor oil bean." (p. 150)

Taylor commented that on awaking Benedict obeyed these instructions. He slept that night and "The next morning I woke and found all pain was gone. No weaknesses. I could use my eyes again" (p. 151). This anecdote suggests that in African dream perspective, dreaming is understood as a medium through which people can receive messages of wisdom outside of their own cognition, that is, intersubjectively. The next pertinent anecdote arising from this fourth source of data is one which came from a dream narrative of Bishop Akinyele of Ibadan (Nigeria), which was cited in *Christianity in Africa* edited by Fashole-Luke, Gray, Hastings, and Tasie (1978, pp. 152–153).

> In 1891 Bishop Akinyele's mother had died, and three years earlier in 1888, the Bishop (Anglican) then a little boy was about to leave the home in order to go to school where he was to stay in the missionary's house. The day before he left home, his mother and himself knelt together and prayed. She made him promise to do God's work in His church and not to aspire for worldly advancement. Unfortunately, however, the boy (the Bishop) did well in school and in 1893 was told that he had been selected to become a "private clerk" in the Governor's palace in Lagos. This was a very great and rare honour and in the Bishop's very words, "a turning point in my life." "But then I had a dream. I saw my dead mother approaching me. She reminded me of my promise given many years earlier, to work for God and not for the

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world. I so much would have loved to have gone to the Governor—but for that dream." (p. 553)

The following morning, he was found weeping, torn as he was between two loyalties. But that same day he decided to inform the governor that he could not come to him, since he had to keep his promise to a higher authority (the voice of her mother that came to him in the dream).

This narrative, like the one preceding it, illustrates the extent of faith and strength of commitment that Africans can give to information gained through the dream process. The trend draws attention to the kind of "invisible loyalties" (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1973/1986) that can arise in an African person's life and world through the avenue of dreaming.

More important, the general lesson to be drawn from this fourth source of data is that dreams that form logically, morally, or aesthetically satisfying wholes are not exceptional in African dream perspective. Consequently, Jung's (1991, p. 68) assertion that usually "a dream is a strange and disconcerting product distinguished by many bad qualities such as lack of logic, questionable morality, uncouth form and apparent absurdity and nonsense" cannot be seen as entirely accurate when judged within the context of African dream traditions examined in this chapter. Rather, as this chapter hopes to demonstrate, as understood in Africa, dreams are often poetic or metaphorical, dense or didactic, or even, at times, prophetic in content. Thus, the target of such dreams is assumed to be the heart of the dreamer and not his or her mind. And it is this factor in particular which explains why a significant dream in Africa is known to raise the conviction that something outside the ordinary is addressing the dreamer at that moment (e.g., Bishop Akinyele's dream or that of Benedict the Rhodesian). The traditional African individual, from the point of view of the African dream perspective, can, therefore, be said to be a dream-instructed (pliable) personality.

Sources of Dreaming in Africa

Drawing from the four sources of data on which the discussion in this chapter was based, one can say that in the African perspective three categories of sources of dreaming can be distinguished. These include (a) *individuocentric*, (b) *intersubjective*, and (c) *transcendental/vertical* sources.

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The Individuocentric Source

The individuocentric dream source refers to that category of dreaming that originates from within the dreamer and addresses either the *daily residue*, as emphasized in Islamic dream traditions (Bulkeley, 2002), or the personal needs and concerns of the dreamer (as also emphasized in mainline Western psychology). Consequently, individuocentric dreams in the African context, as in Western dream traditions, refer to personal or intrapsychic dreams. But even here there is some important difference between African and Western perspectives. This comes from the fact that in the African dream perspective there are two main types of individuocentric dreams. They include (a) *compensatory dreams* and (b) *anticipatory dreams*.

The category of *compensatory* individuocentric dreams in Africa refers to those personal dreams which one can classify as wish fulfilment dreams that emerge in the dreamer during sleep as a compensatory response to the needs and perturbations of the dreamer's ordinary life. Compensatory dreams in this context aim to promote fantasy fulfillment of the dreamer's needs and aspirations. In this way, many dream narratives of a typical married woman in Africa who has never been able to conceive a child tend to be dominated by the notion of having been able to conceive and give birth to a bouncing baby boy or girl. Hence, compensatory dreaming functions to help the dreamer derive some inner (emotional) fulfillment of some of the desires that the dreamer has not been able to achieve in ordinary life. This indication implies that the notion of compensatory dreaming in Africa bears great resemblance to the notion of dreaming as espoused by Freud and Jung (Caperton, 2012). In the Freudian framework, for example, when reference is made to another person in one's dreams, such references boil down to a mere commentary on the dreamer's inner life (Caperton, 2012). Indeed, Freud's position is that dreams, at best, constitute one dependable source of information regarding the dreamer's subjective reality, unconscious, and personality. In Freud's view, such knowledge is useful precisely because it helps us to understand the desires and needs of the dreamer. Thus understood, individuocentric compensatory dreams in both Africa and the West generate information that speaks to the nature of the inner life of the dreamer (Caperton, 2012). It is therefore not at this level of individuocentric dreaming that a difference can be found between African and Western theories of dreaming. That difference emerges when consideration is given to the fact of the African notion of anticipatory dreaming that is instigated not from the dreamer's unconscious fantasies but from personal conscious experience in the life world of the dreamer.

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In the African dream paradigm, in addition to the unconscious origin of some individuocentric dreams is the interesting discovery (from the sample of dream reports from the author's graduate students) that there are certain classes of dreams in Africa that originate from the *conscious* experience of the dreamer's life world. This presents the idea of a dream as anticipatory. In the African context, according to some of the students' dream narratives, *anticipatory dreams* do not aim at fantasied wish fulfillment of the dreamer's aspirations and yearnings, as indicated under compensatory individuocentric dreams. Instead, the key idea is that some dreams of the Black African man or woman in crisis often have direct sympathetic relationship with and positively address the conscious yearnings or aspirations of the dreamer. This is made possible by the dreamer's earlier personal contact in real life (as can happen through participation in hope-healing communities; A. Nwoye, 2002) with others' who have had similar hopes fulfilled (see also Chapter 15 in the book). In this context, anticipatory dreams have as their main theme the attempt to help the dreamer have a kind of symbolic/imaginative realization of what he or she consciously yearns for and concretely sees fulfilled in other people's lives. In other words, the aim of such dreams is to make the dreamer have hope that his or her present aspirations or yearnings (like those of others) will soon be fulfilled. The result gives rise to the notion of the hope healing function in the psychic world of the dreamer by promoting, in the dreamer's mind, the quality of time integration or by giving the dreamer the negative capability "to see the absent in the present" (A. Nwoye, 2006, p. 132). Here, the principal assumption appears to be that unless the dreamer, who is daily conscious of his or her problem (and who has discovered from the live testimony of others that similar human aspirations are able to be fulfilled), is confronted in dreams with some elements of sympathetic assurance that his or her present life obstacles will soon be surmounted, the conscious component of his or her psyche will remain unsettled and restless. The anticipatory dream category of the individuocentric theory of dreaming in Africa thus aims to promote the phenomenon of *interval therapy* in the conscious life of the dreamer. By this is meant that it helps prevent the dreamer's emotional tension due to long waits for the eventual realization of his or her conscious yearnings and aspirations from degenerating into the stage of depression and hopelessness. And it is able to do this by helping the dreamer adopt two important hope-sustaining principles in relation to his or her conscious life aspirations: the *principle of anticipation of completion* or the belief that their distress or present challenge will be overcome with time, and the *principle of*

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anticipation of truth or the belief that the story of their current hope for the fulfillment of their aspiration must have some "truth" to tell (the dreamer) in the end (Gadamer, 1975). As noted elsewhere (A. Nwoye, 2002; see also Chapter 15 of this book), by learning from the concrete testimonies of others of similar hopes fulfilled, the dreamer during sleep dreams of the possible fulfillment of his or her own aspirations and needs. In that way, anticipatory dreams heal through their inspirational value in the life of the dreamer. They give the dreamer a foretaste of how the story of his or her own hope journey will eventually end; namely, that she or he will prevail.

These indications mean that, as a heuristic concept, the anticipatory category of the individuocentric theory of dreaming in Africa is an important addition to the literature on dreaming in human beings that needs to be recognized. It helps us African psychologists gain an effective understanding of the complex rationality and hope-healing power of certain dreams in light of the view emphasized in this discussion that the unconscious and fantasy-related aspect of the human psyche is not the only source of dreams that emanate intraindividually.

The Intersubjective or Bidirectional/Triangulation Dream Source

This second category of sources of dreaming in Africa, as revealed from the graduate students' responses and the review of the literature on dreaming in Africa, differs essentially from the Western dream perspective. The Western paradigm assumes that dreams are typically personal, originating from a given individual, and containing messages that reveal the needs, histories, and perturbations of the dreamer.

In contrast, in the African perspective, one can dream not only about oneself for one's problems but also about the life and concerns of another person, such as that of a neighbor, a relative, or a friend. Vital messages necessary for reordering, influencing, and guiding the life and experience of the dreamed person (not the dreamer) are conveyed to the dreamer. According to this perspective, one can gain information in dreams that might be useful and of interest to the life of another person who may or may not be familiar to the dreamer himself. The following anecdote volunteered by one of the author's graduate students from Nigeria may add further clarity to this horizontal source of dreams in Africa.

The student's narrative concerns the case of a widow. The story involves the idea of the dead husband of the widow "visiting" another man in a dream, giving him (the dreamer) messages to be passed on to the deceased's

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surviving widow. The content of the dream included one *guideline* and one *directive*. The first relates to how the current family problem the widow was facing should be resolved. The second contained the injunction that the deceased man's son should not fail to go ahead with his decision to marry the girl (the name of the girl was mentioned) he was courting before he (the dead father) died. Gaining this information was said to be a big relief to the widow and immense guidance to the deceased man's son, who had already started to vacillate on whether or not to marry the girl he had been courting.

This report implies that, in the African perspective, horizontal/triangulated dream sources can serve as a mediated or vicarious means of *discernment* in the face of obstacles or challenges confronting a life. Thus conceived, the dream is seen as both a teacher and a guide to the client(s) to whom it makes reference. Consequently, dreaming in Africa is taken as another way of knowing or gaining access to the truth that is more specific and precise than is true of ordinary intuition and insight. And because the triangulated dream's dictates are heeded as coming from a higher authority, they give little or no opportunity for the development, in the beneficiary, of a neurotic search for certainty and, therefore, of the problem of vacillation and indecision. Thus, the source of dream insight and guidance in the African context is not always personal, nor does it always originate from the beneficiary's unconscious (Caperton, 2012).

The Transcendental/Spiritualist Dream Source

This third source of dreams in Africa suggests that some dreams are called into being by the agents of the spiritual (e.g., ancestral) world. This dream source category speaks to the idea of dream as a visitation or transcendental intervention, one orchestrated through a meeting during sleep or trance between the dreamer and a specific agent of the ancestral or spiritual world (as in the dream narratives of Benedict the Rhodesian or Bishop Akinyele, the Nigerian). In that way, many African dream narratives imply that, during sleep, the dreamer achieves some communication or engages in dialogue (often in the manner of a conversational monologue in which the spiritual agent speaks and the dreamer listens) with a spiritual or an ancestral agent. During this meeting the dreamer often ends up receiving a key message or instruction "from above." Hence, some leaders of the African Independent Churches today remain strong in their belief that God reveals His wishes and guidance to people

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of every generation through the avenue of dreams (A. Nwoye, 2002; see also Chapter 15 of this book). Thus inspired, they try to exploit the dream medium as an avenue for contacting the Holy Spirit in search of guidance and support on how to contend with the problems which their clients daily present to them (Charsley, 1992; Jedrej & Shaw, 1992; A. Nwoye, 2002). This aspect of dreaming in Africa is therefore conceived by some religious practitioners in Africa as a method by which to arrive at insights that could be used to unravel and master the challenges of living in the human world.

Given this, it is argued that the philosophical tradition that underpins the world of dreaming in Africa is different from the one that anchors and influences "the dominant rationalist view" (Taylor, 1963/1994) of Western philosophical tradition, with its dedication to the investigation (often within experimental laboratory conditions) of the isolated individual and his or her dreams.

Now to the other methodological question: Why "totalize African experience and mentality" in the context of dream psychology as presented in this chapter? In response, I would like to draw attention to the pertinent observation credited to Macquet (1972), who in accounting for the unity of African culture south of the Sahara suggested that "Africanity, like every broad cultural synthesis, . . . is based on a similar experience of the world shared by various societies and on the dissemination of several cultural traits among these societies" (p. 16). This unity of vision and experience among members of the varied societies of Africa is made possible, according to Maquet, by the "development of similar ways of adapting to the natural environment and the diffusion of culture traits; these two mechanisms, each reinforcing the other, combine to create a common culture" (p. 16), a common framework of experience, and a generic African vision with regard to the notion and functions of dreaming in human life. The same is true with the notion of Negritude as African people's singular response to the question of what binds them together. Irele points out that the concept of Negritude, according to Senghor, refers to

> the sum total of the cultural values of Africa. It is a concept that postulates the underlying unity of the various forms of cultural expression in black Africa, and which explains the objective difference that separates the black African from the European or the Asian, despite their common humanity. (Senghor, cited in Irele, 1981, p. 72)

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Based on this, I believe that it is possible to represent Africa in the singular when considering the variety of nations, cultures, and geographical distinctions that make up the continent (A. Nwoye, 2015a). At the same time, it remains important to acknowledge that, due to intragroup diversity, there may be varied interpretations, perspectives, and roles associated with dreaming across Africa. However, drawing from Senghor's and Macquet's positions, Africans (whether on the continent or in the New World), possess a unity in diversity, sharing a common spiritual and epistemological tradition, a common vision of the world (Holdstock, 2000). It is that common worldview (often designated as a *spiritualist worldview*) which underpins the African perspective on dreaming examined in this chapter.

Epistemology and Worldview of African Dream Psychology

The psychology of dreaming in Africa is strongly influenced by the African people's perception of the world as consisting of interpenetrating realms of existence (Animalu, 1990; Bodibe & Sodi, 1997; Bührmann, 1981; Chukwu, 2008; Holdstock, 2000; Horton, 1962, 1967, 1995; Kalu, 1978; Mbiti, 1969; M. A. C. Nwoye, 2011; Tuche, 2009). Within such a worldview, the life of a human being entails the experience of *being-in-the-world* (Heidegger, 1937/1962; Freeman, 2014) and recognizing the importance of the Other (human or spirit) in the human condition of existence. Fundamental to this view of reality is the idea that nothing in life, whether human or spirit, living or dead, self or Other, lives in isolation from another (Achebe, 1990, 2002). Rather, the governing principle of natural and supernatural existence is anchored on the fundamental principle of inclusion based on the spirit of interconnectedness (Nwoye, 2006; Webb, 2012). This peculiar dialectical/ontological principle recognized in African psychology (Animalu, 1990; Mbiti, 1969) is based on the interdependence that exists between humans and spirit and between the individual and the community, including that of the self and "the other" in human existence. This view of life as interdependent and interpenetrating encourages the basis for the African people's practice of ancestor veneration (Mbiti, 1969) as well as their belief and faith in the enormous potential of spirit in the revitalization of human life (Hemminger, 2001). Such ontology challenges the dichotomous opposition of mind and body, of self and Other, giving rise to a rejection, in indigenous Africa, of any serious attempt to draw

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a categorical distinction between people and their complex environments—physical, social, natural, and supernatural. This African ontology provides enriching ways to approach the world and the place of humans and their dreams in that world.

Given this ontological perspective, and as seen by Ngubane (1977), S. D. Edwards (1986), Holdstock (2000), and H. B. Mkhize (1981), and from the dream reports volunteered by the my graduate students as well as from my case study of the Ugandan traditional medicine man, the phenomenon of dreaming in Africa can only be effectively understood when perceived from the vantage point of the African epistemological assumption that significant human knowledges can be acquired through three principal sources: intrasubjective, intersubjective, and transcendental. The transcendental sources, as already explained, emanate from influences of human contact and dialogue (through the avenue of dreaming) with agents of the invisible or supernatural/abstract world. In indigenous Africa even today, there is a belief in the existence of an interconnectedness and intermingling of forces within the universe and, therefore, of concrete opportunities for intertransactional communication among various categories of beings within the universe (human and spiritual, and the living and the dead, Mbiti, 1969). This belief goes hand in hand with a similar belief in the existence of merely a thin line separating beings of the mundane, physical world from beings of the invisible or spirit world (Animalu, 1990; Kalu, 1978; M. A. C. Nwoye, 2011). The African psychological universe is, therefore, perceived to be broad-based, complicated, and porous in its borders, never restricted to the experiences and happenings in the physical world of the five senses.

Consequently, the psychology of dreaming in Africa is influenced by the indigenous African view of the world, in which there is an assumption and a recognition of the existence of both circular and mystical causality in the universe (Mbiti, 1969); a universe in which the sovereignty of the self and the spirit of exclusivity are not part of the bargain (Freeman, 2014). Under this framework the physical world of things and human beings is embedded within the larger ambit of a spiritual universe, with beings from these contrasting realms (visible and invisible/abstract) having some kind of (mystical) access to one another. The social and the spiritual, the natural and the supernatural, and the self and the Other are assumed to mingle in complementary rather than opposing directions. This framework attests to the complicated image of the African concept of the universe and the regions and

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multiple sources through which an intermingling of elements of the African cosmos can occur.

In this way, the African universe is an alive, circular, and dynamic universe of multiple realities in close proximity and complicated transactions with one another. Given such a worldview, African dreams can originate from (a) *within* an individual in the human world (as understood in the West); (b) from other human beings in contact with other beings and realities from outside the human world on behalf of other persons, or triangulated "others"; (c) through contact with members of the ancestral world or the world of the recently dead (as in the dream report by Benedict the Rhodesian and Bishop Akinyele of Nigeria); or (d) from the intervention of the god of medicine and other assorted patron spirits in the numinous or spiritual realm.

Illustrative Anecdotal Dream Reports

The following three narrative accounts (van Manen, 1990) are not direct quotations of dream reports. They are drawn from sources mentioned earlier and underscore the high visibility and the notion of triangulation of *the other* in African dream perspective.

Dream Case 1 (Volunteered by a Graduate Student from Nigeria)

This dream anecdote reports the problem of a Catholic parish in the eastern part of Nigeria, West Africa, which lost its parish priest in a ghastly motor accident. The main problem in this story is that, with the accidental passing of the priest, the key to the tabernacle where the monstrance (the vessel used in both the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches for the more convenient exhibition of some object of piety, such as the consecrated Eucharistic host during Eucharistic adoration or Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament) and the extra consecrated Eucharist (for the parishioners' holy communion) are kept for safety and later use, could not be found. This was a major problem because the searchers had a strong belief that the key was somewhere in the parish house, but they were unable to say exactly where the deceased priest kept it before his untimely death. Because they felt sure that the key must be somewhere within the house,

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they were reluctant to destroy the expensive tabernacle. Many weeks passed, however, and yet the key was nowhere to be found. This situation caused enormous inconvenience to the easy management of Sunday services for the thousands of parishioners. But, while the searchers were at the verge of losing hope, the deceased priest intervened in a dream to one of his sisters, telling her the whereabouts of the key. The following morning the priest's sibling immediately contacted the acting parish priest with the dream message. She told the acting priest of the dream she had about the key, indicating that her deceased brother had told her where to look for the key. They went to the exact place indicated and found the key there!

This anecdote shows that, in the African dream perspective, the dream message or information often arises not from within but from outside the world of the dreamer and often comes to the dreamer from the other in an ordinary language that requires no need for specialized interpretation. The same anecdote also shows that, in the African dream perspective, the dream *other* (the one who initiated the dream) can be a dead person "visiting" a living person (the dreamer) with a message for the benefit of another person (a triangulated "other," in this story, the acting parish priest) in the human world.

The anecdote illustrates the idea of the existence of the phenomenon of triangulation of *the other* (and with this even the notion of the multiple "other") in the African dream perspective. In this way, the context in which there is the notion of "the other" occurs more than once (or in multiple fashion) in the dream discourse: where the dreamer (the sister of the dead priest) is taken to refer to the self; the dead priest (the initiator of the dream) becomes the dream "other"; and the acting parish priest (to whom the message was directed, as well as the parishioners, becomes "the triangulated other"). The case equally shows that the notions of *self* and *other* in African dream perspective can be applied not only to people in the world of the living but also to the deceased inhabiting the world of the dead. Also, this dream narrative shows that, in African indigenous thought, the death of the body does not entail the death of the mind (A. Nwoye, 2015a) as earlier highlighted in Chapter 6 of this book. The self is defined through relationships to ancestors, the yet unborn, the community, and assorted patron spirits inhabiting the numinous world (Freeman, 2014).

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Dream Case 2 (Volunteered by a Graduate Student from Kenya)

This second case was contributed by one of my graduate students from Kenya. It reports of a dream narrated by a relative, which stemmed from a terrible automobile accident that involved a head-on collision between two big luxurious buses on their way to and from Kampala, Uganda. The accident took place on the famous Naivasha-Nakuru expressway in Kenya. The accident was said to be one of the most tragic and ghastly in recent memory. It claimed more than 60 lives from both buses, including men, women, and children passengers en route to various destinations for their Christmas holiday. A majority of the corpses were in mangled states and some were burned beyond recognition, making some relatives of the deceased passengers unable to recognize the true identity of their dead loved ones. Under this condition most were unable to identify and collect the remains of their deceased relatives from the various mortuaries to which they were taken. For this reason some relatives settled for mass grave burial ritual for their dead relatives. One of the affected families, however, having assumed to have successfully identified their deceased member, had gone home to prepare to return to the mortuary the next day to collect the identified corpse for a decent burial. But, during the night, an aunt of the deceased man dreamed that she was visited by her deceased relative, who left her with an order to contact the deceased's elder brother, who had gone to the mortuary with other family members the day before, and inform him that the corpse they thought was his "is indeed not his." The dream message was therefore offered by the dead person concerned to keep his relatives from the mistake of burying the wrong corpse. To ensure this, the message was very clearly presented regarding how the right corpse would be detected on their arrival at the mortuary: when the family arrived at the mortuary, they should leave the row of corpses where they thought his was to be found and go over to the next one. There, they would find his remains lying second from the left side of the entrance. The dream "other" (the deceased man, the architect of the dream) said that they could identify him from the mark of sharp cut on the first toe of his right leg. The aunt (the dreamer, the dream self) went early the next morning with this message to the elder brother (the triangulated "other") to whom the message was directed. On receiving the dream and its directive, the elder

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brother and the other men accepted the message as given and went to the mortuary. Following the guidelines given, they found the corpse there. With this they took the corpse home amid tears mixed with joy: tears for the untimely loss of their relative and joy at the successful identification and access to the remains of the deceased. They were able to confirm the authenticity of the corpse through a DNA test.

Again, this anecdote, like the first, suggests that dreaming in Africa may not be a totally personal affair originating in the self and ending with addressing or interrogating the needs or concerns of the self (the dreamer). Rather, what is underscored is that people can dream about matters relating to the well-being or needs of others. In the African dream perspective, dreams that bear reference to our own life and problems can arise either through the gateway of our own psychic apparatus (or, as Levinas, cited in Davis, 1996, p. 46, would say, the "cabinet of consciousness") or through those of others. What "visits" the dreamer during sleep can include insights to a problem or an ancestor or a recently dead person with a message to deliver to a living relative or friend. In the African view, in other words, one can dream for others (Engelskirchen, 2006).

Also, in this second anecdote, the notion of the "other" in African dream perspective is very clearly a foregrounded Other. It can refer either to another human being sharing the same earthly world with the dreamer or a dead relative who, though dead, is believed to be still living (Mbiti, 1969; A. Nwoye, 2015b) and could pass vital messages to surviving relatives in the earthly world through the agency of other living human beings. Another important theme emerging from this second anecdote is the clear visibility of the insufficiency of the self (in this context, the deceased man), the noted dependency of even the dead on the support of the living, and thus the important idiom of *the priority of the other in human existence* (Freeman, 2014) that anchor the African dream theory. This means that in African dream psychology the lesson is that the human condition as well as spiritual life is founded on the ethics of mutuality, interdependency and cooperation, trust, and humility.

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Dream Case 3 (Case Study of a Traditional Medicine Man from Uganda)

The time frame for this third dream narrative was during the first World Council for Psychotherapy Congress, which took place in Kampala, Uganda, on November 23–29, 1997 (Nwoye, 2010, 2015b). At that time, in the course of my pre-conference activities, I opted to be among a team who arranged to visit a popular traditional medicine man in Kampala to discover his diagnostic process and how he effects his healing. The interview I had with the man revealed that he relied heavily on the phenomenon of dream insight and guidance in both his diagnostic process and in his prescription of healing. According to the medicine man, after finding out through other ordinary procedures, including observation and interview, what is troubling a given client, a time must come when he has to rely on dream messages to confirm his diagnosis and determine the specific action to take to effect healing in the client. According to this traditional healer, such messages usually come to him from either the god of medicine or else from an ancestor or the dead relative from whom he had inherited his healing powers and vocation. Most of these messages, according to him, come to him during the early hours of the morning—1 or 2 a.m.—while he was still asleep. He indicated that to induce such dreams he does not sleep in his normal house but in a ritual thatched house (the dream house; see Figure 8.1) specifically built for the purpose. According to him, during such dream visitations, he is usually told what is ailing the patient, the origin of the problem, and the type of medicine to use and the specific place to find it as a remedy for the problem. This man emphasized (as confirmed by Erdtsieck, 2001, among the traditional healers in Tanzania) that engaging in dreaming is one of the common means of diagnosing among traditional medicine practitioners in Africa.

From this dream vignette, we get an expanded notion and location of the "other": the dream "other" who bears the dream messages encompasses not only fellow persons in the human world but also an ancestor in the world of the living dead or other patron spirits (in the supernatural world) with whom humans, under specialized or induced conditions, can establish dream contact. Thus, in this particular anecdote, there is an interesting discovery which shows that, in African dream psychology, dreams can be

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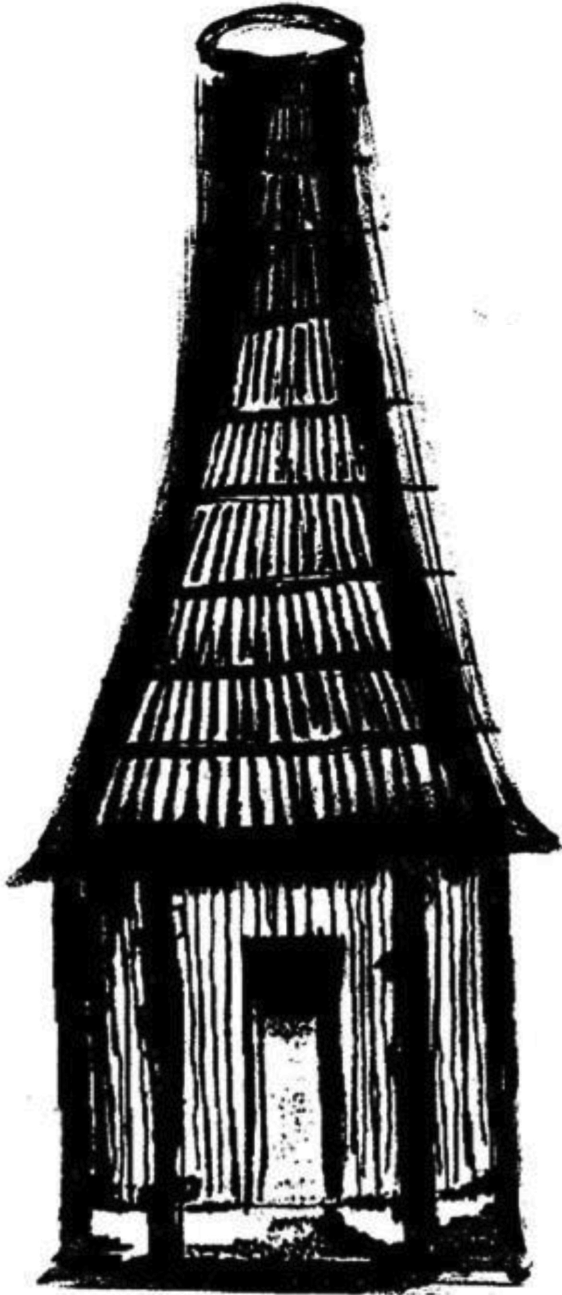

Figure 8.1 Image of the House of Wisdom (or the dream house).

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induced through culturally specific mechanisms like the medium of a dream house. This mechanism infuses the ordinary (the phenomenon of dreaming) with a sense of the extraordinary in soliciting dream guidance and information. The agent whose contact and guidance is sought out is independent of the dreamer and often is approached due to their superior knowledge and understanding. The same anecdote also shows that an *izangoma* (or traditional healer among the Zulu people of South Africa) takes dreaming seriously, believing it is a source of vital information for the success of his or her professional career and undertakings and that important human knowledge can come from outside the self (Andersen, 2007). *Izangomas* do not approach the context of dreaming without getting themselves effectively psychologically and morally prepared for the dream encounter with the significant dream "other" (A. Nwoye, 2015b). The traditional medicine man from Uganda who volunteered the preceding anecdote emphasized the critical importance of one being in a state moral purity and balance, including, but not limited to, avoiding sexual contact with menstruating women while getting ready for this meeting with the dream "other." Such anecdotes suggest that some African dreaming processes can move into the realm of professional healing and accessing the supernatural for healing purposes. The presence of the dream house in this anecdote indicates that the dream "other," in African perspective, is at times met in a specialized place located away from the dreamer and the ordinary accoutrements of life.

The same anecdote equally suggests that dreaming, in some instances in Africa, arises in the context of taking redressive action in search of a resolution to a crisis disturbing a member or members of the community unrelated by blood to the dreamer (A. Nwoye, 2015b; Turner, 1980). Essentially, there is a connection between the self and community, and between culture, cognition, medicine, and spirituality, as revealed in the dream accounts discussed earlier.

This exploration demonstrates that there is a range of dream reports to be encountered in Africa. Some are individuocentric and the dreams originate and end in issues of relevance to the dreamer or the self. Other dreams originate in one individual but have a particular reference to the needs of another. Other dreams are essentially solution-focused, either to the needs of the self or to those of others. Some dreams are mundane in origin, while others are transcendentally sourced. And there are significant and insignificant (nightmarish) dreams. On the whole, however, the most significant conclusion to be made from the anecdotes presented is the high visibility of

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the phenomenon of "other" triangulation in dreaming in Africa, forming the foundation for human beings' participation in the mystical universe.

Implications

Based on these discussions and the implications arising from them, the following conclusions can be made regarding the psychology and content of dreaming in Africa. The first is that some significant human dream messages in the African perspective are believed to originate from outside the self (dreamer) and require the authoritative presence of "the dream other" as speaker or bearer of message to the dreamer. The dreamer, in such instances, plays the role of go-between, listener, and receiver of dream messages, instructions, and guidance from "the dream other" who is the initiator of the dream message. For this reason, in African dream psychology, there is a great respect for the identity of the "other." In this way, professional dreamers (such as some diviners or other traditional medicine healers who employ the mechanism of dreaming in their diagnostic practice) try to get properly disposed to approach "the dream other" by utilizing a specialized holding environment for the encounter with the "dream other" (A. Nwoye, 2015b). Thus, contact with the significant and respected "dream other" cannot be established at the ordinary meeting ground but must occur in a sacred or specialized location. This encounter with a significant "other" bears something vital for the good of the self and/or the members of the community.

Similarly, the relation of "the dream other" to the self (the dreamer) does not have an unyielding dominance in African dream psychology since the dreamer is approached in each of the three dream cases cited as an autonomous subject with an agency of its own, entrusted with significant messages to be taken to a third party (the triangulated "other") for the benefit not of the self, but of the third party or the triangulated "other" (e.g., the dead man's elder brother, as seen in the second anecdote). This suggests the conclusion that the self or the dreamer in African dream theory is not overdetermined in African dream perspective. The authority of "the dream other" does not overshadow or go beyond the bounds deserving of a cultivated speaker or a significant informant in a discourse. In other words, in African perspective, "the dream other" does not exercise authoritarian or lordly control for the proper handling of the dream message issued. This shows that there is a basic *mutual respect* that is entertained by the self and "the other" in African dream

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theory. In this way, both the self and "the other" are allowed respect and autonomy in African dream psychology. This dream attitude is nurtured by the fact that, in the African perspective, "the (dream) other" is often thought of as an independent active agent, seen as a carrier and donor of vital information and ideas, wisdom, and guidance to the dreamer (the self) during the dream contact (e.g., Case 3).

From the content and analysis of the three dream narratives volunteered by the author's graduate students, an intriguing pattern of metaphysical themes clearly emerges, one that foregrounds the spiritual foundations of life in the African context. This includes the notion of circular causality (through the process of dream triangulation), the possibility of mystical knowing and mystical causality (through the avenue of transcendental dream processes) and an emphasis on the ethics of engagement, commitment, trust, honesty, communality, and dialogue (reflected in the transactions that take place between the dreamer and "the dream other" during the dream process). Another important implication emerging from this presentation is the notion that "the dream other" in some African dream narratives (as noted earlier) is typically an extramental, disembodied, or noncorporeal being with agency and a message to share with the dreamer. This observation suggests the existence of the border-crossing phenomenon between the dreamer and "the dream other" located at different existential regions within the framework of the African cosmology. In this way "the (African) dream other" is believed to exist independently of the dreamer, often outside the world region of the dreamer. This mystical contact furnishes the dreamer with information, guidance, or important ideas for addressing the problems of human living (as in Bishop Akinyele's dream narrative in influencing the dreamer's career decision-making). In that way, we get prescriptions and instructions for action through the agency of "the dream other." This observation brings to the fore the implied *insufficiency of the human conscious* and the *priority of the other* in the generation of relevant human knowledge (Anderson, 2007a, 2007b; Freeman, 2014). Thus, "the dream other" in the African dream perspective is considered a significant "other" with something essential to draw from to enrich our lives.

Most importantly (particularly when contrasted with the Eurocentric dream paradigm), the meeting place for encountering "the dream other," in the African perspective, is not often this-worldly centered, as in the psychological laboratory, the village stream, or the village square, but at the numinous, transcendental, or spiritual realm (i.e., at the boundary separating the

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physical from the spiritual plane). This is especially true when "the dream other" originates from the world of the ancestors or from the spiritual realm. Thus, the African dream perspective agrees with the comment credited to Levinas (cited in Davis, 1996) that, unlike Sartre who finds an antagonism in this entry of "the dream other" from the outside, in African dream perspective the experience of visitation by "the dream other" is valued very highly and indeed is courted by means of a dream house, which explains the basis for the present resurgence in the use of dreaming in religious healing processes in most African Pentecostal churches (Bulkeley, 1995; Charsley, 1992; Jedrej & Shaw, 1992; A. Nwoye, 2002; see also Chapter 15 of this book).

There is still another implication. In the African dream perspective, there is the presence of the phenomenon of triangulation through interactions between (a) the dreamer, (b) the dream other, and (c) the triangulated other. This could be seen manifested in each of the three dream narratives volunteered by the author's students, and this speaks to the need for a shift of emphasis from the ethics of bidirectionality between the self and "the other" in human relationships to the ethics of interconnectedness and community (in contrast to the ethics of oppositionality and exclusivity) in human living. In the African context, a human being, whether a living being or a deceased individual, is embedded in a condition of complex interconnectedness that does not vanish with the demise or exit of an individual from the human earthly world. Thus, from one of the dream narratives presented we learn that even the dead needed the assistance of the living, and the living (in the case of the traditional medicine men/women) needed assistance from the spiritual agent in order to effectively heal his patient. This observation draws attention to the *spirit of the curve* and interdependence that is valorized as one of the principal idioms of African philosophy.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the concept of dreaming from an African perspective. Its principal argument is that an African psychological perspective on dreaming adds a new understanding to the prevailing (European) perspective. The Eurocentric paradigm suggests that dreaming is for the self of the individual and thus individuocentric, whereas, in the African-centered paradigm, individuals not only dream for themselves but also dream for others. Hence, in the African dream perspective expounded in this chapter, there

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can be a triangulation in dreaming, where dreams originate from another source to give messages to the individual for the benefit of others. It is hoped that this chapter makes a contribution in considering the tenets of an African dream perspective and furthers the breadth of African-centered psychology. As Guba and Lincoln (2005) observed, social science scholarship "needs emancipation from hearing only the voices of Western Europe, emancipation from generations of silence, and emancipation from seeing the world in one color" (p. 212). Hence, the conceptual framework on African dream perspective re-envisions, re-evaluates, and deepens the literature on dreaming in both African and Western psychological traditions.

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9

Writing the Body

An Africentric Theory of the Gates of Stress

Although psychologists in Africa have continued to rely on Western frameworks on stress as a guide for their work, it is now realized, particularly in this era of intensive clamor for the decolonization of the curriculum in African universities (Heleta, 2016), that the Western models of stress, while relevant and have their place, are partial and heavily Eurocentric in content and perspective and therefore incomplete (Nyamnjoh, 2015; Nwoye, 2018) to serve as comprehensive and reliable guides for action in managing some peculiar sources of stress in ordinary life in Africa. This recognition generates the need for the evolution and entrenchment of the spirit of pluralism and the balance of traditions (African and Western) in the crafting of epistemologies of stress for use in Africa. In response to this need, in this chapter I work out an experience-near and Africentric theory of the embodied gates of stress in everyday life. The goal of such a locally generated theory of stress is not to replace but to complement Western theories of stress that have so far been dominating the centers of psychological training in African universities. The chapter provides what one can call a critical psychology of the phenomenon of stress in two regions of Africa (Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, and Cameroon, in West Africa; and Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, in East Africa). The theory is put forward to draw attention to the existence of some embodied gates of stress among rural people in some parts of Africa that should be recognized by psychological practitioners in Africa. It is expected that the emergence of such a theory will serve as an important addition to the hitherto one-sided (Western) and elitist idioms and vocabularies of stress that dominate the literature on stress in international psychology.

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The Notion of Stress in Western Psychology

As a background to such an endogenously grown theory, I begin with the notion of stress as understood in mainstream Western psychology. In doing this, the first point I want to make is that, from the point of view of mainstream (Western) psychology, there are no less than five major theories of stress available in the literature. These include the idea of stress as external pressure or the so-called physical pressure perspective; the concept of stress as internal tension (the psychological approach); the idea of stress as physiological arousal (the physiological model); the model of stress as transaction, or the now very popular cognitive model of stress propagated by Lazarus and Launier (1978), Lazarus (1991, 1993), and Lazarus and Folkman (1984); and the notion of stress as proposed by Hobfoll (1988, 1989, 1998, 2002), who conceives of stress as a product or impact of the loss of valued assets/resources in the context of traumatic events.

In exploring these literatures, the impression that one gets is that the model of *stress as external pressure* takes its explanatory analogy from the engineering fields. "It suggests that stress exists as a property of an external event" (Price, 1998, p. 174), just as happens in the world of physical objects and events. In constructing bridges, according to this model, engineers try to calculate the load or force a bridge must endure and then build it to be strong enough to resist that force. In this perspective, therefore, bridge stress would be said to occur when it cracks or breaks down under a load that puts greater pressure on it than it is built to endure. Human beings, according to this model, similarly are known to break down under the weight of stress when confronted by external pressures (such as deadlines and tasks) that appear beyond their control. This model, in other words, presents humans as passive victims of stress that confronts them with pressures they must try to withstand in order to survive. In this view, humans are conceived as mere victims, not architects of their own stress. The African perspective on stress presented later in this chapter runs contrary to this particular model of stress propagated in mainstream Western psychology.

The model of *stress as internal tension* conceives of stress as "an inner state of psychic struggle, tension, anxiety, perhaps even panic that involves a perception of threat or harm" (Price, 1998, p. 174). In other words, in this model, stress can be perceived as an internal war that goes on inside ourselves when we are confronted with a challenge or approach/avoid tasks that

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seem catastrophic or overwhelming, whichever way one wants to resolve the equation. In this model, too, psychic struggle is believed to take time and energy to resolve, and, should the struggle continue over a long time, with little or no end in sight, the result can be disastrous. The limitation of this model when seen from the point of view of African psychology is that it sees stress as a product of interiority; that is, as something brewed inside an individual in the face of a problem to be addressed. Thus, stress is not seen as a product of panic instigated by the presence or negative actions of others with whom we live and work. Yet, as understood in Africa, certain aspects of social stress or panic are instigated not primarily from within but from the destructive actions of others with whom we have either psychological or spiritual contact.

The model of *stress as body arousal* was credited to Selye who, in 1956, suggested that stress is "the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it" (Selye, 1974, p. 72; see also Selye, 1976, 1980). In this model, stress is defined in terms of the demand itself, rather than as a response to it. However, it also implies that, to meet the demand, the body usually reacts with a higher arousal level and expends more energy in doing so. In this model, therefore, it is the state of body arousal and energy expenditure that constitute the stress impact on humans. Again, in this model, as in the models mentioned earlier, the social context of behavior that is emphasized in the African perspective is not placed in focus.

The concept of *stress as transaction* is currently one of the most popular perspectives on stress in Western literature. It is an integrative model that tries to connect and build on the important components of the three earlier model. A basic definition of stress under this model is that it is "neither an environmental stimulus, nor a characteristic of the person, nor a response but a relationship between demands and the power to deal with them without unreasonable or destructive costs" (Coyne & Holroyd, 1982, p. 108). The transactional model believes that "stress exists only when environmental demands exceed the person's ability to cope. If the person's coping resources are adequate, no stress occurs, even if an outsider might view the demand as extreme." Conversely, "if the person's coping skills are weak and ineffective, stress may occur, even though to an outsider, the demand may appear slight" (Price, 1998, p. 76). One essential implication of this model is that stress is differentially perceived, person by person, its meaning being controlled by the factor of individual differences. Of course, there is reasonable application

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of this notion of stress in some contexts in Africa. The main contention, however, is that it is not always the case that we encounter stress as a type of demand imposed on us from the environment. Often, in many parts of rural Africa, people indulge in behaviors that generate stress for themselves.

The fifth model of stress, the one credited to Hobfoll (1988, 1989, 1998, 2002), appears to depart from the key premises of the earlier four. It also seems to address particularly the stress of the executive, both young and old. That fifth model, known as the *conservation of resources theory* (COR theory) *of stress* was made famous by two landmark publications by Hobfoll, in 1989 and 1998. Hobfoll's theory focuses on loss of resources as a major factor in understanding executive stress. The central tenet of COR theory is that people strive to obtain, retain, and protect that which they value and that they try to avoid losses in regard to these things. Hobfoll (1989) views those things which people value as resources. In his theory, he divides the resources which people value into four categories: *object resources, condition resources, personal resources,* and *energy resources.* Object resources in this model include resources that have a physical presence, such as a home or house, clothes, land, or a car. Condition resources refer to those that give people the foundation and opportunity for access to other resources. They include such things as being employed, having an elevated social role, being married, being healthy, or attaining seniority. Personal resources, on the other hand, include both skills and personal traits such as social aplomb, self-efficacy, self-esteem, optimism, or hope. Energy resources derive their value from their ability to be exchanged for resources in the other three categories. Hence they include money, knowledge, or time. According of Hobfoll, stress occurs when resources of the individual or his family in any of the four categories are threatened with or subjected to a loss. Following Hobfoll's theory, one can say that, in the African context, stress results through loss of one's home to fire or flood, loss of an only child to death, or loss of one's marriage or source of income to factors beyond one's control. But the main contention of this chapter is that, in rural Africa, people encounter stress not only in conditions of loss of valued objects or resources, but also through the indulgence in some negative lifestyle practices that come with stress.

Although most of these theories can be said to be, up to a point, universally applicable to the understanding of stress in all cultures including those of Africa, there are a number of limitations in some of them when perceived from the point of view of what generates stress among ordinary people in all

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four corners of the African continent (East, West, North, and South). Among such limitations is that, in most of them, the role of cognitive systems in the generation of stress in human beings is heavily emphasized. In doing this, they give little or no attention to exploring how the presence of others in our lives can collude in the initiation of stress. Yet a realistic theory of stress as understood in Africa must recognize the fact that people in face-to-face communities often affect each other's lives both directly and negatively through their strained and conflicted interactions with one another.

Another limitation of some Western theories is that, apart from the tendency of some to privilege the role of the mind rather than the body/people's spiritual perspective in the etiology of stress, there is the tendency to emphasize the role of industrial environments and their demands on individuals as the key foundation in stress formation. By doing this, some of the current literature of traditional Western psychology on stress tends to privilege aspects of stress formation that are more relevant for understanding factors in executive or traumatic stress (COR theory) than in understanding sources of stress emerging from the dynamics of ordinary life and interpersonal living in the non-industrialized African world.

In saying this, what I hope to argue and demonstrate in this chapter is not that these theories are wrong or that they should be replaced by the African approach to stress. What is contended is that they are partial and unable to take into account other sources of stress more familiar to people in non-industrial settings, as we have in Africa. In this way, my major contention is that there is an urgent need to develop a critical climate that should favor the evolution of multiple perspectives on stress, the type that can lay the foundation for the emergence of complementary streams of thought (some Western, some African) in this regard. Through such an inclusive or globalectical (wa Thiong'o, 2012/2014) approach to stress, opportunities will be created for the evolution of theories of stress that could be made sufficiently down to earth to be able to capture some grassroots sources of worry, tensions, or non-cognitive panic among people in Africa.

This chapter is an attempt to formulate one such theory, offered from the vantage point of the Africentric perspective. In pursuing this goal, the chapter places emphasis on the metaphor of the *gates of stress*, giving recognition to the determining role of the body, human memory, and imagination, as well as the spiritual view of the people, in stress-related illnesses in traditional African societies.

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The Notion of Stress in African Psychology

Data for generating this African-based perspective on the phenomenon of stress emerged from my years of clinical experience in two regions of Africa (East and West) as well as from pertinent documentary sources through which I came to recognize that the stories of stress in the average African client often implicate the body and the influence of the behavior of others, including beings in the spiritual realm, in stress provocation. In listening to such stories, for instance, one comes to the conclusion that there are not less than six "gates," "zones," or sources of stress in ordinary life in Africa. These include the oral gate, ocular gate, genital gate, auricular gate, and abstract gates, such as those of the human memory and imagination.

Thus, I argue that the stress-related complaints of the indigenous African individual often—though not always—take their origin from the irresponsible management of any one or more of these gates, most of them constitutive of the strategic regions of the human body. The details of the causative role of these regions of the human body in stress provocation in Africa are highlighted here as a means of initiating a discussion on the view that, apart from the perspective on stress formation recognized in mainstream Western psychology, there are other ways of conceiving sources of stress in human beings that are relevant for effective psychological practice in Africa. In giving this account, the discussion begins with the stress of the oral gate.

The Stress of the Oral Gate

Here, the first point to make is that one instigative aspect of the oral gate as a source of stress in the African context is linked to what is known in most parts of Africa as "the problem of the tongue." In relation to this view, what is meant is that some of the psycho-social concerns of people in the African context do not come, as emphasized in most Western psychological literature, from an inability to meet deadlines or due to the problems of the workaholic but rather from people's bad use of words or tongue-lashing against one another (Magesa, 2002). Here the stress generated arises from the unfavorable and damaging elements in the words exchanged. One illustrative account of the poisonous nature of irresponsible use of the tongue is presented by Gail Presbey (1999). That account shows that, in an interview on what causes stress-related disputes among people of Western Kenya (East

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Africa), Saulo Namianya Manyonge, who had worked for the Government Lands Office beginning in 1969 to settle disputes arising with land allocation, pointed out that

> What causes misunderstanding and conflict in society is the tongue [i.e., the way people talk about and against each other] and certain evil things inherent in society [*sitani*]. I therefore see my role as *facilitating the leveling of tongues* [emphasis added] among people so as to eliminate misunderstanding and the conflicts [stress] that go with it. Once the tongues are leveled, they live in harmony and peace with each other, as they are now more amenable to listen to peace counseling.

In line with this observation and from some accounts volunteered by some of my African clients in conflict with another, it is often discovered that the kind of bad use of the tongue that generates stress in African communities is the type that involves and implicates the use of malicious, slanderous, and demeaning language or the practice of false-witnessing against fellow members of a family or society.

However, in more instances than one, the problem of the tongue as a source of stress in African people's day-to-day interactions with one another does not often derive so much from *what is said* than in the pain of *what is not said* or *withheld*. In this instance, what is emphasized is the potential destructive element in *wrong use of silence* in relating with others that is often noted in the African context. The crisis of wrong use of silence in this regard is said to be most devastating and stressful within the family setting as well as in the larger community of friends and extended kin group, especially in times when people fail to speak out against an injustice when they ought to do so. In that way, the error of keeping quiet when one ought to speak out is the crisis of ambiguity and misunderstanding that such a stance sets into motion, with its attendant stressful consequences for the victims concerned. In that case, interpersonal conflicts and strains become the result because witnesses deliberately held their speech in the face of an injustice.

Another dimension of stress that derives from the wrong or irresponsible management of the oral gate emanates from the mouth's role as an organ of ingestion for a number of things that cause harm and stress to personal health. The stress of the oral gate in this context arises, particularly, for slum dwellers in big African cities (e.g., Lagos, Nigeria; Johannesburg, South Africa; Nairobi, Kenya; Dar es Salam, Tanzania; Cairo, Egypt, etc.) from

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crises of indulgence in illicit drug-taking, smoking, and excessive alcoholic consumption (e.g., *kumi-kumi* in Kenya and *burukutu, palmwine, kai-kai, and illicit gin* in Nigeria) and, for the well-to-do members of the population, overeating or eating to impress. In some places like Tanzania, the reckless use of the oral gate can arise in the smoking of *bhang*, an illicit drug that has given rise to many young people who present with psychiatric manifestations of what is now known in African psychiatric diagnosis as *bhang psychosis*.

With particular reference to people in rural Africa, the major stress that comes with addiction and misuse of substances related to the oral gate is not only the health-related problems that such habits can generate but also from the secondary social stress that may follow from them: job dismissals, poverty, family violence, and marital instability. In almost all cases, African families of alcoholics are often in debt, and the spouses of chain smokers and drug addicts in Africa (as in the West) usually fall out with their mates on account of their dangerous bad habits.

It is in the light of such considerations that the oral gate must therefore be recognized as one of the key sources of interpersonal headaches in African communities. This recognition of the causative role of the oral gate in stress promotion in Africa emerged loud and clear during the era of dwindling of African economies that started with the problem of structural adjustment programmes (SAP) in many African states in the mid-1980s. And the current age of globalization and the media promotion of consumerism have intensified its continued onslaught on the unsuspecting members of urban and rural African communities.

The Stress of the Ocular Gate

Under this theme, the notion of the ocular gate as a significant source of stress in the African context arises from what is often referred to in African villages as the problem of the "evil eye" (Magesa, 2002). This is a critical source of stress that is very popular among communities in Western Kenya (Presbey, 1999) and some parts of Uganda (Whyte, 1997). In both cultural groups, the problem of the *evil eye* is said to come as a product of greed (*anya ukwu*, in the Igbo language of Nigeria) which generates negative envy among some members of the community. The main sting of its stress comes from people who are not happy with others' wealth and successful children and those who are strong in farm work (Presbey, 1999). This means that one of the major

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instigators of ocular gate stress in the African context is the problem of pathological jealousy (or *anya oku*, among the Igbo of Nigeria). In this regard, people who are not happy with the success of others become threatened when they see others making greater strides and progress in farm work, family life, and other areas of life more than they. In that way, they are believed to try to correct the imbalance by resorting to the use of magical charms or poisons to intimidate and halt the progress of their (successful) compatriots.

In much the same way, the instigative role of the ocular gate in stress provocation in Africa can be illustrated by the fact that even the phenomenon of revenge instituted through the agency of witchcraft, as Magesa (2002) observes, cannot have any impact among people in the villages unless the eye has been able to see the charm or medicine placed on their way to home or farm. The person so confronted, influenced by the spiritual view of the people (affirming the intermingling of forces in the universe), reads a personal meaning of danger or threat to the self in the transaction. Consequently, the stress of the ocular gate arises from the role of the eye as a means of surveillance of our physical, social, and spiritual environment. Hence the view by Presbey that "some persons move away from areas at which charms keep reappearing" (Presbey, 1999, p. 12) can only be explained in the context of the eye's contribution to stress generation. For, unless intended victims have first *seen* the charms and are overtaken by panic in the charm's presence, they would not be compelled to take withdrawal action from the place where "charms keep reappearing." As a further illustration to this point, the following observation reported by Presbey (2004) from her fieldwork in Western Kenya appears very germane. Presbey (2004) reported that one of her field informants, Paul Mbuya Akoka, told her that the eyes are the central organs of instigation of panic among people in rural areas where belief in the danger of witchcraft and magical charms is rife. Commenting in this regard, Akoka (1999, p. 87) remarked that influenced by this belief:

> When the person who is to die *sees* (italics added) the destructive charms, he gets frightened and his 'blood goes cold (translator's note: Fear sets in).' He is shocked and henceforth lives in fear. He becomes sick and then dies.

In some other cases the ocular gate stress is fueled by the pathological jealousy. An incident that illustrates how this aspect of the ocular gate stress operates was reported in Northern Nigeria in the mid-1980s and demonstrates that, among the major aspects of ocular gate stress in the

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African context is the problem of negative envy fermented by "the problem of difference" that arises from an individual's calculation of a negative difference that exists between his or her prospects in life and those of others. In that way, out of uncontrollable jealousy, a neighbor from Northern Nigeria deliberately allowed his cattle into the prosperous sugarcane plantation of a fellow villager, and the result was the emergence of animosity and misunderstanding and therefore social stress among these co-villagers. The problem of the evil eye coupled with a misguided personal conclusion that an individual makes regarding the negative meaning of a given action or object to one's health or success is thus a key instigator of social stress and interpersonal wrangling among people in Africa.

Indeed, another key aspect of the stress of the ocular gate in the African context derives from the eyes' tendency to focus on appearance rather than reality. In this context, most marital conflicts in Africa can be traced to the problem of mates choosing each other on the grounds of appearance rather than on the basis of a true knowledge of what each is made of. As well, political decisions based on the appearance of competing candidates are among great sources of leadership crisis and stresses in today's Africa. And so a lot of stress problems in Africa presently can be traced to the crisis of the provocation or deceit of the ocular gate.

The Stress of the Auricular Gate

In ordinary African life, the stress of the auricular (ear) gate arises most often from the phenomenon of "two-minus-one-ear syndrome." This is the situation where an individual takes in information (e.g., authoritative warnings, regulations, important advice, and vital suggestions) in one ear and allows the same information to escape unheeded through the other ear. In that way, the individual concerned gets into trouble very often in life, with the ultimate price being a crisis of personal stress. Typical examples of how this kind of stress can come about in people's lives in Africa are many. One is the problem of road accidents that are becoming very rampant in most African countries, such as Egypt and Kenya. Eye witness accounts usually suggest that most of these accidents occur through inattention by drivers to road signs and regulations. In Kenya, for example, a lot of accidents take place daily through inattention to road signs and instructions.

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But perhaps a more critical example of the stress-inducing character of the obstinacy of the auricular gate is the crisis of those who refuse to listen to warnings against the hazards of excessive smoking or drinking, or who indulge in unprotected sex with questionable sex mates, ignoring the dangers of so doing even in this day and age of the AIDS pandemic. The victims of such obstinacy often pay dearly for this by getting infected with dangerous diseases because of their inability to listen to messages of caution and education on these matters circulating in the community.

In an African university context, for instance, a good number of students may decide, consciously or otherwise, not to take into account university regulations on cheating on examinations or on the stated rules of conduct in halls of residence and the general social discipline that must prevail on campus. Such students, however, will later pay dearly for their obstinacy when they are faced with dismissal actions for their infractions. This is an undesirable outcome that is accompanied by enormous stress both to themselves and their parents.

Again, a major disturbing aspect of auricular gate stress is the tendency to excessive gullibility among the African masses. A good number of the African people, for instance, often start to avoid their neighbors and friends immediately after attending Sunday service in some of the new churches now on the increase in modern Africa. There, a "prophet" may carelessly comment that most of our problems are caused by some of our evil-minded neighbors or so-called friends who do not want us to progress (Gifford, 2004). In the same way, some gullible members have emptied their meager personal resources into these churches in response to the preacher's suggestion that "we can only get favors from God in comparison to the amount of gifts we are ready to give to God ourselves."

In much the same way, many people in Africa suffer from the crisis of the wrong use of the auricular gate due to their inability to listen to themselves/their intuition, to their spouses, to their parents, and to their elders in making certain decisions whose implementation may cause untold embarrassment and stress to their lives. This means that, apart from the problem of gullibility, another key aspect of the stress of the auricular gate in the African context is the problem of obstinacy (or, as understood in the Igbo language, *mkpachi-nti*), which comes with regrettable consequences to those affected.

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The Stress of the Genital Gate

Apart from the problem of the tongue, the evil eye, the overly indulgent mouth, and the obstinate ear is the constant threat of the danger of the genital gate in people's lives. This, in part, derives from the breakdown of traditional mores on morality and sexual etiquette that came with the influence of Westernization in modern Africa. In the past, for instance, the traditional African homestead was constructed in such a way as to promote sexual discipline among members of the family. The aim in particular was to protect children from getting sexually curious too early. In contrast, in the contemporary situation, through peer influence, mass media, improved communication facilities (e.g., the presence of mobile phones in many people's hands), and the privacy afforded by bungalow architecture encourages the experience of moral laxity and temptation to sexual promiscuity among young and old alike (Arnett, 2002). In this way the genital gate becomes for people in Africa today, both young and old, the greatest source of stress. In this way, too, the future of most young people in Africa today becomes blocked or suffers from immature closure as a consequence of irresponsible and misguided use of that gate.

Most African novelists (e.g., Ekwensi, 1967/1987; Mwangi, 1992) who comment on African cities, for example, have shown that the crisis of poor management of the genital gate is the principal cause of much marital conflicts, family violence, child prostitution, and the phenomenon of children begetting children, which is now a frequent feature of social evils in urban Africa. Even the crisis of guilt and shame expressed by young people who present for counseling with stories of having misused their lives in their earlier youth (the so-called Jonah complex clients), such as having failed to take appropriate action when they ought to or make use of growth opportunities that life presented to them, is often connected to the stress of wrong management of the genital gate.

Careless management of the genital gate is also now known to be the primary cause of the pain of unplanned parenthood and the stress that comes with it for a good number of girls in African universities. Along with this is the stress caused by abortions, especially through the use of quack doctors, a practice that often leads to death or to irreparable damage to the gynecological system of those concerned. The genital gate, too, is the root cause of emotional restlessness or lack of concentration among many students in Africa presently. And, most importantly, it is the main channel of risky

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activity leading to vulnerability to all kinds of venereal disease infections such as HIV/AIDS. It is equally the primary basis for the loss of solvency among flirtatious husbands and the consequent problem of family distress among wage-earning couples in Africa. A number of social stresses among students also arise from competition for girl- or boyfriends and from the painful narratives of "snatching" experiences and "crossovers" which some university student clients bring up for counseling in university counseling centers. The increasing cases of student prostitution and so-called moonlight practitioners arise, among other reasons, also from the crisis of poor management of the genital gate.

These indications, taken together, firmly demonstrate that the genital gate is for many people in Africa, including parents and children, as well as for husbands and wives, the most stress-inducing gate we harbor in ourselves.

The Stress of the Memory Gate

Four prominent aspects of the stress of the memory gate in today's Africa can easily be highlighted. The first is the painful memory of personal involvement in wartime torture, the sufferings of victims of war trauma, and the loss of dear ones due to war, as witnessed in Rwanda, Uganda, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. The second is the problem of failure to forgive and forget offences leveled against us. The third is the failure by many students in Africa to remember that the facility of a dependable memory cannot be achieved when one indulges in what one Australian learning theorist refers to as the "error of cognitive overloading." The fourth is the distressful memory of being abused as a child, often arising from the error of partiality in parenting practices.

The stress of the painful memory of personal involvement in wartime torture, trauma, or loss is more rampant these days in Africa with the current trend for military and armed civil conflicts in many parts of the continent (Nwoye, 2002). This point has been corroborated by studies by Reynolds (1990). In her article, Reynolds (1990) cites some of the painful memories of the War of Liberation in Zimbabwe that remained, for many children in that country, a stressful experience to remember and talk about. Reynolds identified three main causes for this anomaly. One was where children witnessed bloodshed and death. Her report showed that Gushongo (the medicine man) said that even if a child only witnessed a killing, the *ngozi* (the unsettled spirit

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of the one killed) might return to trouble the child, causing him or her to relive the visions and say "You were there, too." According to Reynolds's report, in this kind of context, evil must be blocked and the cause explained to the parents. Medicine must be given to the child to stop him or her reliving the experience. And these cases, healers say, are the easiest to treat.

Another cause of children's traumatic memory according to Reynolds's (1990) report was that, as vulnerable and precious family members, they are often attacked by *ngozi* (spirit of the dead) seeking to revenge wrongful deaths. The child in such cases is a pawn: his or her well-being depends on the ability of an *n'anga* (traditional medicine man) to reveal the true cause of the child's trouble and on the willingness of the family to tell the truth, pay compensation, or chase the *ngozi* to the killer.

The third cause, according to the same report, lies in children's wartime activities: a child may have caused an adult's death. After the war, children who participated in such infractions had to live with their consciences, causing most of them untold emotional stress. Reynolds (1990) observes that "Rituals of purification helped to eliminate some of the defilement of war. Wrongs were straightened out through confession and sometimes compensation. As hosts of the shades, healers have access to privileged knowledge about the thoughts and past deeds of their patients. They examine motives and intention in order to straighten out mystical disorder" (p. 17).

In addition to this, another problem that causes memory gate stress in the African context is the inability to forgive when offended, often reported by a good number of African clients who present for psychological attention. The stress of the memory gate arises when the offended individual decides to carry malice in memory, and this causes an emotional barrier to his or her effective commerce with other things that matter in life (Nwoye, 2009). Hence the virtue of forgiveness is an obvious moral asset in an individual's life. It goes with the wisdom that one who learns to forgive becomes able to untie him- or herself emotionally in their life with others and so learns to live the life of an unburdened spirit in the course of one's earthly existence. For most people in African villages this facility does not come easily due to their ungenerous appropriation of the virtue of forgiveness.

The last key problem that can arise from the stress of the memory gate in the African context is the type usually mentioned by clients who were abused as children. Such children complain of tension headaches and insomnia caused by their painful remembrance of maltreatment at the hands of parents (Nwoye, 2006a), sometimes favoring one child while disregarding

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the needs of another. In such a situation, the stress of the neglected child will remain until a redressive action is taken to promote the multipartiality in the parenting repertoire of the family's executive system.

The Stress of the Imagination Gate

The stress of the imagination gate is usually the bane of those African clients who

- Plan or live above their means despite the distressed economy under which we presently live and work.
- Experience excessive amount of restlessness arising from the thought of imagined enemies, particularly witches and those who are believed able to poison others (sorcerers).
- Show morbid loyalty to getting the view of ancestors before carrying out any important decision in life (e.g., taking a wife, building a house, going out on an important journey).
- Believe that the best choice of a mate or a job will come when the divine moment for it arrives, with the individual concerned believing that he or she has no personal responsibility or agency for the result.

One important conclusion that suggests itself from our discussion is the compelling view that much of psychosocial stress is culturally instigated. Thus, I argue that reliance only on the Western models of stress will not be sufficient for effective understanding of the subtle sources of stress among people in Africa.

Critical and Emergent Implications

What implications for critical African psychological practice can one draw from the theory of the gates of stress as discussed in this chapter? One straight answer to this question is that, in the Africentric perspective, humans tend to harbor in themselves (largely through the auspices of their embodiment) the limitations that generate stress in their lives. The African psychological theory of the phenomenon of stress espoused in this chapter illustrates that we become stressed, at least in the rural African context, most often not as

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passive victims of a hostile work environment but often by the ill management of the gates of stress that we harbor in ourselves. From the accounts presented here, one can see that some people, at least, in the local communities in Africa become stressed due to their irrational approach to living reflected in their falling victims to the unnecessary problems of reckless consumption of food and ideas, inflated ambitions, pathological jealousy, excessive greed, and acidic intolerance of the success of others. This indication suggests that emotionality, feelings, and subjectivity are among the principal commodities that promote stress in Africa and which the African clinician needs to recognize and learn to deal with in clinical practice. The present discussion also illustrates that people often become psychologically stressed in Africa as a result of their bad use of the tongue, their habitual inability to listen to well-meaning advice from friends and family members, and by their excessive indulgence in the call of the genital gate. We have also noted that for some people in Africa, at least, what causes stress is often not something external to themselves, but due to problems that derive from the African notion of the menace of the evil eye or the tendency to a "personal reading" of a threat in objectively harmless events in their lives.

The importance of this kind of local knowledge for psychotherapists in Africa and the African Diaspora is that, first and foremost, it helps the clinician assess the extent to which a client's claim is true that the source of his or her distress emanates from outside. From the theory just presented, one can see that it is not always the case that the source of our distress is outside of us. The trend instead shows that, in the African context, in more instances than one, we are part of our own downfall (in the sense of a Jonah complex).

Another implication of the kind of critical African psychology theory espoused in this chapter for improved psychotherapy practice in Africa and the Diaspora is its suggestion that we need to incorporate in our counselor-education programs the psychology of personal and communal meaning; that is, "the importance of understanding the emotional meaning of events and situations from the perspective of the individual experiencing them" (Salkovskis, 1996, p. 536) is crucial before effective intervention can be instituted, and that we must explore the intricacies of the African worldview and psychology often sidelined in Western training programs.

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Thus, as far as psychological practice in Africa and the Diaspora is concerned, the most acceptable paradigm to work with is that of quantum or post-Einsteinian physics. "According to quantum physics, our reality *must* be a projection of higher multidimensional realities" (Edwards, 1994, p. 206). The pragmatic importance of this notion follows from the fact that, as this chapter shows, the African environment is a place where people tend to go beyond the information given (to use Jerome Bruner's phrase [1990]) in their judgment of experience; a world where the meaning given to life events is influenced by the context and grammar of the culture in which the individual is situated; a view that teaches that the African's psychological universe is an interpreted/hermeneutic and a spiritualized/transpersonal one (Nwoye, 2006b). The present exploration further suggests that counseling and psychotherapy practice in Africa and the Diaspora must involve some practice of rituals (that may not be seen as necessary in Western literature; Dawes, 2001), such as the rituals of purification or cleansing often needed to purge clients with negative memory of wartime trauma to help them achieve psychological relief.

Conclusion

In conclusion, an Africentric theory of the embodied gates of stress as expounded in this chapter suggests that existing Western theories of stress that guide our psychological practice in Africa must be *added to* since, in their present frame and coverage, they have failed to reflect some of the practical realities of stress formation in traditional African societies. In this way, no psychotherapist in Africa can fully succeed in clinical practice if they were to continue to insist on getting a bearing on the phenomenon of stress in Africa by taking note of only what is understood as sources of stress in mainstream Western psychology to the exclusion of other perspectives on the matter. In this regard, what is argued is that awareness of one direction without any awareness of the other is no longer acceptable because doing so has continued to limit the practice of psychology from exploring its full potential in continental Africa. To remedy the situation, what is recommended is the immediate inclusion in international psychological literature of the usually excluded (Ruto-Korir, 2006) African perspective to stress as delineated here.

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10

A Rainbow Theory of Marriage Development

An Africentric Perspective

This chapter presents and explains my rainbow theory of the stages of marriage development constructed within the framework of the Africentric paradigm. The theory is offered as one of my efforts in response to the challenge posed by Paulin Houtondji (1995) who has criticized the tendency of African scholars to depend on theories emanating from the North for their practice and challenged us to come up with indigenously generated theories for use in Africa. Indeed, contributing such a theory is deemed necessary as one of the practical efforts made in response to the current demand for the decolonization of scholarship in African universities (Heleta, 2016). The theory proposes that a variety of roles and expectations, tasks and tensions, joys and crises, strengths, and opportunities constitute and determine the psychology and experience of the typical marital pair in Africa, from the mate selection stage to the last stage of marital life.

Marital Life in Africa as Different from Family Life

The central assumption of the theory is that, at least as understood in Africa and other non-Western cultures, marriage is different from family life (McGoldrick, 1995; Nwoye, 1991) since it precedes, lives along with, and survives family life (understood in Africa and other non-Western cultures as marked by the presence and upbringing of children). This perspective of seeing marriage as being different from family life, which undergirds my theory, is depicted in graphic form in Figure 10.1.

In Figure 10.1, the notion of marriage as different from family life is not only put into sharp relief but also the symbol of a broken middle loop demonstrates that it is during that period (stages four to six of my eight-stage

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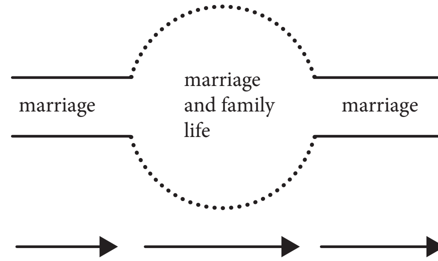

Figure 10.1 Notion of Marriage as different from family life in the African context.

theory) that some major changes and critical experiences take place in the life and career of a given marital pair in Africa. Some remain monogamous, while others are transformed to a polygamous arrangement, often in response to the challenge of enduring childlessness in the marriage (Nwoye, 2007/2008). Indeed, the picture of the broken middle is intended to emphasize that many of the pains and unfulfilled aspirations and desires of many couples in Africa originate from that middle phase in the life of the marriage. This is in addition to the fact that the life of the couple before and after that broken middle period is not free of problems, tensions, and surprises (some of them joyful, others painful and frustrating).

The Concepts of "Rainbow" and "Stages"

In the proposed theory, the concept of the "rainbow" is deployed as a metaphor to refer to the variety of changes (some joyful, some painful) that constitute the life and career of a given African married couple across the entire span of their marital partnership. The concept of "stages" has been employed to refer to the sequence of characteristic concerns and tensions, roles and expectations, possibilities and challenges, joys and stresses that evolve as the marriage grows from mate selection to death, as perceived within the context of African traditions. Commenting in this regard, my rainbow theory proposes that, seen from its African frame of reference, eight distinct stages of this cycle of marital experiences can be delineated, each allotted its matching color that reflects the principal tone and tensions or critical experiences associated with it.

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Following this understanding, the characteristic stages that constitute the architecture of this theory of African marriage development include

1. the Liminal and Propositional stage;
2. the Inauguration and Ritual of Incorporation stage;
3. the stage of Establishing Mutuality and Togetherness;
4. the stage of Fecundity Quest and Raising a Family;
5. the stage of Generative Care and Amassing of Wealth;
6. the Executive and Retirement Planning stage;
7. the Sunset and Retirement stage; and
8. the Paying Back and Drawing of the Curtain stage.

What Happens in Each of These Stages?

A description of what happens in the life and career of the couple at each of these stages is delineated here.

Stage 1: The Liminal and Propositional Stage

Two basic constructs are salient for analyzing and describing the psychology of prospective African couples at this stage. The first is the construct of *liminality*, borrowed from van Gennep (1969), which he put forward in his analysis of the *rites of passage* in traditional societies. He used the concept to describe that period in the life of initiates when they are *no longer* in the developmental stage they left behind at the start of the initiation process but still have *not yet* ascended into the new status that will come with the end of their initiation. He called that period of one being in a state of *no longer and a not yet* as characteristic of people residing in the condition of "*between and betwixt*." I use it in this theory to show that this is the stage in the life and experience of a typical prospective marital pair in Africa in which, age-wise, they are older than 18 and have come to see themselves as *no longer* unattached individuals or in a state of singlehood but *still not yet* perceived in the eyes of the people as officially married until certain cultural requirements have been fulfilled. The second construct is the notion of *propositionality.* It is used in this theory to emphasize the agentic nature of the behavior of the marital pair at this foundation stage in the history of their partnership. The

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notion of propositionality is used to show that people who end up as a prospective marital pair at this stage mutually contribute to *co-constructing* their partnership. They have worked together to make it happen. They do not wait for God or luck or chance to do it for them. They actively demonstrate and accept their love for one another. I also use this notion of propositionality to draw attention to the fact that this is the initial stage in the life and experience of a prospective marital couple in Africa, in which official marriage proposals cannot be entered into until the intending couples have first discussed their intention with their respective parents and have secured their parents' approval of their wish to marry one another.

Thus, like their counterparts in the West and other cultures, modern African youths are influenced in their mate selection calculations by factors as positive Stimulus (S) characteristics, high Values (V) similarity, and impressive Role (R) fit (SVR) between them and their mates (Murstein, 1976). In addition, however, they must take the initiative to approach, discuss, and, if possible, convince and gain the approval of their parents on the adequacy of their chosen mates. Research (Nwoye, 2006b) shows that unless such *Parental consent* (Pc) has been sought and secured, they will not go ahead with the exercise of *cementing* their marriage proposals to one another.

This observation implies that, in Africa, a four-factor (SVRPc) framework, in contrast to Murstein's three-factor (SVR) theory of the mate selection process, prevails, entailing the following processes:

S: Determining the adequacy or physical appeal-value, the Stimulus characteristics or physical properties of the intending mate.
V: Determining the extent of Value similarity (likes and dislikes) between the mates.
R: Determining the extent of Role fit between the mates (answering the question: "To what extent does the mate show signs of important marital role competence?").
Pc: Negotiating and securing one's Parents' consent in favor of a decision to propose to marry the intended mate.

This means that success in obtaining one's parents' consent to a marriage proposal through the practice of elementary diplomacy is the first basic challenge to young people contemplating marriage in the modern African context. This is because, in Africa past and present, marriage is never understood as a personal affair that concerns only the interests and whims of the

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young people in the picture. It is also a family affair, and the young people's parents and other close relatives who count have a stake in it. Consequently, it is reasonable to speculate that one can only have peace of mind when the possible marriage candidacy of one's preferred mate has been approved by one's parents. In contrast, frustration and distress is the result when one's desire for a given mate is vehemently challenged and unconditionally disapproved by one's parents. This resistance can come from either the young man's side or the young woman's side of the prospective marital pair. Hence a terrible scenario often ensues where a young woman's proposal from a given suitor is rejected by her parents on a number of grounds. Then she herself in return proceeds to reject any alternative suitors recommended for her by these same parents. In extreme cases, a suicide protest may follow such a stand-off and frustration. In that case, the girl concerned may decide to die rather than deviate from marrying "a man after her own heart" (Nwoye, 2006b).

But it needs to be remembered that African parents who throw in their weight for or against the adequacy of a suitor being proposed to them for consideration and approval by their children usually do so not arbitrarily but with profound responsibility: they act to prevent their children from getting married to criminals or to mates from known dangerous and wayward clans and families, which can have serious negative consequences.

These observations clearly suggest that as far as mate selection practice in Africa is concerned, there are conditionalities to fulfill before the exercise of marriage proposals can be undertaken. This again means that there are various challenges and surprises which prospective modern African couples must face and successfully navigate before proceeding to the second stage of their marital career. In general, some of the things that agitate the minds of intending marital mates in contemporary Africa at this liminal and propositional stage encompass the following:

1. Anxiety about whether one's preferred marriage mate will survive parental scrutiny or be rejected.
2. Fear that resisting or dismissing one's parents' disapproval of the preferred mate may lead to one being *cursed*.
3. Unconscious anxiety about the possibility of one's approved mate dying before the wedding, leaving one with the Herculean task of starting all over in search of another. This fear is associated with the myth rampant among the Luo people of Kenya and narrated by Grace Ogot (1966, pp. 105–106) in her novel, *The Promised Land*, where a traditional Luo

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harpist sang of "Dulo Omolo, the son of Owiti, who had died on his wedding night, leaving his bride alone in her hut."

4. Ability to maintain the expectations of one's mate and successfully motivate him or her to continue to be in love and marry. To achieve this aim, an unmarried woman in love with her prospective suitor may need to spend much time in a mirror to ensure she is perfectly groomed for any planned meeting with her intended mate. Thus, hair, clothes, and cosmetic expenses can be very high at this stage for a young woman in love who is not yet employed.
5. The need, in this era of mobile phones, wi-fi, and WhatsApp, to ensure that one has enough money for airtime and data to communicate frequently with one's mate in order to entrench one's affection and presence in the said mate.
6. Another challenge at this stage might at times be the regretful realization that, after so many years of courtship, one's mate is indeed unreliable, dishonest, or that he or she is from a family with some bad health history, particularly those associated with terminal illness or madness, etc.
7. The challenge of abstinence during courtship, which becomes worse when one's mate is not living nearby or is close but pressures the mate to prove his manhood or the woman's fertility. If the couple concerned are not sober and strong enough to overcome the urge for sex during this first stage, an unplanned pregnancy may result before the marriage ceremony or *lobola* takes place. The outcome will bring shame especially to the female partner, who may then be forced into a hasty marriage with the man responsible to minimize embarrassment to self, family, friends, and relatives. Corroborating this view, Ogho (2005, p. 291), speaking specifically with reference to the African experience, argues that "social status of women in Africa is often inseparable from their marital status. Some women even accept to be second or third wives only to be socially accepted and recognized in the society."

Given the dynamics of love and tension and the diplomatic challenges that confront the life and experience of a marital pair in Africa at this first stage, I assigned this stage to the symbolic color of *pink*. This is in recognition of the fact, that despite the anxieties that go with it, this stage marks the period of great intimacy and emotionality among prospective marital couples in Africa as they endure and navigate their way through the tasks and demands

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of this fundamental stage in the construction of their marital career. In addition, a common narrative that successful couples tell about this stage of their life together is "a narrative of endurance."

This notwithstanding, it is not far from the truth to say that, essentially speaking, young people in the *liminal and propositional stage* of marriage development in Africa are also concerned with the thorny issue of mate identification and gaining parents' approval of the marriage and therefore this is a period that confronts them with marked uncertainties. Yet some people are able to weather its possible stresses and uncertainties successfully and launch into the second stage of Inauguration and Ritual of Incorporation.

Stage 2: The Inauguration and Ritual of Incorporation Stage

Where there is concord or fundamental agreement between the prospective African couples and their respective parents/guardians regarding their preferred mate for marriage, the intending couples comfortably move on to this second stage in their marital career. In this theory, this stage is assigned the symbolic color of *white*, in line with the African perception of white as a color of purity, honesty, and innocence (Turner, 1966). In the context of this theory, white depicts the experience of the prospective couples at this stage as it reflects and symbolizes the psychological condition of their honest longing for one another and the presumed purity and integrity in their intention to marry one another, which dominates the mood of the premarital pair at this stage. On the other hand, the notion of *ritual of incorporation* in the name of this stage is used to draw attention to the fact that it is through the ritual of this stage that the bride, in most cultures in Africa, is made to become a bona fide member of the husband's family and community (Nwoye, 2005). With both sets of parents in support of the decision to marry, plans are made to ritualize and cement the decision, first through the ceremony of the *lobola* and then through the wedding ceremony, where applicable.

For some cultures, including the Shona people of Zimbabwe, the customary practice of the *Kukumbira* (Ansell, 2001; Hamisu, 2000; Meekers, 1993) marks this stage as the *covenant* stage. The role of the dowry payment (a token monetary amount in cash or material equivalent, like cows and goats) in African marriages that takes place at this stage is to seal the marriage agreement and entitle the man to ownership of children that issue from

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the marriage (Nwoye, 2006c). Of course, it is important to mention that in some few instances, under this ritual, conflicts may arise between the families about the size of the dowry, bride-wealth, or *lobola* to be paid and the manner in which it will be paid (e.g., whether in cash or in cows). But, in general, the main challenge of this stage revolves around the task of getting the groom and bride to agree on which type of marriage tradition to adopt: traditional, Christian/Muslim, or civil marriage). Where both partners are Christians, Muslims, or Hindus and from dedicated respective family backgrounds, the decision will be easy. But where the groom is merely lukewarm religiously and not from a solid religious background, wrangling may result. In this case, he may opt to start with the traditional marriage process, postponing the religious ceremony to a much later date. This is an option that may frustrate and wound the pride of the bride, who may wish to use her wedding day to "parade" the man after her own heart before the view of her entire community of friends and relatives soon after the *lobola* is paid.

The temptation to call this stage the period of wedding celebrations has been resisted. For, in most cases, the religious wedding ceremony may come, in places like Kenya and Tanzania, many years (at times, up to 20 years) later, after the marriage has first been blessed with children (Kithinji & Kithinji, 2005). Thus the African marriage development process does not always strictly follow a chronological order or linear time progression (in terms of engagement and wedding first, childbearing later) as understood in the West (Nwoye, 2006b).

However, when everything goes well and the religious ceremony takes place at this stage, other possible sources of tension, conflict, and distress may confront the engaged couple. These may follow from their inability to achieve unanimity in responding to the following questions:

1. Who will serve as the best couple, sponsors, or witnesses to the wedding ceremony?
2. Which pastor, priest, or imam will conduct the wedding ceremony?
3. What amount will be budgeted for wedding outfits?
4. Where will the outfits be purchased (locally or from overseas)?
5. Where will the wedding take place (in the city or township), and in whose parish, mosque, or temple when both are not from the same parish or attend the same house of worship?
6. Who and how many people will be invited to the wedding?

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7. What amount will be spent for the wedding feasts?
8. Who will be in the committee to organize the wedding, and who will chair it?
9. Who will serve as master of ceremonies for the occasion?
10. Where will the couple spend their honeymoon after the wedding, and for how long?

In addition, a related challenge to be faced by prospective couples at this period is the test of their ability to show maturity and teamwork in organizing the wedding in such a way to avoid the temptation to overspend in order to entertain, impress, or show off only to go bankrupt afterward.

As well, disappointment may come when some guests come to the wedding only to eat and make merry with no intention of giving the newlyweds anything substantial as gifts. Another possible source of embarrassment for prospective couples at this stage is the possibility of a former girlfriend of the groom showing up with a child who is purportedly the product of a past liaison. The aim of such last-minute showdowns is to cause disgrace and commotion to all and sundry but especially to the unsuspecting bride, who may feel cheated and embarrassed by the now proved failure of transparency on the part of her groom. Such possible embarrassing scenarios usually end up spoiling the spirit of the ceremony as well as the mood of the honeymoon. It is thus during this second stage in the psychological experience of the prospective marital pair that some spouses may have to embrace the bitter truth that they have indeed been conned into marriage to an untrustworthy mate. This may be bemoaned forever or prompt the decision to sue for an early escape from the marriage. This observation implies that some seeds of the downfall of a marriage are sown during this second stage of marital development.

However, when these negative scenarios do not arise, this stage gives the spouses the opportunity to present their parents to the world as people blessed with well-bred children who are able to find suitors, get married, and wed. And the fervent wish of typical African parents is to live to see their children's wedding day and the African psychology of celebration that goes with it: music and dance, social commensality, and words and prayers of praise, worship, and appreciation.

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Stage 3: The Stage of Establishing Mutuality and Togetherness

This stage marks the post-wedding period. It is characterized by the symbolic color of *yellow* to reflect the great spirit of hope that inhabits so much of the psychology of newly married couples at this time. African spouses, like their counterparts all over the world, come out of the wedding or *lobola* ceremony resolved to not disappoint each other or their people in the vows they have exchanged. To make the marriage last, a major task they face at this stage is to be able to gradually shed their parental or family of origin's dominant influence and control in their lives without breaking family links completely as they struggle to find fulfillment in each other and establish a united home and a mature marital unit for themselves. Another important challenge that confronts the marital pair at this stage is the extent of their ability to successfully negotiate the *blending*, *identification,* and *inter-habituation processes* (Nwoye, 2006c) at this stage.

Another crucial challenge for newly married couples at this stage is the question of their ability to negotiate new relationships with their in-laws. Still another is their ability to learn how to do things together, such as how to talk and present themselves to outsiders as a unit and how to protect their common interests as husband and wife. In particular, they must be willing to give up for good former boy- or girlfriends, thereby transcending the initial temptation to assume that they might carry such past baggage (in a type of "both-and" attitude) along with them into their new state of life.

However, because each partner brings some amount of conditioned attitudes, fears, interests, beliefs, and values—in short, their personality—into the psycho-social economy of their new marital unit, the greatest challenge they must face is how to harmonize these assets and orientations for the good of the marriage. Thus, in this third stage in the history of their marital career the new spouses must nurture a sense of mutual obligation of their new status as husband and wife. It equally means that it is at this stage that they must confront the following tasks required by their new life together:

1. Learn about each other more closely and realistically, such as watching each other as they sleep
2. Blend their differences in taste with regard to food and sex, in addition to the need to develop compatible sexual relationships with one another

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3. Establish home chore patterns acceptable to both
4. Blend official work routines when both are involved in outside employment (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Grzywacz & Bass, 2003; Hochschild, 1989)
5. Respond maturely or constructively, not meekly or unquestioningly, to their newly inherited extended family's needs and demands (Kithinji & Kithinji, 2005).

In addition, a major blending issue that must be resolved at this stage is deciding how an unemployed partner who will care for the home while the other goes out to work can do so while retaining worth and dignity. A crisis can arise if the one unemployed is the husband who, traditionally in Africa, is supposed to be the chief bread-winner of the home; he may see his role in doing more housework at this stage in a negative light.

Other blending issues to be faced and resolved at this stage include

1. Who will contribute what to the household economy when both are employed (Nwoye, 2000).
2. How to deal with in-law requests in a way that promotes the spirit of multi-partiality (Nwoye, 2006c); that is, in a way that ensures no one in-law family from either side of the marriage monopolizes the attention of the new couple, to the exclusion of people from the other side of the family.
3. Which religion to adopt when both are from different religious backgrounds.

These observations suggest that this third stage in African marriage development is a key period of *learning to marry* and *develop togetherness and mutuality*. This is the quality in a marital couple's life in which, in helping to build the other, one is also enriched and transformed.

Stage 4: The Stage of Fecundity Quest and Raising a Family

Marriage in both old and contemporary Africa is not only about achieving mutuality and a sense of quality companionship (Mbiti, 1969). It is also about ensuring that children are produced (Basden, 1966a). This is why *green* is the symbolic color characterizing this stage, to underscore the fact that the

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crucial aspiration and challenge of a typical African couple at this stage is the need to prove the fertility of their marriage. Hence the greatest stress of this stage arises from the inability of the couple to consummate the marriage or start making babies at least 1 year after the wedding.

And, as indicated elsewhere (Nwoye, 2007/2008), in Africa marriage is not perceived as truly successful or as having achieved its predetermined goal of diversity and climax unless that marriage has been blessed with children of both sexes, healthy and well-bred. Indeed, as noted in another context (Nwoye, 2007/2008, p. 4) "African marriage is grounded on a framework of order." And that order is present if and only when childbearing comes after marriage, and children of both sexes issue from the marriage. Hence, according to Bennett (1972, p. 26), in the African context, "Child-bearing is necessary for a woman's mental health."

This is more so in an African village context where, as in Uganda a childless woman is looked at with pity as a tree without fruits (Nwoye, 2006c; Whyte, 1997). This is perhaps a view where the African marriage experience tends to differ very much from the notion of marriage as understood in the West.

Thus, according to Pauline Ogho (2005, pp. 282–283),

> Though marriage and maternity do not always go together in some societies especially in the West, where the woman can freely choose marriage without maternity, maternity without marriage, none or both of them, in a variety of "options," womanhood in Africa is meaningless without both. . . . [T]he question of choice is of little or no relevance to the issue of maternity, which is not only a biological, natural and traditional obligation but also the logical sequence and consequence of marriage.

These observations suggest that the first real crisis in new marriages in Africa (as depicted in many novels written by African female novelists such as Buchi Emecheta [1979], in her *The Joys of Motherhood*; Flora Nwapa (1966, 1970, 1981), starting with her first novel, *Efuru*; and Ifeoma Okoye, in her 1982 novel, *Behind the Clouds*), arises from situations where conception is not achieved and children fail to issue from the marriage within the first few years after wedding. On the other hand, a positive mood of joy typically greets the new marital couple if children begin to arrive according to plan, beginning with the arrival of a boy child (Achebe, 1958; Uka, 1966). For an African wife, such a positive outcome means achieving a sense of security, especially in

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meeting the traditional societal expectation that the greatest blessing for an African marriage is for children to issue from it (Nwoye, 2006a; Uka, 1966).

Given this, a major challenge of this fourth stage of marriage is the ability of the marital pair to organize and plan their child-making sessions to correspond with the time of the wife's window of fertility, when it is possible for the woman to give birth to children of desired sexes (McSweeney, 2011). Hence an important asset at this stage is the couple's ability to improve on their knowledge of their own physiology and anatomy and get acquainted with the methods of pre-selecting the sex of their children. This can be accomplished through natural family planning using the Billings Ovulation Method (BOM) to promote proper timing of their intercourse to give birth to a child of the desired gender.

However, the tension for the African wife at this period escalates when, after 3–5 years of marriage, it starts to dawn on her and her spouse that she (from a certified medical examination) cannot conceive because of a problem arising from her biology (Nwoye, 2007/2008). Such a realization is usually made worse by the fact that, in many cultures of Africa, there is a negative connotation about a woman without children; in which a childless woman in Africa is considered a failure in her primary duty and often suffers considerably as a result. This statement suggests that African couples who remain childless at this stage have a lot of stress to contend with as their parents, relatives, and friends close in on them, asking continuous questions about "what is happening" and whether appropriate action is being taking to correct the situation.

Indeed, a related source of tension and conflict at this particular stage of the marriage, especially among some ethnic groups in Africa, concerns what pattern to adopt in naming the children born to the couple. In Africa, in general, the arrival of a child provides an opportunity for the couple to extend their family lineage and glorify the ancestors by naming their children after them (Kithinji & Kithinji, 2005). In that case, a key problem arises when there is no child to name, or when there is only one child who is available to name and thus can only take the name of one great-grandparent, leaving the interest of the other spouse unattended to.

In some African communities, the manner in which children are named is indeed carefully spelled out. For instance, among the Meru and the Kikuyu of Kenya (Kithinji & Kithinji, 2005), the first-born child is always named after the grandparents of the man, while the second child is named after the parents of the woman. However, if the first two are a boy and a girl, they are

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both named after the man's grandparents. This means that if the couple has to name their children after the names of the second spouse's grandparents they must continue to bear children until they have numbers enough to complete the balance of naming children after the woman's grandparents. This, however, is where the major problem lies. This procedure creates some marital strain in situations where biological factors may preclude the woman bearing more children before her grandparents have the opportunity of being named in the children.

On another note, in some places, an ugly situation might arise when a spouse develops soft spots for or indulges a spirit of favoritism regarding children named after his or her own grandparents while developing a no-nonsense attitude in discipline matters when dealing with children named after the grandparents of the other spouse. This kind of favoritism, if not controlled, will sow the seed of animosity in the children against one another. Such improper preference patterns are not only demoralizing to the wife but to the children themselves, who soon begin to see themselves almost in the position of "outsiders within."

Stage 5: The Stage of Generative Care and Amassing of Some Wealth

African couples aspire not only to have children, but also to ensure that such children develop into full-functioning and "real quality persons" endowed with the required skills, values, attitudes, and manners necessary for effective operation within the society of which they are a part. Consequently, an important chunk of marital time of a typical African couple is devoted to the exercise of careful and selfless attention to the education and upbringing of the children. In handling this task, couples strive to go beyond the exercise of feeding, clothing, and caring for their hygiene and health to include the exercise of *instructional parenting* (Hobbs & Cole, 1976; Nwoye, 2006b, 2007/2008), which involves inducting the children into the moral visions or the do's and don'ts of the culture of which they are a part. To achieve good effect, most couples/parents resort to the medium of stories and *narrative proverbs* (Achebe, 1958; Obiechina, 1993) intended to teach about life and transform the children into acceptable and enviable members of society.

Although the task of parenting at this stage is often a daunting undertaking for both spouses, this fifth stage nevertheless has been allotted the

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metaphorical color of *blue*, to reflect the fact that African couples, particularly at this stage in their marriage development, appear more relaxed. They embrace this positive mood simply because, with their initial anxieties of possible infertility now behind them, they settle down to the key task of dedicated child-rearing, accompanied by committed pursuit of wealth with which to finance the appropriate education of their children. But while in that posture and mood, the key challenges they often face include

1. Developing an enduring spirit of co-responsibility for parenting the children, including operating as a unit in child–school community responsibilities
2. Making themselves available to the children by responding to their own inner urge to be home as often as possible *to provide on-the-spot guidance and support* to the children

Other challenges of this stage equally include

3. Speaking with one voice or as a unit when relating with and disciplining the children, thereby giving the children the impression that the couple are not two but one and that they are a role model to emulate in learning how to deal with self and others
4. Learning how to establish *clear generational boundaries* that will enable the children to get to know that there are established *structures* and *ground rules* for everyday life and experience, as well as to let them to know "who is where and who is what" in the hierarchy of the African home
5. Learning to settle their differences in the bedroom, which, in the context of the contemporary African marriage experience, is now considered a *boardroom* (or a place for ironing out their differences and planning together as a unit). Should spouses be unable to settle their differences in the bedroom, the possibility of a lack of emotional solidarity may arise in the marriage (Nwoye, 1991, 2006b). This can lead to the crisis of *coalition* formation (Minuchin, 1974) between the wife and children or with the wife's siblings against the husband. African couples who live in one-room apartments may not have the opportunity to use the bedroom as a boardroom for marital decision-making processes, seeing that the bedroom also functions as kitchen and living room. The effect is that they often quarrel or iron out their differences in the open

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and often engage in intimacy under the gaze of the children, either in darkness or light. This limitation explains why children in such homes tend to be contaminated by the negative expressions and emotional intimacies of their parents.

Still other possible sources of tension and conflicts for the couple at this fifth stage include

6. The persisting problem of only sons or daughters as children of the marriage; this is a crisis which in many cultures in Africa would constitute a trying moment for the marital pair.
7. The problem of discrepancy over the values to impart to their children or which schools to enroll them in for best results.
8. Lack of rotational sensitivity on the part of one spouse, in disregard of the interests of the other, in championing the continuous provision of support to siblings or parents of his or her own side of the marriage, to the exclusion of the interests of the family of the other mate.
9. The possibility of fragmentation of the couple through the phenomenon of work transfer. If one spouse's employment is relocated to another region, it may not be in the best interests of the children to withdraw them from the schools in which they have been entrenched and relocate with the transferred spouse (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Grzywacz & Bass, 2003).
10. The possible lack of self-care on the part of one or both spouses (Nwoye, 2006c). Gaining weight, losing body tone, and being lax in personal hygiene and grooming can cause couples to lose their original attraction to each other.
11. Couples who are still childless up to this stage (e.g., 10 or more years after the marriage) face a lot of pressures from their parents and friends. Some will be encouraged to resolve the matter through either interventive polygamy (Nwoye, 2007/2008) or adoption if their search for a remedy to their situation in prayer healing churches has proved abortive.

Stage 6: The Executive and Retirement Planning Stage

This sixth stage has been assigned the symbolic color of *red* (Turner, 1966). This is to reflect the notion of this stage as the stormiest period in the life of

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the average marital pair in Africa. Fundamentally, it is at this stage that the couple has to redefine or review their earlier methods for disciplining the children to match with the children's sex and age. Similarly, this is the stage where the executive decisions of the spouses may need to be revised to take into account the views and interests of their upcoming children and gain the respect and trust of these children at this time.

An important point to note in relation to the psychology of the couple at this stage is that this stage occurs at a time when careers have peaked or are at advanced levels for one or both spouses, where both are employed. For this reason, African couples at this stage may often be targeted for senior career positions in their professions. The consequence of this may mean a lot more time and energy are devoted to their careers than to their marriage. More importantly, some couples at this stage may discover that they are targeted for retrenchment, transfers, or early retirement. Whichever the case, all are issues that can create enormous tensions and occasions for distress for some African couples at this time (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Grzywacz & Bass, 2003; Hochschild, 1989; Kell & Patton, 1978; Wallace, 2005; Zaman, Anis-ul-Haque, & Nawaz, 2014).

Other sources of discomfort and tension for the couple that may arise at this period include

1. The tendency of some of their children to exceed their due limits of freedom, privileges, or entitlements. For example, some grown-up children at this stage of the marriage may try to come home at late hours against house rules and regulations to test their parents' will and strength and their spirit of consistency and firmness in standing together as a unit at such times.
2. An inability of the spouses to form a firm alliance in opposition to a misbehaving child, but instead resort to blaming each other for the child's errors.
3. A possible drop in the wife's sexual appetite as well as attractiveness, which can lead some husbands to look for mistresses outside the home to fulfil their sexual needs.

However, despite the hassles of this stage, it must be mentioned that there are some opportunities and strengths that lighten the couples' spirit at this time: as in the previous stage, spouses have the chance to see themselves in their children (fathers in their sons and mothers in their daughters). In seeing

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these children grow and succeed in school and larger life, African couples feel extremely happy with themselves. In addition, this is the stage of total recovery of the comfort of sleeping together in the marriage bed without interference from crying babies or young children who may crave to share a bed with their mothers (as was the case in the previous two stages).

Stage 7: The Sunset and Retirement Stage

This stage has been assigned the symbolic color of *gray* to underscore the fact that this is the graying years for spouses, with this manifested not only in their hair but also in the quality of their accumulated wisdom of mature restraint about marriage and larger life concerns. It is, for instance, at this stage that the couple may come to deeply appreciate the accuracy and wisdom of the dictum credited to Kierkegaard that "we . . . live our lives forward, [only] to understand it backwards" (Friedman, 1999).

One of the most discomforting challenges for a couple at this stage arises in situations where children rebel against their parents, thereby developing maladjusted behavior patterns that include stealing, drug-taking, or sons "ballooning" (a slang among Kenyans for the term "impregnating") other people's (such as their neighbors') daughters, in addition to being indolent and a disgrace to the community.

Still other challenges of this stage include the need to take care of their own aging parents. This can be financially draining to them, now that most have retired. It also poses some major demands on mothers at this stage who have been the traditional caregivers in African families. These women are always relied on to attend sick parents at a time when a rest from nurturing would have been most ideal for them. Also, most spouses become anxious at this stage and worry over the children who have just left home after becoming employed or about the daughters who are married and not yet blessed with children. Couples in this stage also tend to worry about whether or not their daughters are being treated well in their marriages.

The end of this stage is of course marked by both spouse's continued aging and becoming dependent on their children. Indeed, some African mothers at this stage may tend to abandon their husbands and go stay with their married children, particularly daughters overseas, to assist the latter with the task of caring for grandchildren. With this development, they leave their mates alone at home, often in a big and lonely house (Harkings, 1978). This

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is a situation that can be challenging and depressing for the male spouses concerned.

Stage 8: The Paying Back and Drawing of the Curtain Stage

This last stage is the period that marks the boundary between the life and death of the marriage. This is the stage when the couple, where both spouses are still alive, tend to be living under the "shadow of non-being" (Friedman, 1999, p. 457), expecting death to call on either of them at any time at this stage of their marriage. However, it must be mentioned that not all African couples are able to hold together to this stage. In some cases, this stage is only achieved by a few couples and many times, the surviving spouse is the wife. This partially explains why many people (Stroebe & Stroebe, 1983) tend to refer to this stage as the "widowhood stage" and why, given the fact that it is the stage when couples experience several losses, it has been allotted in this theory with the symbolic color of *black*, which is associated with pain and mourning in many African societies (Nwoye, 2005; Turner, 1966).

Because this is the stage when spouses are very much dependent on their children for survival and happiness, it has equally been designated as the *paying back* stage. This is because children who indulge in caring for their old parents at this stage do so by choice and with some sense of having an opportunity to show appreciation to parents who have given everything to them in life. Hence one chief joy for elderly couples in Africa at this time is that of seeing their children grow and wax stronger and stronger in rewarding life occupations, businesses, and other civic endeavors. With that, they come to entertain the fervent assurance of having people to give them a decent burial when they die (Mbiti, 1969). In contrast, the greatest dread of old couples at this stage is the danger of their children dying before they do. The anxiety and tensions that face them in this regard is usually made worse in a situation where there is an only son or daughter. Stresses of this period include

1. The problems of coping with advancing age, dwindling physical strength, a sense of increased frailty, the discomfort of various illnesses of old age, and diminished genital energies for both spouses
2. And, finally, the problem of anxiety in facing impending death of either of the two spouses.

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Conclusion

Drawing from this theory, the following conclusions are made:

1. In the African context, and within the Africentric paradigm, marriage precedes, continues with, and survives family life.
2. Each stage of African marriage cycle encompasses the complementary themes of experience (tensions and challenges) and vision (the couple's effort to address these challenges); each stage is also accompanied by sources of opportunities and threats, joys and happiness. Consequently, the need for marital therapy in Africa can be called for at any of the eight stages highlighted in the theory.
3. Successful African marriage begins with emphasis on mutuality and companionship but does not end there.
4. Marital life in Africa also involves a craving for procreation through producing children and the respect that emanates from having them. The couple works hard to transform their children into quality human beings, working from the raw humanity the children are born with.
5. With couples in Africa, parenting, once started, does not end when the last child is 18. It elongates and continues indefinitely beyond its normal season as understood in the West.
6. Parenting is a responsibility which African couples believe is theirs to shoulder as long as necessary. This means that, as far as parenting in Africa is concerned, the principle that prevails is not the Aristotelian linear model of beginning and closing processes, but one that accepts non-closure (Nwoye, 2013).
7. From the point of view of clinical practice, this theory draws attention to sources and seasons of complexity and tension in a typical African marriage which foregrounds the direction along which clinicians may go in their exploration of potential fault lines to be addressed when working with marital clients in the African context.

In conclusion, therefore, one can say that a rainbow of anxieties and challenges, risks and opportunities, and joys and hopes constitute the life and destiny of an average marital pair in Africa, from the mate selection to death. Yet African couples are well known in the literature for their great spirit of resilience in the face of these challenges. For, although threatened and challenged all through the various stages of their married life, most of them walk

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on unbroken, believing in the power of the future to assist them "to find gold amidst ash" (Friedman, 1999, p. 457) in the life of their dyadic contradictions and becoming.

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11

Research Methodology in African Psychology

Epistemology, Theory, and Techniques

The emerging field of African psychology demands and embraces an open philosophy approach to the study of psychology. An open philosophy approach encourages an open spirit of inquiry and rejects the hegemonic and epistemic dominance of logical positivism and logical empiricism in the scientific study of psychology. It considers the absence of methodological pluralism in mainstream Western psychology a limiting framework for promoting the effective practice of African psychology, understood as the systematic and informed study of human mental life, culture, and experience in the pre- and postcolonial African world (Nwoye, 2015a). According to Marecek (2003), pluralism and openness to technique in the study of psychology can help psychologists all over the world perform better than they do since, with a wider range of accepted research options, investigators will be better able to choose the method that best suits their research objective.

In this chapter, I aim to highlight and discuss some of the distinctive approaches to psychological scholarship emphasized by scholars of African psychology. In this regard the following questions will be explored: What constitutes the multiple epistemologies or other ways of knowing in the study of African psychology? What are the fundamental principles of research in African psychology? What are the major theoretical frameworks in African psychological research? What are the methodological approaches in African psychological research? And, what are the main types of qualitative methodology and analysis in research in African psychology? These themes will be examined in the following sections.

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Multiple Epistemologies or Other Ways of Knowing in African Psychology

The mainstream European-American approach to the study of psychology is grounded in a physicalist philosophy that believes that only measurable realities (particularly those that are quantifiable and observable) can be known and studied in psychology. Scholars of African psychology argue that the subject matter of African psychology is not restricted to only what is visible or quantifiable since the subject matter of African psychology embraces the study of various realms of beings both visible and invisible that can influence (directly or indirectly) the life and well-being of humans in the world (Nwoye, 2015a, 2015b).

Given this more inclusive perspective in its study of psychology, research and scholarship in African psychology is grounded on the interrelated principles of *multiple epistemologies*, *epistemic disobedience*, and *methodological pluralism*. Here, by the principle of multiple epistemologies is meant the idea that African psychology affirms and embraces other ways of knowing than is available in traditional Western psychology. And by the principle of epistemic disobedience is meant the idea that scholars of African psychology are not obliged to follow, but must epistemologically transcend (i.e., decolonize and move beyond) the Western canon and epistemology of research in their psychological scholarship. This in particular implies the need to reject the assumption propagated in mainstream Western psychology (Freeman, 2014) that positivist/empiricist methodology is the most, if not the only important approach for the scientific study of psychology. African psychology favors broad and open selection of research methodologies that can facilitate the achievement of its primary objective of improving human understanding.

This observation means that research and scholarship in African psychology disposes itself to benefit from many more ways of knowing or a wider range of epistemologies than those emphasized in traditional Western psychology. Having said this, the question then is: What are these other ways of knowing valorized in African psychology but essentially marginalized and unsung in mainstream psychology? Those other ways of knowing that are recognized in African psychology as legitimate sources of acquiring human knowledge include the following:

1. *The observationist epistemology* refers to the knowledge we gain by observing the behavior of individuals or animals in their natural

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settings. Thus, the knowledge derived from the behavior of certain animals in Africa arises from the sustained naturalistic observation of such animals like the cockerel (*jogoo*), rabbit (*sungura*), hare, ram, eagle, and even the little baby goat suckling her mother's breasts on her knees. It must be mentioned that both African and mainstream Western psychology do agree on the importance of this particular approach to gaining useful human knowledge in the study of psychology. This is another way of saying that African psychology is not antagonistic to the use of empiricist methodology in psychological scholarship where such a methodology is believed to offer a better purchase in its study aims and objectives.

2. *Narrativist epistemology* refers to the method of acquiring knowledge transmitted by storytelling (verbal or written), oral tradition, or folklore, all of which leads to *narrative knowing* and improves the beneficiary's narratological memory (Freeman, 2015; Nwoye, 2006a, 2006b).
3. *The proverbial epistemology* is another source of acquiring knowledge recognized in African psychology, namely, through the avenue of proverbs. In African cultural traditions, according to Mtyende (2016, pp. 203–204), proverbs function as tools of language used to persuade, impress, or influence; tell a story or incident that imparts cultural values to the listener; and teach moral lessons about virtues and vices as well as impart verifiable cosmological and philosophical knowledge.
4. *The sage epistemology* is a way of knowing that came into the limelight from the African philosophical tradition championed by Odera Oruka (1990, 1991) and expanded by Presbey (1996), Ezenabor (2009), etc. Oruka, in his numerous research and writings, drew attention to the specialized kind of knowledge acquired through interviewing and listening to the gifted, critically minded, and eloquent elders of the community. Some aspects of the *appreciative inquiry methodology* emphasized in African psychology research and scholarship are grounded in this epistemology.
5. *The generationalist epistemology* makes reference to the specialized human knowledge that is passed down from generation to generation (e.g., from grandfather to grandson, or from grandmother to granddaughter), as in the context of transfer of inherited healing skills and medicinal plants from parents to children.

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6. *The hermeneutic epistemology* refers to the method of acquiring knowledge through an in-depth search for and discovery of meaning in given texts or situations (Freeman, 2015). For example, in many communities in indigenous Africa, conducting burial ceremonies usually involves some members of the bereaved undergoing cleansing rituals (Nwoye, 2005). Unless explained or interpreted, the meaning and relevance of such rituals cannot be assimilated and appreciated. But gaining access to such a meaning is an example of knowledge arising from the perspective of the hermeneutic epistemology.
7. *The Kamukunji or the Ogbako epistemology* relates to that important category of knowing that results from the deliberative round-table meeting of the elders called for by the village head in response to a problem or an emergency harassing the village or members of the community in question. In the medical field, this particular way of knowing is popularized as the *case conference epistemology*.
8. *The revelationist epistemology* refers to the kind of mystical knowledge gained through the impact of music and dance that elevates certain specialized and unique individuals to the trance state under which they can begin to see things with new eyes and perspective.
9. *The dialogical or conversationalist (cultural forums) epistemology* refers to the way of gaining useful knowledge through mutual inquiry or conversation that takes place between two or more people in interaction with one another. This is at times the greatest way that young men and women in contemporary Africa get to know their life-worlds. David L. Shabazz (2016, p. 1) in his article entitled "Barbershops as Cultural Forums for African American Males," drew attention to the operation of this epistemology in the social interactions of African American males in urban, Southeastern barbershops. His study of people's interactions in those shops suggests that African American barbershops (and similar places in many cities in continental Africa) are discursive spaces where young people can learn a lot and are initiated into manhood (womanhood) and African (American) culture. From social interactions and the conversationist epistemology that issues from them, male and female bonding, culture-specific history, and argumentation and sociocultural learning take place.
10. *The didactic or apprenticeship epistemology* refers to the approach of acquiring useful knowledge through arranged attachment to specialists or coaches who have certain specialized skills for doing

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things that a given learner lacks. In modern parlance, this is the kind of epistemology that is behind the current curricular emphasis on the importance of internship experience in professional education.

11. *The instrumentalist or mediated epistemology* refers to the method of acquiring human knowledge through the use of indigenous specialized instrumental procedures like the *ifa* (among the Yoruba), the "dollar" (among the Zulu), the *oracle*, and the study of *animal entrails* (among the Zande and Nuer of South Sudan).
12. *The dream-related epistemology* refers to the understanding that some important human knowledge can be gained through the dream process (Nwoye, 2017a). In the African context, people can dream not only for themselves but also for others. In that way, in Africa, dreaming can have both instructional and prescriptive functions. Some medicine men and women in rural Africa get reliable prescriptive guidance for the cure of illnesses through the dream process. And some people derive some vocational guidance on careers to follow in life through the dream medium (Nwoye, 2017a).
13. *The rationalist epistemology.* The rationalist source of knowledge recognized in African psychology refers to the kind of knowledge that is generated through the use of one's personal reason to think things through. In this way, when researchers in African psychology come to study people's views on a given theme (political, cultural, etc.), they are interested in getting at this kind of knowledge that people arrive at through their own capacity to reason out and make an independent judgment or take a position on the issue under study. According to Odera Oruka (1990), many of our elders generate useful human knowledge by means of this approach.
14. *The sibling epistemology.* Although Sigmund Freud had given enormous recognition to the role of the mother in child development, seminal research by Maureen Mweru (2005) has shown that, apart from the role of the mother in the effective education and upbringing of children, the sibling has an equally important role to play in child development. This epistemology refers to the kind of learning or knowledge which senior siblings transmit to younger ones in order to influence the latter's equitable development. As the siblings grow older, this sort of learning process usually becomes reciprocal or mutual with both the young and the older siblings being in a position to give and receive knowledge from one another.

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15. *The personal epistemology.* In this discussion I use the term "personal epistemology" or the "epistemology of first-hand experience" to refer to the accumulated private knowledge that each individual acquires in the course of growing up and passing through certain personal experiences that teach them many lessons that only they are aware of, record in their personal memories, and can only share with others if prompted. Such personal knowledges or first-hand experiences are only accessible to the knower but could be accessed by others through the interview technique or the reading of autobiographies and through the methodology of psychobiography (McAdams, 1988; Ponterotto, 2015; Simonton, 1999).

This indication means that African psychology has a wide range of epistemologies to draw from in its study of the life of the mind, culture, and experience in the pre- and postcolonial African world. Consequently, instead of imitating and aligning itself to the mainstream Western emphasis on quantitative approaches as the royal road for the study of psychology, African psychology opts for the use of selective methodological pluralism in its approach. In this regard, instead of assuming that what can be known are only human and animal behavior and thought that can be quantified or observed, African psychology is influenced by the principle of duality and opts for the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Freeman, 2014; Kirschner, 2015) in the study of psychology.

Figure 11.1 specifically demonstrates that

1. People studied in African psychology are pre- and postcolonial Africans.
2. There are both local and foreign sources in the study of African psychology.
3. There are two basic research methodologies recognized in African psychology—quantitative and qualitative—with particular attention given to the latter because of its flexibility in the study of people's personal experience and epistemologies, culture, and spirituality that are not amenable to the application of quantitative methods.
4. Three levels of realities form the subject matter of African psychology: Physical; abstract (e.g., human subjectivity or the view of the human being as essentially complex; entailing a being who feels, thinks,

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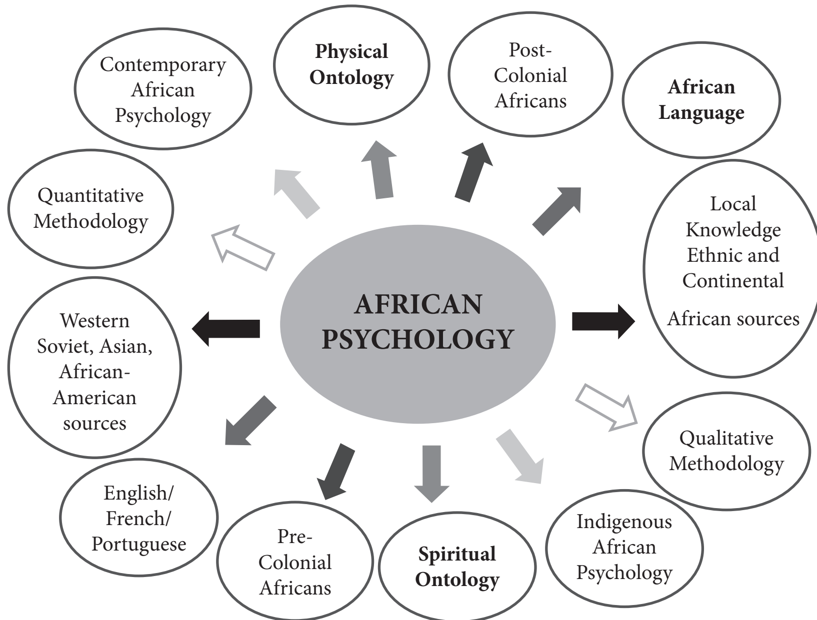

Figure 11.1 Complimentary dualisms in the study of African psychology.

reflects, who makes and seeks meaning [Meneley, 1999; Throop & Murphy, 2002]); and spiritual realities.

5. A multilingual approach is recommended in the study of African psychology.
6. There are two categories of African psychology: indigenous and contemporary or pre- and postcolonial African psychologies.

Fundamental Principles of Research in African Psychology

The following key principles of research in African psychology can easily be delineated.

The Principle of Multidirected Partiality or Globalectics

Two aspects of this principle bear observation in this discussion. The first relates to the idea that African psychology is interested in the study of the physical, abstract, and spiritual realities, encompassing the study of the cognitive, social, cultural, political, spiritual, and moral sides of human beings

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in Africa and the wider world, and in the deployment of applicable quantitative and qualitative methodologies in doing so. This means that the principle of multidirected partiality is one of the orienting principles of research in African psychology.

The second aspect of this principle relates to the conviction shared by many scholars that the special field of African psychology should promote the scholarship of open-minded engagement with all knowledge traditions (foreign and local, ethnic and continental) in psychology and other related disciplines. In other words, that research in African psychology should capitalize on the opportunity to learn from and draw on all relevant human knowledge systems and theoretical perspectives (local and foreign), both within and outside the field of psychology.

These clarifications mean that, in the context of research and scholarship in African psychology, the principle of multidirected partiality or globalectics (wa Thiong'o, 2012/2014) refers to that dimension of the discipline that shows that African psychology is not afraid to learn from and draw on all relevant human knowledge traditions and theoretical and conceptual perspectives (local and foreign) found within and outside the field of psychology, as long as such knowledge traditions from the various African groups and the wider world do not contradict or distort African reality and humanity but instead enable us to better understand and explain more effectively the life of the mind and culture in continental Africa (Nwoye, 2020, 2021).

The Principle of Thick/Double Description

This is an important principle in the systematic study of African psychology, particularly in its narrative inquiry in which there is always the need to gain more than one version of a story, an account, or testimony before its full narrative truth can be ascertained. The technical construct, *thick description* used in naming this approach to narrative inquiry in African psychology was first introduced by Clifford Geertz (1973) in his now classic book, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, which drew attention to the notion, later popularized by Jerome Bruner (1990) and Michael White and David Epston (1990), that all human narratives are partial, told from the point of view of the person telling the story. When another person is implicated in the story being told, as happens in the context of interpersonal or intergroup conflicts (so rampant these days in Africa), the narrative truth cannot be determined without hearing the viewpoint of the accused.

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The advantage of this search for *double description* in narrative inquiry in African psychology arises from the opportunity that it offers to hear the story from another's perspective, in the context of a conflict situation, or from the accused's point of view. Gaining that second perspective on the matter is what, according to Geertz (1973), makes possible the emergence of a *thick description* of the narrative. From such a double and thick description of the narrative, areas of omissions, contradictions, or inconsistencies in the first description may be detected and truths about them pursued to their logical conclusion. It is argued that it is only when this cross-checking process is engaged in through the process of a double description that any modicum of balance can be brought into the description and a proper direction for determining the full truth of the case being investigated can be achieved (Nwoye, 2006c).

The principle of double description is therefore an essential principle worth of adoption in both research and clinical practice of African psychology. This is because, in Africa, many people, particularly those who reside in rural areas, still tell their stories or respond to research questions or conflict accusations in words or oral narratives rather than in writing, and the principle of double description requires that, whether in the context of research, conflict management, or narrative therapy, opportunity must be created, in African psychological practice, to hear the same story in its varied versions (i.e., from the viewpoints of more than one person or research participant).

The Principle of Deconstruction

As indicated elsewhere (Nwoye, 2015b; see also Chapter 12 of this book), among the tasks of African psychology is the need to *re*visit, *re*think, and *re*assess some of the imported theories, concepts, and principles from Western psychology, literature, anthropology, and ethnography, that are considered not wrong, but still not completely accurate in their description and representation of the life of the mind and culture in Africa. Perceived in this way, the principle of deconstruction as a critical research framework in African psychology is the approach by which constructive attempts are made to point out limitations inherent in some of the taken-for-granted principles and assumptions of Western psychotherapy, like the biopsychosocial model that currently dominates clinical psychological practice in Africa (Nwoye, 2015b; see also Chapter 12 of this book). It is presented in Western psychological texts and journals as a fitting model for understanding and working

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with people with psychiatric disorders throughout the world, Africa included. The principle of deconstruction as used in this discussion thus refers to the critical research process through which African psychologists try to raise objection and confront some of the Western approaches to psychotherapy practice that fail to square with the African perspective of things (see Christopher, Wendt, Marecek, & Goodman, 2014).

The Principle of Re-Studies and Defamiliarization

This principle helps to draw attention to one of the major efforts of scholars of African psychology, which is to help correct the strange impressions and negative conclusions arrived at by foreign researchers about Africa and its peoples, traditions, and cultures during the colonial period (Nwoye, 2015a). Some of those conclusions were influenced by attempts by some colonial scholars to present Africans as the "Other," as human beings of lesser quality, different from themselves and other members of the human race. For instance, the distinguished German scholar of African culture, the late Janheinz Jahn, as cited by Achebe (1990), highlights one such strange image of Africans found in Western literature. According to him, and as propagated in Western literature, during the colonial period

> Only the most cultivated person counts as a "real European." A "real African," on the other hand, lives in the bush . . . goes naked . . . and tells fairy stories about crocodile and the elephant. The more primitive, the more really African. But, an African who is enlightened and cosmopolitan . . . who makes political speeches, or writes novels, no longer counts as a real African. (p. 27)

A similar negative view of Africa and Africans is found in much of European fiction, such as in Karen Blixen's *Out of Africa,* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness.* In both novels and others like them, there is enormous evidence that, for the European, the humanity of Africans is still something in doubt (Nwoye, 2015a; wa Thiong'o, 1986).

Of course, in other instances this misrepresentation may not be totally deliberate. It could be due to lack of genuine access to the worldview of the people and local languages of those studied. As a result, the reports that came out of most such earlier studies about Africa and Africans were diluted with imprecise meanings and interpretations of the aspects of the culture they had

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studied. This made the end products of their efforts inaccurate and therefore unreliable.

It is a point similar to the one just mentioned that Smith and Dale (1920) allude to when they commented on the problem that a foreign ethnographer encounters in getting at facts about the African oral tradition during the colonial period. Arising from barriers of language access, according to them, the foreign researcher under reference ends up recording as facts the decontextualized words of spoken performances in what was then Northern Rhodesia. To paint the picture of the challenges presented, the authors (Smith & Dale, 1920) described one instance of the problem.

> Ask him (the African informant) now to repeat the story slowly so that you may write it. You will, with patience, get the gist of it, but the unnaturalness of the circumstance disconcerts him, your repeated request for the repetition of a phrase, the absence of the encouragement of his friends, and, above all, the hampering slowness of your pen, all combine to kill the spirit of story-telling. Hence we have to be content with far less than the tales as they are told. (p. 336)

Given this limitation, most scholars (e.g., Achebe, 1958; Mkhize, 2004; Nwoye, 2015a, 2007/2008; wa Thiong'o, 1986) of African psychology and related disciplines consider part of their research agenda the task of *re*studying most of the themes (e.g., widow inheritance, circumcision) earlier studied by foreign investigators. It is argued that those earlier studies were inadequate due to lack of the researchers' insiders view of things and their lack of direct access to the people's language and culture. Through the *methodology of restudies*, in which the people will be studied in the language they and the native African psychologists understand, researchers of African psychology hope to come up with revised conclusions that offer an opportunity to represent in a more accurate light the taken-for-granted images of Africans propagated by colonialist investigators.

The Principle of Experiential Knowing and Respect for "the Claims of Experience"

This principle proposes that first-hand experience is the surest way to achieve true human knowledge. However, the same principle recognizes that different situations may result in different knowledges on account of the influence of standpoint or perspective. Yet the epistemic privilege of first-hand

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experience is never in doubt (Freeman, 2014). This is particularly true in the context of the study of marginalized groups or rural communities as we have in Africa. These groups are invested with knowledge of their unique personal experience or situation which only they themselves are in a position to share.

Against this background, the only way to know a socially constructed reality (i.e., African cultural traditions like the psychology and content of female circumcision in the African context) is to get to know it from the inside, not from the outside—that is, from those who have undergone such a practice. At the same time, it is acknowledged by many scholars of African psychology that seeing the world from where we are located and recognizing where we are located allows us to know that what we know is conditional upon that location. Consequently, a major principle of research and scholarship in African psychology is the view that, in order to arrive at an adequate representation of a given African reality, it is important to begin from the proper standpoint in relation to that reality (Jaggar, 1983, p. 56).

These indications mean that researchers of African psychology must place a premium on getting at people's direct assessment of their situation, instead of using intermediaries to engage in this. This imperative to study human subjects directly, rather than through intermediaries, as the colonial anthropologists did, must distinguish research results from African psychologists working with an insiders' view of things from those by colonial and etic anthropologists working from the outsiders' perspective.

The Principle of Reconstructive Methodology

The principle of reconstructive methodology is relevant when the aim of a given research project or scholarship in African psychology goes beyond the exercise of identifying and correcting existing distortions of the image of Africans and their worlds propagated in Western scholarship to embrace the task of replacing such distortions with more corrective information. In this case African psychology operates not just as a reactive or protest psychology but also as a reconstructive psychology.

The Principle of Constructive Methodology

African psychology students and scholars influenced by the principle of constructive methodology are driven by the need to create the new theories, concepts, principles, and assumptions required for generating solutions to emerging psychological problems of the contemporary African client and to inject freshness and originality into the study of African psychology as

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a postcolonial academic discipline (Nwoye, 2021) grounded in African cultural and philosophical traditions. The principle of constructive methodology, in the context of research in African psychology, is geared at guaranteeing the birth of new dimensions of thought and understanding on the nature of Africentric (as opposed to Eurocentric) humanity and experience (Nwoye, 2020). The Eurocentric human being is a self-contained individual devoid of background (Cushman, 1990); an Africentric human being is an individual who recognizes that to be is to belong and that one *is* because others *are*; that if others (e.g., one's parents) are not, one cannot be (Nwoye, 2020, 2021). Hence the African individual strives to be a man or woman of the people, but without this philosophy degenerating into canonizing the negative perspective of social parasitism.

Theoretical Perspectives in African Psychological Research

Research in African psychology is informed and driven by several theoretical traditions:

1. *The Africentric perspective/Indigenous Knowledge System (AIKS*), in which the aim is to center and learn about Africans and their cultures from the perspectives of these Africans themselves.
2. *The postcolonial theory* which aims to use the methodology of counterdiscourse or counternarrative to challenge the negative images imposed on colonized societies by European colonialists. This theoretical tradition also reflects the attempts made by the colonized to establish their own voice in matters concerning their own well-being, rather than being spoken for by others (Alcoff, 1991–1992).
3. *The theory of decoloniality*, which aims to dismantle and transcend the epistemic violence and hegemonic presence of Eurocentrism in psychological scholarship in African universities. The decolonial theory is also interested in giving a voice to the silenced (Nwoye, 2017c) in psychological scholarship.
4. *The theory of globalectics* (wa Thiong'o, 2012/2014), whose central argument was championed by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2012/2014) and adopted by the present author. The theory states that the universality of the human experience is not necessarily the particularity of one culture. Thus, it becomes egocentric or ethnocentric for the

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people of the West to valorize only their particular experience of history, space, and time as the universal. Given this understanding, the goal of African psychology in its globalectical perspective is to challenge Western assumptions of Eurocentrism as a universal approach to achieving effective human understanding. Hence the aim of the theory of globalectics as adopted in African psychological research and scholarship is to destabilize 400 years of Western monologue in psychology about the colonized and instead argues that the colonized can create space for a hundred flowers to bloom on a global scale and reflect the multicolored reality of the human experience (wa Thiong'o, 1986). The target is to make African psychological research and scholarship reflect multicolored thought, multicolored experience, and the multicolored particularities of our being.

5. *Critical theory*, which exposes and calls into question the hegemony or traditional power assumptions held about communities or societies by Western colonialists and scholars. Critical theory as used in African psychological research also aims to critique certain negative African cultural traditions that (like the Osu caste system among the Igbo of Nigeria, the culture of ritual sacrifice rampant in the Western part of Nigeria, and the subjugation of women) tend to dehumanize other African citizens as lesser human beings (Mgbeadichie, 2015).
6. *Post-structuralism/postmodernism*, which proposes that scholars must be wary of, deconstruct, and reject all master narratives (such as the colonialist theory of African inferiority) that pass themselves off as absolute and objective truth (McCulloch, 1995).
7. *The theory of Black Consciousness* made popular by Steve Biko (Nwoye, 2018), which teaches that the ideal African self in the postcolonial dispensation is a liberated individual with the ability to speak for him/herself rather than be spoken for.
8. *The theory of research as a collaborative partnership* and, in particular, of the notion of *research as conversation*, in which there is an assumption that the researcher and research participants must operate as equal conversational partners. The theory proposes that one cannot have a research conversation without the assumption that those who are holding it are equals (wa Thiong'o, 2012/2014).
9. *The theory of negritude as humanism* (Senghor, 1970) and as *a framework of Black self-affirmation* which proposes that, we Africans, "must first be rooted in our native soil and culture, and only then, from that

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base, must assimilate, in ever-widening circles, all other civilizations and cultures." This means that the theory of negritude emphasizes the importance of knowing oneself and one's origin as a starting point for gaining effective knowledge of other lands and cultures. It reflects a vision of affirmation in Black agency and the notion of the African as a being with subjecthood.

10. *The theory of the embodied gates of stress* (Nwoye, 2013; see also Chapter 9 of this book), which proposes that we carry in our bodies many inlets or zones through which stress can have access to and assail us.
11. *The synoptic theory of the modern African self* (Nwoye, 2006a; see also Chapter 7 of this book), which teaches that the African self is a product of a synoptic aggregate, which, unlike the Western self that is said to be bereft of a background, is a product of an interdependent ontology, made the way it is by the forces arising from both within itself and its background and culture.
12. *Location theory or the perspective of the standpoint epistemology*, which states that all human knowledge is partial or situated, influenced by the standpoint or angle of vision of the knower. The equivalence of this theory in the African cultural tradition is the fable of the seven blind men who had different views of what an elephant looks like. The differences in their perspectives are determined by the varied and unique parts of the elephant which each man has access to (wa Thiong'o, 2012/2014).
13. *The theory of "incompleteness," or the framework of insufficiency* as articulated by Francis Nyamnjoh (2015) in his critical analysis of Amos Tutuola's novel, *Palm-Wine Drinkard.* I use it in this discussion to draw attention to the fact that, as understood in African cosmology, nothing in the universe, whether human or spirit, is sufficient unto itself or can exist in complete isolation from another. Hence, according to Nyamnjoh, and in my own perspective as well, in the African understanding of the universe, the fundamental principles that govern human and spiritual existence are the principles of mutuality and complementarity and those of insufficiency and interdependence (Nwoye, 2018, 2020).

Given this, every African psychology research project or scholarship worth its salt must be grounded in one of these theoretical traditions. In that regard,

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when we talk about a theoretical framework of given research in African psychology we mean the theory or perspective that undergirds it and the aspect of the theoretical literature where the result of the research in question is expected to make an impact or significant contribution.

Methodological Approaches

Students of African psychology must push back the limits of Western psychological traditions to accommodate other relevant psychological and social science research methodologies for use in African universities (Nwoye, 2017c). To do this, we need to reconnect our psychology with the complexities of life as lived in various African societies. Hence, the language and research paradigms to be adopted by researchers in African psychology must be flexed and bent to allow relevant psychological idioms and registers to be invented and made use of in our efforts to account for the peculiar challenges of the African environment. Seen against the earlier discussion, it is obvious that there is a crucial place for alternative research paradigms in African psychological training in African universities. This is because the qualitative, more so than the quantitative, approach to the study of things psychological has concepts and methodologies that are more flexible and diverse to accommodate the challenges of understanding the nature and complexities of human subjectivity, culture, and experience in the pre- and postcolonial African world.

To signpost the enormous benefits of a research paradigm that embraces qualitative approaches, the rest of this chapter is devoted to a brief introduction to the different aspects and methodologies of qualitative research that are amenable for research and scholarship in African psychology. To do this, I begin with some attempt at a definition of the term “qualitative research.”

The Notion of Qualitative Research in African Psychology

From the point of view of African psychology, the term “qualitative research” is to be understood from the perspective proposed by Schwandt (2001) as research in which the researcher trusts textual data more than numerical data and analyzes these data in their textual form (instead of transforming it into numbers for analysis), with the objective of understanding the meaning of human action. Elaborating on this, Reavey (2011) remarked that in qualitative research textual data refers not only to verbal data but also to visual,

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bodily, audio, and spatial data. Reavey (2011) criticizes qualitative researchers in psychology for not giving enough attention to this wider variety of data modalities in qualitative research. However, in an important earlier definition by Schwandt (2001), it is understood that under the qualitative methodology data are analyzed in their original dimensions, without the need to first transform them into numbers before their meaning can emerge. Given this understanding, in qualitative research that is serviceable to in-depth scholarship in African psychology, the following count as major sources of data: historical documents, journals, diaries, letters, artifacts, photographs, objects, statues, artwork, scars, spaces, tattoos, and performative practices like music and dance, including communal rituals and ceremonies.

This indication shows that qualitative research as understood in African psychology is an approach that searches for the "hows" and "whys" of given practices and experiences, and one in which the views and perspectives of those studied and the *meanings* that people bring to things that happen to them are given priority. For this reason it often implicates the study and reporting of *first-person* experience through the technique of psychobiography, or the psychological approach to the study of *life as lived*. Thus, unlike in quantitative survey researches (which are indeed relevant in conducting some aspects of African psychology research), in which a structured questionnaire or standardized rating scale with preset answers to questions under study is presented to (often distant) respondents, qualitative research involves an open-ended collaborative research methodology in which the aim of the researcher is to gain access to unbiased views or beliefs, assumptions or practices, and fears, plans, and complaints of the research subjects on the phenomenon under investigation.

Consequently, one of the vital differences between quantitative and qualitative research from the perspective of African psychology is that, in qualitative research, there is an absence of manipulation of variables and there is no testing of hypotheses. Qualitative research, particularly the nuance emphasized in African psychology, is concerned with aspects of the culture and lived experiences of people and is, therefore, basically exploratory or phenomenological in nature. Most importantly, in qualitative research in the context of African psychology, there is an emphasis on *triangulation*, including the technique of *multi-sited ethnography*. By the term "triangulation" here is meant an approach to research that uses a combination of more than one research strategy in a single study. Hence, in qualitative research in African psychology different types of triangulation can be used. These

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include (1) data triangulation, (2) mixed-methods triangulation, (3) investigator triangulation, (4) theory triangulation, and (5) multiple triangulation, which uses a combination of two or more triangulation techniques in one study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Schwandt, 1997).

The technique of *data triangulation* is involved when the qualitative researcher collects data from different categories of stakeholders of interest to the research. In some other instances it may mean the need to collect data from more than one site, community, region, or country (Nwoye, 2002a). It is argued that conducting in-depth interviews to gain insight on a given situation in African psychological research will be much more reliable if representatives of each relevant target group or community are found to volunteer information or distinct perspectives on the issue under study.

In *mixed-methods triangulation* the qualitative researcher most often uses quantitative methods combined with qualitative methods in the study design. In that case the interview procedure can be combined with a survey questionnaire design. On the other hand, using *methodological triangulation* requires the qualitative researcher to make use of multiple qualitative and/or quantitative methods to study the problem under scrutiny. In that case, the assumption is that where the conclusions from each of the methods corroborates one another, the findings should be considered more reliable than those emanating from just one method.

Again, in qualitative research in African psychology, *investigator triangulation* is suggested in situations where two or more researchers (such as colleagues) from one area of research interest work together to study a given problem. In that case, each member of the research team will have to study the phenomenon using the same instrument (interview, questionnaire, or focus group discussion). At the end, the findings from each investigator will be compared to arrive at a joint conclusion for the study. The process is believed to make the entire study and its findings more robust and reliable. At other times, of course, investigator triangulation might involve researchers with divergent backgrounds and expertise working together on the same study, as happens in, for example, chewing stick research. In this study, research planning and data collection can be undertaken by two or more investigators, one (the primary) from psychology and the other from microbiology or biochemistry, both trying to understand the chewing stick as an oral hygiene practice from different perspectives. In this regard, each member of the investigator team must have prominent roles in the study, and their reportage of the events studied is expected to be complementary. This is because each

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of the investigators should discuss his or her individual findings and reach a conclusion in their presentation that must include all findings from the different dimensions studied. In these examples, the difficulty to be faced is that of being able to assemble different investigators with a common interest and time to work together on a particular problem.

Theory triangulation is also often essential in qualitative research in African psychology, particularly at the level of giving a theoretical explanation to the diversity of meanings encountered in the data collected. For example, this happened some years ago in my study of African family behavior in illness, in which the goal was to determine why some African family members tend to devote enduring attention to the care of their terminally sick, while, in other instances, family members tend to be on the run, deserting the sick person (Nwoye, 2001). In this way, through theory triangulation, diverse explanations were found to account for the variety of trends in the data collected, a feat that would not be possible if attention was placed in reference to only one theory (Holloway, 1997). Thus, with *theory triangulation*, the idea is not to draw a theory from the data collected, but to make use of multiple professional perspectives (often outside of one's field of study) to interpret, clarify, or explain the meaning of one's research data.

Major Qualitative Research Approaches in African Psychology

This section highlights the major qualitative research approaches deemed applicable for conducting African psychological research in continental Africa.

1. *Appreciative inquiry (AI).* This is a very important component of research in African psychology. It draws inspiration from the work by David Cooperirider, a professor of organizational behavior at Case Western Reserve University in the United States. A major premise of AI as understood in African psychology is that the positive case of individual and collective systems has been very much neglected in much research in mainstream Western psychology, where attention is paid more on diagnosing what is wrong rather than discerning what is noble in understanding people or social systems. In this regard, in AI in the context of African psychology, there is the assumption that people (such as successful and exemplary African mothers and fathers even in remote African villages) carry around with them several stories, some of which are positive in their successful life in the world. AI studies are designed to elicit those positive stories associated with understanding

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people's positive experiences and accomplishments. AI uses case study, narrative, portraiture, and evaluation methods in implementing its research objectives.

2. *Narrative research.* In a narrative approach from the point of view of African psychology, the focus is on studying one or two individuals, gathering data through collecting their stories of (Gergen & Gergen, 1983) experiences, and responses to a significant event in their lives, such as a chronic illness, and exploring the meaning of those experiences for the individuals studied. Examples of such studies are those made famous by Michele L. Crossley (2000) and reported in her important book, *Introducing Narrative Psychology: Self, Trauma and the Construction of Meaning*, in which emphasis was placed on constructing through research a new framework for understanding how people challenged by a difficult illness struggle to survive and find personal meaning in their battered and tragic lives (Crossley, 1998, 1999a).
3. *Phenomenological research.* This aspect of qualitative research in African psychological research focuses on the *meaning* of a given experience for an individual or a number of individuals. In phenomenological research, the emphasis is on discovering what all participants may suffer in common but often approach in a different way, such as HIV infection or involuntary childlessness (Dyer, Abrahams, Hoffman, & van der Spuy, 2002). After generating accounts of the participants' lived experiences in this way, the researcher can develop descriptions and psychological understandings of the underlying meanings which each participant brings to the experience.

In some phenomenological research in African psychology, the main goal may not be that of understanding different people's approaches and responses to a given problem, but instead exploring the basis for a unique personal orientation, for example, of unmarried school drop-out teenagers who relish being young mothers even though their parents and neighbors may consider them as regrettably naïve and unready for that role.

A similar goal was explored in my study of the differential behavior of two married African women whose husbands suffered injuries from a similar ghastly automobile accident. One wife exhibited empathy and devotion to the hospital care of her afflicted husband, while the other refused to show up for the care and support that was needed. In such research, that explored the

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basis for the occurrence of compassion fatigue in family care of the chronic hospital patient, the emphasis was on understanding the psychology of variation reflected in the differential attitudes and responses of the two women and learn from it.

These observations mean that in phenomenological (qualitative) research from the perspective of African psychology the researcher's effort is to attempt to "understand the world from the research subjects" point of view or "unfold the meaning of people's experiences" (Kvale, 1996, pp. 1–2). Expatiating on this, Bentz and Shapiro (1998, p. 96) point out that, at the root of phenomenological research, "the intent is to understand the phenomenon in their [sic] own terms—to provide a description of human experience as it is experienced by the person herself."

4. *Grounded theory research.* A good number of researches and publications in African psychology are geared at theory building (Nwoye, 2015a). This is an approach to qualitative research adopted by scholars of African psychology and made famous by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). Grounded theory research is a type of qualitative research in which the ultimate goal is to move beyond description to generate or discover some links within a set of collected data that can lead to the development of a theory. Thus, in grounded theory research, as in all kinds of qualitative research, the goal is not that of theory testing but that of theory generation and development. As the field of African psychology is currently a fledgling postcolonial discipline with limited theories in its "savings account" (see Chapter 2 of this book), conducting grounded theory researches is essential to promote the growth of theories that will move the field forward.
5. *Ethnographic research.* In African psychology, as in African anthropology (Bernard, 2006), the ethnographic research approach can be used to study, describe, and interpret the shared and learned values, behaviors, beliefs, and practices of a given institution or community, such as the leading prayer-church groups found in most parts of Africa today (see Chapter 15 of this book). In conducting such a study emphasis is placed on trying to discover a pattern in the data collected, including identification of the category of people who attend these churches and the commonalities and differences in the rituals of healing provided to participants (Nwoye, 2002a).

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6. *Case-study research*. The case study approach is a popular qualitative research approach in the new field of African psychology as in other related disciplines. In the context of African psychology, a case study can be conducted on an individual, an institution, or a group or community. A typical example of such a qualitative research is the master's degree study carried out by Winifrida Kambona, a graduate student of the Department of Psychology of the University of Dodoma, Tanzania, under my supervision. The study was entitled "The Challenge of Educating the AIDS Orphans in Tanzania: A Case Study of the Dodoma Village of Hope Centre in Dodoma Municipality." It was concerned with the study of the objectives, history, development, initial constraints, and present successes of the Village of Hope (VoH).

To gather data to respond to the study's goals and questions, a triangulation of people and data collection methods involving multiple sources of information (observations, interviews, documents analysis, and audiovisual material, such as photographs of key officials, buildings, and classrooms) was used. At the end, the researcher presented findings which revealed an interesting approach to educating the AIDS orphans at the VoH, with practices rich in deep psychological relevance.

For instance, it was found that the orphan children at the VoH were sorted into houses, with each house bearing a religious name and each house and its occupants assigned to the care and management of a male and a female teacher. These together acted *in loco parentis*, operating as the designated father and mother of all the children allocated to that house. In that way, orphans in the VoH grow up using the critical words "mom" and "dad" in their early lives. From this study it was concluded that the operational psychology of orphan handling entrenched at the VoH is the *psychology of "as if*," credited to Vaihinger (1924/1968); the orphaned children were seen to be living and behaving, relating to their house "dads" and "moms" *as if* these school officials were indeed their true parents (or their actual mothers and fathers).

Conditions of Possibility for Use of Qualitative Methodology in African Psychology

There are several issues to take into account when deciding to adopt a qualitative research methodology in African psychological research.

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1. The first is that qualitative methods are mainly called for when there is need to better understand any phenomenon (such as the positive dimensions of an individual, a group, or an institution or a community) about which little is yet known or to gain new perspectives on things about which much is already known, but the remaining gaps are in crucial need to be addressed.
2. The second condition is that qualitative research is often called for when there is need to gain more in-depth information (often through an in-depth interview process) that may be difficult to implement or navigate quantitatively, such as in auto-ethnography or autobiography (Freeman, 2015) and psychobiography, in which the researcher is at the same time the source of data for the study.

In sum, then, a qualitative research approach is appropriate essentially when a complex, detailed understanding of an issue, an individual, or a community is required and when quantitative measures and statistical analyses do not fit or will not be able to do justice to the problem under investigation.

Characteristic Features of Qualitative Research in African Psychology

To further assist a prospective qualitative researcher in African psychology in coming to a firm decision on whether or not to choose a qualitative method for his or her study, I summarize here some of the views of several authors and researchers on the characteristics of qualitative, or naturalistic, research in the social sciences in general and African psychology in particular. They include the following:

1. *Qualitative research uses the natural setting as the source of data*. In it, the researcher attempts not to rate or assess, but to observe, describe, and interpret settings as they are or the person under study as she or he is, thinks, and/or feels, with the researcher maintaining while doing this what Patton calls an "empathic neutrality" (1990, p. 55). Thus the operative word in most qualitative research in African psychology, particularly in phenomenological research, is the notion of *thick* description. Thus, in phenomenological research, according to Groenewald (2004, p. 5) "the aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts." This is the kind of thing that happens

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in phenomenological case studies like the one undertaken by Kambona (2011), earlier cited.

2. *In qualitative research the researcher assumes the role of the "human instrument" of data collection.* This means that in qualitative research, unlike in quantitative survey research, the researcher is the vehicle through which data are collected and interpreted. Thus, there is direct contact between the subject of study and the researcher doing the study. This is different from what happens in a quantitative survey research, in which a researcher can send his or her questionnaire to a respondent, not directly, but often through posting or by proxy, and the responses are returned without the researcher ever knowing the respondent in person.
3. *Qualitative researchers predominantly use inductive data analysis*. This means that there is an attempt to generate new knowledge, ideas, models, or assumptions from the collected data to better understand the phenomenon under study on the basis of what is found. That is, in qualitative research, an effort is made to go beyond the information given to draw important conclusions from the data collected. Qualitative researchers engage in this inductive analysis process convinced, in line with the view credited to Coffey and Atkinson (1996, p. 139), that "good research is not generated by rigorous data alone, . . . [but by] going beyond the data to develop idea." In it, too, there is an attempt to detect the typical within the general. In this way, initial theorizing, no matter how small, is often a product of qualitative research.
4. *Qualitative researchers pay special attention "to the notion of lives as lived," seeking the uniqueness of each case*. Hence, qualitative methodology is a choice research approach for the study of lives in African psychology (Crossley, 2000). In particular, the adequacy and believability of a qualitative research report is judged using special criteria, different from those applicable for evaluating the adequacy of a quantitative research report. In this regard, the suggestion proposed by Maxwell (1992 and expanded by Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001) appears to be the most interesting of the options available in the literature. According to Maxwell, there are five types of validity processes to be followed in order to enhance the trustworthiness and appropriateness of a qualitative research report. These are (a) the notion of validity as reportage accuracy, (b) interpretive validity, (c) theoretical validity, (d) the notion of validity as generalizability, and (e) evaluative validity, which refers to

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the study's ability to stand the test of evaluative scrutiny, particularly in regard to how the study was planned and data collected.

As a complementary perspective to Maxwell's view, Schurink, Schurink, and Poggenpoel (1998) propose a number of strategies to achieve truth in qualitative research. Among these are (a) effort at bracketing one's beliefs and assumptions in order to gather data and understand the person being studied, with a focus on getting an "insider perspective" on the case; (b) audio-recordings made of each interview; (c) bracketing oneself during the transcription of the interview process; and (d) sending a copy of the text of the report to study participants to cross-check that it accurately portrays their perspectives regarding the phenomenon investigated.

These indications mean that, in qualitative as much as in quantitative research, there is usually a commensurate attempt made to ensure and enhance the truth value of the study report.

Qualitative Research Design and Sampling Strategies in African Psychology

The particular design of a qualitative study in African psychology depends on the purpose of the study, the kind of information needed for the study questions to be adequately answered, and the type of data that will have the most credibility when collected. Hycner (1999, p. 156), in commenting on this issue, points out that "the phenomenon dictates the method (not vice-versa) including even the type of participants to get into the sample." This means that in qualitative research in African psychology, the decisional wisdom is to let the problem under scrutiny dictate the method of study to be used.

At the same time, in qualitative methodologies, there are no strict criteria for sample size (Patton, 1990). In qualitative research, the sample size can be one, as in situations where an individual is the subject of the study. Concurring, Boyd (2001) regards 2 or 10 participants, research subjects, or respondents as sufficient to reach saturation in some types of qualitative research, and Creswell (1998, pp. 65, 115) is of the view that "long interviews with up to 10 people" within the context of a phenomenological study are sufficient to get the typical pattern (or to achieve saturation) in data from the participants on a given problem.

Thus, whereas in quantitative research the dominant sampling strategy is *probability sampling*, which depends on the selection of a random and

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representative sample from the larger population, by contrast, *purposive sampling* is the dominant strategy in qualitative research (Maxwell, 1992) in African psychology. Purposive sampling targets an individual or those persons who possess the data needed (i.e., *information-rich cases*) to achieve the goals of the study. However, absence of randomization in sample selection in qualitative research does not imply that issues of sampling and those of representativeness (voice) and generalizability, where applicable, are not important. These concerns are crucial in both qualitative and quantitative research whenever one wants to draw inferences from the actual persons, events, or activities investigated to other persons, events, or situations related to but not covered in the study, or to those at times and places other than those investigated.

In qualitative research, *snowball sampling* is used to connect and access additional relevant participants or informants for the study. Here, the term "snowballing" is used to refer to a method of expanding a qualitative study sample by asking one informant or participant to recommend others with rich information pertinent to answering the key questions of the research (Babbie, 1995; Crabtree & Miller, 1992; Groenewald, 2004). In this regard, Groenewald (2004, p. 9) notes that many authorities like Bailey (1996), Holloway (1997), and Greig and Taylor (1999) refer "to those through whom entry to research participants is gained [as] *gatekeepers* and those persons who volunteer assistance [as] *key actors* or *key insiders*." Contributing his own view, Neuman (2000) qualifies a gatekeeper in qualitative research as "someone with the formal or informal authority to control access to a site" (p. 352); that is, a person from whom permission is required before access to the relevant participants for the study can be achieved. In this way, according to him, key insiders often adopt the researcher by agreeing to give time and attention to share their views with the researcher on the phenomenon under study.

Ethical Issues in African Psychological Research

Research in African psychology must adopt a number of ethical principles and benchmarks, such as those highlighted in Emanuel, Wendler, Killen, and Grady (2004) and summarized in Table 11.1. The ethical review guidelines proposed by Emanuel et al. are recommended for use by researchers in African psychology. These are the product of an analysis of

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Table 11.1 Emanuel et al.'s (2004) ethical principles and benchmarks

Item	Principle	Benchmarks
1	Collaborative partnership	Need for relevant community representatives in the research setting form part of the research in all to share responsibility, benefits, and ensure that local context is respected.
2	Social value	The research needs must be beneficial to the participants, community, society, and research community or health system without any waste of resources.
3	Scientific validity	The proposed research must use reliable and valid research designs and methods of obtaining data and be relevant to its objectives. The findings obtained needs to be relevant to the health problems being studied, and study design should not affect provision of healthcare services and should be feasible within the local context of the research setting.
4	Fair participant selection	The selection of the study population must be relevant to the research objectives; risk must be minimized and benefits and protections maximized for participants and vulnerable groups.
5	Favorable risk-benefit ratio	Need for identification and minimization of all forms of potential risks to participants in terms of type, magnitude, and probability, as well as identification and quantification of all types of possible benefits, along with balancing the potential risks and benefits to the participants.
6	Independent ethics review	This is with particular reference to the Research Ethics Committee (REC) and demands that its standard operating procedures be organized in such a way as to ensure its independence from external interference and that it is guided by law and documented ethics. REC members must be appropriately qualified and declare conflict of interest, have a transparent review process to justify decisions, and ensure a fair handling of decisions from multiple reviews.
7	Informed consent	Requires that recruitment procedures and incentives are appropriate to the local context and disclosure documents and procedures are tailored to respect participants' local context. Informed consent also requires disclosure of complete, accurate, and adequate information to participants. Provision is made for obtaining consent from legally authorized representatives if required; provision is made for obtaining permissions from relevant gatekeepers. Consent is obtained within the local context and the documents clearly indicate participants' right to participate, refuse, or withdraw from research.
8	Ongoing respect for participants	To be achieved by monitoring the health status of participants and minimizing risks, maintaining confidentiality, allowing participants to withdraw without loss of access to their entitled healthcare services, and having plans for dissemination of research findings and post-research obligations.

From Emanuel et al. (2004), Frimpong (2016), and Tsoka-Gwegweni & Wassenaar (2014).

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major international research ethics guidance documents from which was developed a synthesized framework consisting of eight principles and benchmarks intended to guide reviewers of biomedical research on ethical compliance. According to the Emanuel et al.'s document, Research Ethics Committees (RECs) are required to assess each research protocol to determine the extent to which the proposed research fairs well on the following eight criteria: (1) collaborative partnership, (2) social value, (3) scientific validity, (4) fair participation selection, (5) favorable risk-benefit ratio, (6) independent ethics review, (7) informed consent, and (viii) ongoing respect for participants (Emanuel et al., 2004, Emanuel, Wendler, & Grady, 2008; Frimpong, 2016; Tsoka-Gwegweni & Wassenaar, 2014).

One prevailing frame of mind that runs through these eight principles and benchmarks of research ethics by Emanuel et al. (2004) and extended by Wassennar and Slack (2016) is the importance placed on ensuring acceptable ethical practice in African psychological research. And, according to Holloway (1997), Kvale (1996), and Wassennar and Slack (2016) this entails, among other things, the need to procure informed consent from each research participant. To achieve this objective, the researcher must develop a specific informed consent "agreement" form, specifying the following: (1) that they are participating in research, (2) the purpose of the research (without stating the central research question), (3) the procedures of the research, (4) the risks and benefits of participating in the study, (5) that participation in the research is voluntary, (6) that each participant has right to withdraw from the research or discontinue their participation in the study at any time without negative consequences, and (7) safeguards that have been made to ensure and protect participants' anonymity and confidentiality. Concurring, Bailey (1996) emphasizes that, apart from the need to secure participants' informed consent, there is also the need to prevent any possibility of deception in qualitative research because its occurrence might color insights, whereas honesty coupled with confidentiality reduces suspicion and promotes sincere responses from participants. Consequently, to avoid inciting suspicion in the minds of qualitative study participants in African psychology as in other disciplines, the "informed consent agreement" form must be explained to participants before the start of each interview.

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Rigor Criteria in Research in African Psychology

As research and scholarship in African psychology is amenable to both quantitative and qualitative paradigms of research, the existing techniques for establishing rigor (validity and reliability) in both research paradigms (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014; Patnaik & Pandey, 2019) are applicable to sound research. For purposes of this chapter, however, identification of criteria for establishing rigor in qualitative research in African psychology will be the key focus of attention. In accepting this view, the chapter adopts Lincoln and Guba's (1985) proposal, currently adopted by many qualitative researchers, that the criteria to be met in the qualitative paradigm to ensure "trustworthiness" of a research outcome are *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*, and *confirmability*. They recommended that specific strategies be used to attain trustworthiness, such as ensuring the inclusion of negative cases (or adequate sample representation), peer debriefing, prolonged engagement and persistent observation, audit trails, and member checks. They also highlighted characteristics of the investigator, who, according to them, must be responsive and adaptable to changing circumstances, holistic, and possess processional immediacy, sensitivity, and the ability to clarify and summarize (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, I argue that while strategies of trustworthiness may be useful in attempting to *evaluate* rigor, they do not in themselves *ensure* rigor. Given this understanding, what I propose, in line with Morse et al. (2002), is that strategies for ensuring rigor must be built into the *qualitative research process* per se.

According to Morse et al. (2002) within the conduct of research itself, design and methodological strategies that ensure both reliability and validity of data are activities such as ensuring methodological coherence; reviewing sampling sufficiency; developing a dynamic relationship between sampling, data collection, and analysis; and promoting investigator responsiveness (Meadows & Morse, 2001). Each of these strategies is discussed briefly.

1. *Achieving methodological coherence.* This task is implemented by ensuring congruence between the research question and the components of the method, making sure that the question matches the method, which matches the data and the analytic procedures. In some qualitative research, as the research unfolds, the process may not be linear because data may demand to be treated differently. Thus, the question may have to be changed or methods modified.

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2. *Recruiting appropriate study sample.* The sample should consist of participants who best represent the issue or have the knowledge searched for in the study. *Sampling adequacy* (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006), in qualitative research evidenced by saturation and replication (Morse, 1991), means that sufficient data to account for all aspects (positive and negative) of the phenomenon under study have been obtained. Seeking negative cases is essential, thus ensuring validity by indicating aspects of the developing analysis that are initially less than obvious.
3. *Achieving concurrency in collecting and analyzing data.* There is need for mutual interaction between what is known and what needs to be known. This phenomenon of iterative interaction between data and analysis is, according to Morse et al. (2002), the essence of attaining reliability and validity in qualitative research.
4. *Promoting investigator responsiveness.* This is achieved through enhancement of the researcher's creativity, sensitivity, flexibility, and skill.

In addition to these practices, the recommended guidelines for ensuring the trustworthiness of qualitative research as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), expanded by Shenton (2004), and summarized in Table 11.2 are relevant and not to be ignored.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) as cited in Pandey and Patnaik (2014, p. 5747; see also Patnaik & Pandey, 2019), trustworthiness involves establishing

1. *Credibility*, similar to internal validity in positivist research and refers to confidence in the "truth" of the findings.
2. *Transferability*, showing that the findings have applicability in other contexts. Transferability is preferred to external validity/generalizability in the positivist paradigm.
3. *Dependability*, which is preferred to reliability in the positivist approach, showing that the findings are consistent and could be repeated.
4. *Confirmability*, which is preferred to objectivity. Confirmability can be seen as a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not by the researcher's bias, motivation, interest, or personal agenda.

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Table 11.2 Techniques for addressing Guba's four criteria for trustworthiness

Quality criteria	Techniques for achieving the criteria in one's research
Credibility	Adoption of appropriate, well-recognized research methods Development of early familiarity with culture of participating organizations Random sampling of individuals serving as informants Triangulation via use of different methods, different types of informants, and different sites Tactics to help ensure honesty in informants Iterative questioning in data collection dialogues Negative case analysis Debriefing sessions between researcher and superiors Peer scrutiny of project Use of "reflective commentary" Description of background, qualifications, and experience of the researcher Member checks of data collected and interpretations/ theories formed Thick description of phenomenon under scrutiny Examination of previous research to frame findings
Transferability	Provision of background data to establish context of study and detailed description of phenomenon in question to allow comparisons to be made
Dependability	Employment of "overlapping methods" In-depth methodological description to allow study to be repeated
Confirmability	Triangulation to reduce effect of investigator bias Admission of researcher's beliefs and assumptions Recognition of shortcomings in study's methods and their potential effects In-depth methodological description to allow integrity of research results to be scrutinized Use of diagrams to demonstrate "audit trail"

Adapted from Shenton (2004, p. 73).

A more detailed discussion of the actions to be taken by the qualitative researcher in implementing these four criteria can be found in Shenton (2004, pp. 63–73), Pandey and Patnaik (2014, pp. 5743–5753), and Anney (2014, pp. 272–281).

On the whole, the proposal credited to Elliott, Fischer, and Rennie (1994/1999) and cited in Lincoln (1995, p. 279), which drew attention to nine guidelines intended to characterize general traditions of publishing for qualitative research, guidelines to which all authors hold themselves in

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principle, must be highlighted in this discussion. In this regard, Elliott and his colleagues (1994) propose that

> [(1) manuscripts be] of archival significance. That is . . . [they] contribute to the building of the discipline's body of knowledge and understanding. (2) The manuscript specifies where the study fits within relevant literature and indicates the intended contributions (purposes or questions) of the study. (3) The procedures used are appropriate or responsive to the intended contributions (purposes of questions posed for the study). (4) Procedures are specified clearly so that readers may see how to conduct a similar study themselves and may judge for themselves how well the study followed its stated procedures. (5) The research results are discussed in terms of their contribution to theory, content, method, and/or practical domains. (6) Limitations of the study are discussed. (7) The manuscript is written clearly, and any necessary technical terms are defined. (8) Any speculation is clearly identified as speculation. (9) The manuscript is acceptable to reviewers familiar with its content area and with its method[s].

I have quoted this citation in its entirety as I strongly believe that the nine guidelines it proposed reflect appropriate criteria for ensuring trustworthiness in research in African psychology.

Data Collection Techniques in Qualitative Research in African Psychology

There are many and varied data collection techniques in qualitative research in African psychology, including interviewing, observation, focus group, audiovisuals, diary, text-based, archival, and document analysis. On account of their relative importance in facilitating research in African psychology, I will discuss each.

Interviews

Qualitative interviews in African psychology may be used either as the primary means of data collection or in conjunction with observation, focus group, document analysis, or other techniques (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Qualitative interviewing utilizes open-ended questions that allow for individual variations. In most interview-based studies, the development of an interview guide (or schedule) is usually recommended. It contains a list of questions or general topics that the interviewer intends to explore during

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each interview. Qualitative researchers agree that interview guides are useful in that (a) they ensure good use of limited interview time, (b) make interviewing multiple subjects more systematic and comprehensive, and (c) help to keep interview conversations focused.

From the perspective of indigenous research, interviewing elders who are recognized as information-rich cases of the subject under study must allow the participating elder to divert and thus bring out more data on the theme under study than might be provided for in the pre-interview list of the interview guide. This means that in working with such very experienced participants the researcher should be humble to see himself as a learner and the research participant as a teacher on the issue under study.

Additionally, an important decision to make before going ahead with the interview process is how to record the interview data. Some researchers prefer written notes. Others prefer the use of a tape recorder. The critical issue is that whichever mode is preferred must be justified for its use. Furthermore, in the qualitative research interview, it is usually an accepted practice to believe that the topic under discussion has been exhausted or saturated. This is believed to happen when the interviewees (research subjects, participants, or informants) no longer introduce new perspectives on the topic. Also, it is important to draw attention to the point made by Kvale (1996), which highlights that qualitative researchers must recognize that there is usually a distinction between the research question and the interview question, the former being the foundation for, or source of, and fewer in number than the latter. And the interview question is reciprocal: both researcher and research subject are engaged in the dialogue. In this way, the duration of the interview and the number of questions vary from one participant to another. And from the point of view of indigenous methodology, there is no time limit to the discussion; the interview is over when the discussants feel satisfied that they have exhausted their views and comments on the matter.

Observations

Most qualitative researchers would agree that the basic form of data collection in qualitative research is observation of participants in their natural setting. In case studies of places and institutions and their rituals and ceremonies, for example, observational data are used for the purpose of describing settings, activities, people, performance processes, procedural patterns, and the meanings of what is observed from the perspective of the participants. According to Patton (1990), observation can lead to deeper understandings

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than interviews alone. This is because it provides knowledge of the context in which events occur and may enable the researcher to see things that participants themselves are not aware of, may not see, or are not able or are unwilling to discuss.

Yet researchers do not just observe events or settings. They make *field notes*. These are running descriptions of settings, people, activities/performances, rituals and ceremonies, and sounds and techniques observed. In some African psychological studies, such field notes may include drawings or maps. In addition, Miles and Huberman (1984, p. 69) draw attention to the importance of "memoing" as another instrument of data collection in qualitative research. Concurring, Groenewald (2004, p. 13) observes that memoing is an aspect of the researcher's field notes, "recording what the researcher hears, sees, experiences and thinks in the course of collecting the data and reflecting on the process." In this regard, the importance of memoing during the process of data collection in qualitative research lies in the fact that usually researchers are easily absorbed in the data collection process and may fail to reflect on what they are seeing or what is happening within the research setting. On the other hand, through memoing, the researcher is able to introduce and maintain a balance between descriptive notes and reflective notes, such as hunches, impressions, feelings, and so on. To make the best use of it, Miles and Huberman (1984) recommend that memos be dated in order to enable the researcher to track or correlate them with the data. The same authorities suggest fleshing out these memos as soon after observation as possible, preferably the same day.

Underlining a similar point, Groenewald (2004) proposes that for the field notes to be useful, the researcher must be disciplined to record, subsequent to each interview, as comprehensively as possible, but without judgmental evaluation. For example: "What happened and what was involved? Who was involved? Where did the activities occur? Why did an incident take place and how did it actually happen?" (p. 15). Also as emphasized by Lofland and Lofland (1999, p. 5), field notes "should be written no later than the morning after."

Similarly, according to Leonard Schatzman and Anselm Strauss in line with the view credited to Robert Burgess as cited by Groenewald (2004), there are four types of field notes. First are, observational notes (ON), or "what happened notes," deemed important enough to the researcher to record. Second are theoretical notes (TN), consisting of "attempts to derive meaning," or to see the typical in the general as the researcher thinks or

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reflects on experiences under study. Third are methodological notes (MN), which carry "reminders, instructions or critique" to oneself on the issues under study. And, fourth are analytical memos (AM), which consists of the end-of-a-field-day summary or progress reviews. In commenting in this regard, Morgan (1997, pp. 57–58) observes that because field notes involve interpretation, they are, properly speaking, "part of the analysis rather than the data collection."

Now, apart from the use of field notes and memoing, qualitative researchers in African psychology do use where available artifacts (as in archaeological research), photographs, videotapes, and audio tapes as means of accurately capturing a setting, personalities, and events under study (see Kambona's earlier described case study), and most of these instruments (e.g., video and audio tapes) serve as important data storage methods. However, for better results, when they are used, the interview setting must be as free from background noise as possible.

Furthermore, some researchers may require their participants to engage in short reflective essay writing, where they are expected to state their viewpoint, perspectives, or feelings on a given issue under study. In such an essay request, the participants are assured that what is important is not grammar or spelling accuracy but their true views or opinions on the issue being studied. To promote confidentiality, they are also told that they are not expected or obliged to put down their names on the sheet containing their essay.

Analysis of Documents

This is another source of information that can be invaluable to qualitative researchers in African psychology, particularly those involved with the study of lives as lived and the colonial misrepresentation of Africa and Africans, and equally essential in psycho-biographical studies. The documents that are pertinent in this regard include official records, letters (personal and official), newspaper accounts, autobiographies, diaries, novels, and reports, as well as the published data used in a review of literature.

A pertinent point to remember is that there are some specialized forms of qualitative research in African psychology which rely solely on analysis of documents. For example, a doctoral study that was based on the document analysis methodology was carried out by Andrew Gilbert (1986) of Rhodes University in South Africa, "Psychology and Social Change in the Third World: A Cognitive Perspective." The study was conducted at the University of South Africa, Pretoria. In it, Achebe's first novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1958),

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was used as a foil to answer some questions of interest to the study, whose objective was to construct a social psychological theory of the relationship that exists between individual and social change—an area which, according to Gilbert, has remained undertheorized even in cross-cultural psychology.

A similar study credited to Willem Jacobus Smit (2009) was "Becoming the Third Generation: Negotiating Modern Selves in Nigerian *Bildungsroman* of the 21st Century." This master's degree study was conducted at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, and entailed an in-depth examination of three twenty-first-century novels: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2004), Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* (2004), and Chris Abani's *GraceLand* (2005). The aim of the study was to reveal how new avenues of identity-negotiation and formation are being explored in various contemporary Nigerian situations. The study tracked the ways in which the *Bildungsroman*, the novel of self-development, served as a vehicle through which this new identity search was articulated. As Smit (2009, p. v) noted, "concurrently, the study also grapples with the ways in which the articulation and negotiation of this new identity reshapes the conventions of the classical *Bildungsroman* genre, thereby establishing a unique and contemporary Nigerian *Bildungsroman* for the 21st century."

I draw attention to these two researches here to show that most of the African novels written by illustrious African men and women writers pose as *underutilized* but fitting sources on which doctoral researches in the areas of African family, child, personality, and social-cultural psychology can be built.

Techniques of Qualitative Data Management and Analysis

Creating meaning and making sense of the variety of data collected is the main purpose of qualitative data analysis. According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 10) "the strengths of qualitative data rest on the competence with which their analysis is carried out." Contributing to this debate, Creswell (2007) remarked that the methods of data analysis in qualitative research rest on three strategies, including the act of preparing and organizing the data, coding, and presenting the data in the form of text, tables, or figures. Ngulube (2015) remarks that qualitative data analysis is concerned with transforming raw data by searching, evaluating, recognizing, coding, mapping, and exploring and describing patterns, trends, themes, and categories

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in the raw data in order to interpret them and provide their underlying meanings. Patton (2002, p. 41), in his own case, emphasizes the role of inductive analysis and creative synthesis in this venture. Concurring, Curtis and Curtis (2011) observed that the inductive analytical process is a common characteristic of qualitative data analysis.

Dawson (2009, pp. 119–125), on the other hand, highlights that the qualitative data analysis process can be divided into four components: *thematic analysis*, *comparative analysis*, *content analysis*, and *discourse analysis*. Most qualitative researchers (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994) emphasize that the major questions that should inform qualitative data analysis and be asked continuously during the process include:

1. What themes and common patterns are emerging that relate to the research objectives?
2. How are these themes and patterns related to the focus of the research?
3. Are there examples of responses that are inconsistent with the typical patterns and themes? In other words, are there some outliers in the responses unearthed?
4. Can these inconsistencies be explained or perhaps used to expand or redirect the research? Or the literature?
5. Do the patterns or themes indicate that additional data, perhaps in a new area, needs to be collected? (If yes, then proceed to collect the data).

Generally, research questions are used as a guide for conducting the analysis. In particular, as the raw data are broken down into outstanding themes in the light of the research questions, the researcher must also devise an "audit trail," which is a scheme for identifying or tracing these data components according to their speakers or sources and context (where they came from, where they were collected).

According to Saldaña (2009; see also Bohm, 2004; Flick, 2014), data analysis in various qualitative research approaches begins with the coding process. According to these authors, the actual coding process involves the grouping or classifying and labeling of segments of data that assists in identifying and connecting bits of data. Agreeing, Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 56) state that "codes are tags or labels for qualitative data reduction and analysis."

According to Grbich (2013), a number of coding options are available to qualitative researchers, including (a) coding and developing themes

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manually or using a computer program, (b) developing themes through thematic analysis and then coding the data around the themes, (c) summarizing and presenting data with minimal coding, and (d) converting research questions into broad themes on which to anchor the analysis. For Grbich (2013) the last two options apply mostly to phenomenology and auto-ethnography research designs.

Thematic Data Analysis

Although there is little consensus on the preferable methods for analyzing qualitative data (Miles & Huberman, 1984), thematic analysis is possibly the most widely used method. It is considered the foundational approach to qualitative data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It can be defined as a "method for identifying themes and patterns of meaning across a dataset in relation to a research question" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 175).

Most qualitative interview-based research data in African psychology are analyzed by use of the thematic analysis procedure that begins with data transcription from an audiotaped interview. Following the technique of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), all audiotaped interviews will therefore first be transcribed to produce a written text version. To ensure accuracy of the transcription, the researcher and his or her assistant or team are expected to review each transcript while listening to the audiotaped interview. The transcript will then be formatted or saved in a computer under a unique name. The newly formatted transcript will be read and reread to identify concepts and themes that capture the experiences and views of the participants in relation to the issue studied (see Mthombeni & Nwoye, 2018).

In studies where there is no opportunity for tape recording and transcription of taped data but mainly field notes of the interviews conducted, the model of thematic analysis followed is the procedure developed and described by Miles and Huberman (1994). According to these authors, the following three stages should be followed in such thematic analysis process: *data display*, *data reduction*, and *drawing of conclusions* in response to the research questions investigated. What happens at each of these stages is presented here.

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Stage One: Data Display

This entails the process of organizing, compressing, and assembling the information in such a way as to permit the task of visualizing the data using a number of strategies such as quotations and narrative texts, and outlining the different sets of data from the different groups investigated. This first stage, in other words, involves bringing together the field notes collected from interview participants or focus group discussions and placing them side by side to facilitate a close inspection of them. This process makes possible the highlighting (through the use of different marking pens) of all the key statements, observations, phrases, pertinent concepts, etc., arising from the fleshed out data of the interview or focus group discussions among the groups studied. Through this process of data display and close inspection, the researcher becomes more familiar with the data collected from various sources and the answers they offer in relation to the research questions investigated.

Stage Two: Data Reduction

For Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 11) data reduction is "a form of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards, and organizes data in such a way that 'final' conclusion can be drawn and verified." This is facilitated by constant reading and rereading of the field notes and the salient data they contain, already highlighted in the previous stage. Specifically, this task entails the process of reducing the data through selection, summary, and paraphrase, sifting the relevant data from the narrative texts emanating from study participants or focus group discussants making up the researcher's field notes. Consistent with Bogdan and Biklen's (2007) recommendation, this stage involves the task of reading and rereading the respective field notes and going through each note at least twice so that the researcher can get an accurate and thorough overview of the points and ideas or themes they contain. While engaging in this stage the researcher will be able to appreciate the full picture of the answers to questions provided by the interview participants or focus group discussants. In this way, it becomes easy to make connections between the participants' thoughts and ideas and the data collected during encounters, where a triangulation between interviewing and focus group process was used in data collection. A major phase of this stage, as underscored by Miles and Huberman, involves the task of picking out salient sentences already marked as illuminating ideas in the answers to the research questions investigated. This process of picking out salient portions

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of the data set or segments generates pertinent excerpts from the field notes arising from the participants' answers to questions put to them. Halldorson (2009) advised that in engaging in this second stage of thematic analysis of collected field notes, "researchers should at all times keep an eye on the study's questions," as this will assist them in identifying accurately "excerpts" that relate to the research objectives. Most researchers in African psychology usually take this suggestion into account in attending to this stage of their thematic data analysis process.

Stage Three: Drawing Conclusions

Having gone through the data reduction process and sifted salient aspects that answer the research questions investigated, the excerpts to be used in composing the report and arriving at conclusions easily come to the fore. In most researches in African psychology, the effect of this process is reflected in the study results section, where the results of the study and the researchers' conclusions are presented alongside the corresponding research questions investigated.

Needless to say, the preceding three stages are deeply complementary and interlinked as none could stand on its own in facilitating the reaching of conclusions from the study's data in relation to the research questions guiding the study.

Voice-Centered Relational Method of Qualitative Data Analysis

Apart from thematic analysis as an important technique of qualitative data analysis in African psychology, students and scholars of African psychology also make use of another important method of qualitative analysis predominantly used with interview data. This is the voice-centered relational (VCR) method originally developed by Carol Gilligan (1982) of Harvard University, and her colleagues (Brown & Gilligan, 1993; Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2003; Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1995). The approach has since been adapted and extended by many other researchers around the world (e.g., Adibo, 2017; Edwards & Weller, 2012; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, 2003; Mkhize & Frizelle, 2000; Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008). The method is used to listen beyond the text in order to understand and filter out the multilayered voices inherent in respondents' interview narratives. It is therefore

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a choice technique of qualitative data analysis when the need is to learn how people see themselves in relation to others and how they comment about themselves and their life circumstances.

As highlighted by Bright, Kayes, Worrall, and McPherson (2015), the principal assumptions that anchor the VCR method are that

1. People exist in the context of interdependent relationships, within a relational ontology.
2. Knowledge is a product of interaction between self and others and the broader social context and culture within which an individual lives.
3. Multiple constructed realities exist (as there are many ways of seeing and commenting on the same phenomenon).
4. Knowledge is partial and situated (as there is no one truth about anything).
5. People act in response to the meanings which objects present to them. These meanings can be multilayered and arise through social interaction.

Data analysis under the VCR method aims to determine *how people represent themselves*, *how they speak of, and think about others,* and *how they speak of their surrounding context, including their feelings and critical judgments about what is going on in their lives.* Hence, actual data analysis under VCR seeks to unearth the multiple voices (and the undercurrents; i.e., the *unsaid*, hints, and nuances) within the data.

A core analytic tool in the VCR method is the Listening Guide developed by Gilligan (1982) and Brown and Gilligan (2003). This has predominantly been used with interview data and operates specifically as a tool for attuning to the multiplicity of voices embedded in a research participant's narrative. Basically, the Listening Guide requires the researcher to engage in four stages of readings of each participant's interview transcripts. This implies four main sequential readings of the said interview transcript, with each reading highlighting a particular aspect of understanding the interview and the research participant. Details of what happens at each of the four stages are clarified here.

Stage 1: First Reading

Two main elements are involved at this stage. The first is the giving of attention to the overall story each research participant is telling. This is

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undertaken in search of the total picture and a rich synopsis of the narrative's content in each participant's transcript. When completed, recurring images and words, key metaphors, and dominant themes in each participant's narrative are identified. This stage thus helps the researcher to answer the question "who is telling what story?" and what is being said by this participant (Byrne, Canavan, & Millar, 2009, p. 69).

This first reading is common to many other methods of qualitative analysis used to interpret interview transcripts in that, at this stage, as in other approaches, the content of the whole story is being considered (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1982; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998; Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008). However, what is unique here is that, in VCR, immediately following the first reading of each interviewee's transcript, notes are made by the researcher about his or her reactions to the interviewees and their stories. In this regard the researcher is expected to ask herself how she thought about each interviewee, how she reacted to each story, and whether she identified with the participants and in what aspect. The researcher is also expected to consider the emotions elicited by each of the stories. As noted by Mauthner and Doucet (1998) and Pinto (2004), all of whom made use of the VCR approach to data analysis in their respective studies, the first reading reveals the whole story of each interviewee, including the plot and the people mentioned in it.

After listening to each participant's story and reading the interview transcript in this first stage, the researcher is expected to reflect on his or her responses and reactions to it and record this in a personal journal. According to Paliadelis and Cruickshank (2008), "this process is to be repeated for Reading 1 of each interview. When completed for all those interviewed, the result at this stage will give rise to a composite picture of the life and world of each participant: both from the participants' perspectives and from the researcher's own reading of the stories."

Stage 2: Second Reading

During the second reading of each interview transcript, the researcher is interested in tracing how each participant represents or speaks about him- or herself in the interview. This second stage of the four readings gives rise to the production of *I-poems*, that focus on "I statements" that interviewees make. In conducting this process, the researcher pays detailed attention to the use of the personal pronoun—"I"—to identify the different mentalities from which each participant speaks.

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According to Edwards and Weller (2012, p. 204), in this second stage of the reading, "the creation of an I-poem involves two main steps. The first involves reading through each interviewee's transcript and highlighting each use of the first person 'I' and the associated verb or accompanying text. In composing the list of the I-statements in each participant's narrative, the researcher underlines what is important for understanding the interviewee's sense of self. The second step (the creation of the I-poems) involves cutting and pasting—or lifting the highlighted phrases out of the transcript in the exact sequence that they occur originally in the interview, and placing them in separate lines, like the lines of a poem."

As indicated in their own practice, "the I-poem can be constructed into stanzas based on breaks in the topics and 'voices.'" Several senses of self—"voices"—can be identified for one interviewee, which, in some cases, may be conflicting or complementary, resisting or capitulating, confident or distressed, firm or struggling to make themselves heard. Edwards and Weller (2012) remark that "some of these voices may be unique to the particular individual whose account is being analysed, but . . . some other of their voices may be senses of self that are echoed across many participants in the same study." The tactics of listening to how interviewees talk about themselves, which is fundamental to the I-poem, creates a space between interviewees' own self-perceptions and the analyst's perception of them. What is important to note is that at this second reading of each transcript researchers are confronted by how the person who has been interviewed understands their self before the researcher produces an analytic account of who they are. Or, as Mikel Brown and Gilligan (1992, pp. 27–28) put it, "how she speaks of herself before we speak of her." Thus, the method allows the researcher to experience an explicit shift from listener to interpreter.

Stage 3: Third Reading

In the third reading attention is directed toward identifying how interviewees talks about others or their relationships with other people in their life and what they see as the consequences of these relationships. Here, the researcher trace, in particular, the different or multiple subjectivities or role identities implicated in these relationships. As emphasized by Paliadelis and Cruickshank (2008) this third reading is designed to further expose the content of the relational self of each participant by shifting the researcher's attention to those aspects of the participants' stories that describe their place in their family or working lives. Where applicable, this third reading assists

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the researcher in uncovering the nature of the interviewee's work or family interactions in order to discover who has the power and the voice in the participant's life. Similarly, this third reading of each participant's transcript aids the researcher in exposing interactions that reflect the experience of oppression and injustice in the interviewee's narrative (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). Through this process the researcher is able to understand the peculiarities and challenges that exist in the life and world of each interviewee.

Stage 4: Fourth Reading

The fourth reading involves the task of understanding how each interviewee places and comments on people in their lives and contexts. Therefore this stage of the readings requires the researcher to pay attention to the specific cultural and political contexts and social and economic structures in which the interviewee is located and which shape their sense of self. Mauthner and Doucet's (1998) explanation of the objective of this final reading proposes that it is intended to focus on "placing people within cultural contexts and social structures" (p. 132) to listen to each participant's experiences of life in the context of their culture and society. This reading helps the researcher to see how each participant is constrained or facilitated in his or her life by the powers that be within the culture and society in which the interviewee lives. This final reading thus entails reading for voices, comments, and complaints in each participant's narratives. It therefore provides insights into the perceptions of each research participant regarding their collective social and political history and how this affects their everyday lives and well-being.

In sum then, when all the four-stage readings are completed, the researcher is expected to revisit each transcript and reread journal notes and consider them in light of the research participants' stories to gain an integrated picture of each participant from her perspective and from the perspective of the researcher. The four readings combine to assist the researcher in understanding and linking the participants' experiences with their sense of self, their feelings about their work and family relationships (where this is part of the research objective), and the social, political, and cultural contexts of their lives. In this way, qualitative analysis using the VCR method helps the researcher answer the vital question: "What have I learned from each participant's story that is important in writing the results of the study?"

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Discussion and Interpretation of Qualitative Data in African Psychology

The interpretation of data is the core of qualitative research (Flick, 2002/2014, p. 176). This phase entails the assessment, analysis, and interpretation of the empirical evidence that has been collected. The different points of view of the participants are presented in sufficient detail and depth so that the reader may be able to gauge the accuracy of the analysis. Stated differently, a thick description is presented in the form of an "analytical narrative" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 361). The data are used to illustrate and validate the interpretation of the study. Pertinent words and comments of the participants are usually quoted. Verbatim quotations from participants assist in "revealing how meanings are expressed in the respondents' words rather than the words of the researcher" (Baxter & Eyles, 1997, p. 508).

Commenting in this regard, Chenail (2012, p. 1) cautions that qualitative researchers should be able to refer to their original data and be able "to construct evidence (of their conclusions) from the data." Furthermore, according to them, qualitative researchers should neither say more nor less than what the data before them says because they must be aware of making errors of deficiency and exuberance in reporting from the data. By "error of deficiency" they mean "Don't try to say less than what the data show" and by "exuberance" they mean, "Don't try to say more than what the data show" (Chenail, 2012, p. 1). Creswell (2009, 2014), contributing to this debate, remarked that in qualitative study reporting and interpretation, the researcher's perceptions, biases, and personal beliefs should be accounted for. To achieve this, the interpretation should include "the voices of participants, the reflectivity of the researcher, and a complex description . . . of the problem." Similarly, while qualitative presentations are mainly in narrative form, tools such as descriptive statistics may be used to summarize data. But, even in this, the conclusions should be consistent with the findings. The synthesis of the findings may be followed by the suggestion of a model or theory. In addition, qualitative research reports in African psychology, as in other related disciplines, are characterized by the use of "voice" in the text. This refers to participant quotes that illustrate the themes being described and the assurance of originality of the data being discussed or presented. In such voice-centered analysis, speakers are typically referred to in a manner that provides a sense of context or the "multivoice" (Gergen & Gergen, 1983).

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Conclusion

The vast demand for the use of qualitative and other alternative research methodologies in African psychology compels the need for a basic understanding of such alternative research approaches by students and scholars. So far this has not been truly the case, given the prevailing hegemonic status enjoyed by quantitative approaches in social science research in most African universities. This chapter represents an attempt to come to terms with this unwelcome state of affairs. The illustrative sample of categories of qualitative methodologies discussed in the chapter is intended to serve as a means of opening the eyes of our students and scholars to the enormous promise of the qualitative research approach in African psychology. The core of my argument is that the current overemphasis on the use of quantitative approaches in social science research in African universities needs to be reconsidered to create space to accommodate the alternative research methodologies highlighted in this chapter that are deemed more suited for the study of lives as lived, as emphasized in African psychology. This in no way implies the total replacement of quantitative methodologies in African psychological research. What is recommended is an entrenchment of the spirit of inclusivity in the curricula contents of degree programs intended for the training of African psychologists and other social scientists in universities in the South and other regions of Africa. That is, in such programs, students should be offered equal access to training and education regarding the fundamental assets and potentials of the two research paradigms in contributing to the promotion of relevant African psychological research engagements in African universities.

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12

Moving Beyond the BPS

An Africentric Approach to Clinical Diagnosis and Treatment

Not everything that can be counted counts,
And not everything that counts can be counted.

—Albert Einstein

In this chapter I plan to achieve two main goals. The first is to undertake a deconstruction of the notion of psychopathology as understood in Western psychology. The principal goal in doing this is to show that when the African cultural context and worldview is taken into consideration there are many ways of understanding the scope and basis of psychopathology than is currently recognized in the mainstream (Western) psychology textbooks. The second aim of the chapter is to assert and promote a more comprehensive understanding of the notion of psychopathology as understood in Africa. The discussion is intended to highlight the grounds for the widened scope of the Africentric approach to clinical diagnosis and treatment.

The Notion of Deconstruction

In this respect, I take Cuddon's (1991) idea of deconstruction as my point of departure for this discussion. According to Cuddon (1991), the term "deconstruction" comes from the verb "to deconstruct" that is often used as a synonym for the process of criticizing or demonstrating the inadequacy and lack of finality in the meaning given to a foreign construct or concept (e.g., the Western notion and models of explaining psychopathology) imported into a new context. Seen in this light, when I make reference to the task of deconstructing psychopathology in this chapter I do so not because I believe

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that the term "psychopathology" as used in Western psychology or psychiatry is completely wrong, but because I wish to demonstrate that its meaning range and the models of etiological explanations associated with it in the West are limited and unable to accommodate some aspects of the African experience and understanding of psychopathology.

Hence, in deconstructing the term "psychopathology" as used in the Western, Eurocentric perspective, in this chapter I aim to problematize its explanatory scope and power when imported to Africa because its bio-psycho-social (BPS) model of explanation of psychopathology, as encoded in the current *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013) classification is considered limited and unable to accommodate some aspects of the African experience of psychopathology or psychological illness (Bodibe & Sodi, 1997; Edwards, 1983, 1984; Edwards, 1985, 1986; Farrand, 1984; Horton, 1962, 1967, 1995; Jacobson-Widding & Westerlund, 1989; Le Roux, 1973; Lund & Swartz, 1998; Naidoo, 1996; Pillay, Naidoo, & Lockhart, 1999; Straker, 1994; Swartz, 1998).

I make this observation based on the idea of deconstruction emphasized by Cuddon (1991), which shows that deconstructive practice is interested in drawing attention to the limitation that a foreign terminology (like psychopathology) attracts when imported to a new cultural context (such as Africa). For Cuddon, such a terminology may be unable, as in the case of Western notion of psychopathology, to carry all the connotations associated with the notion of psychological illness in the African context. In this way, I engage in the process of deconstructing psychopathology in this chapter to call into question the restrictive range of meaning of the Western notion of psychopathology when it is transferred from its original knowledge system (Western) to a foreign one (African).

Given this, one of the specific objectives of this chapter is to interrogate and move beyond the prevailing BPS model of psychopathology championed in Western psychiatric literature. I consider it necessary to engage in this since, within the Eurocentric paradigm of mental health and illness (as encoded in its current DSM-5 classification system), the sources of psychopathology are believed to originate from either the individual concerned or the society in which he or she is born and raised, or from the individual's own biology or physiology.

Yet this Eurocentric tendency to focus its etiological explanation of mental illness on only these three possible sources of human mental disturbances (i.e., the biological, psychological, and social domains) grossly ignores other

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sources of psychopathology as understood in Africa. Hence I consider it deficient as a complete explanatory model for use in Africa when certain manifestations of psychopathology encountered in rural communities in Africa (like the problem of healing illnesses such as *amafufunyana and ukthwasa*), as highlighted by F. S. Edwards (1984) and D. L. Mkhize (1998), are presented by clients.

A review of the prevailing Western models of psychopathology is therefore necessary to elucidate the limitations inherent in the Eurocentric model. In doing this, I raise the following questions: How is psychopathology understood in Western psychology? In particular, what models exist in the Western literature that explain the origins or etiology of mental illness in human beings? To what extent are those models sufficient to explain the various types of psychopathology encountered in Africa?

Western Models of Psychopathology

Influenced by the Eurocentric paradigm, Western psychology sees psychopathology as arising in three main ways.

1. As a "disease" of the mind that originates from abnormality in the patient's anatomy and nervous system. This is the so-called *biomedical model* or the *somatic* or *biogenetic perspective*. Following this perspective, Western psychology sees the body as the site of psychopathology and the problem of psychopathology as something that could be resolved by means of Western (psychiatric) medicine through adequate diagnosis and medical prescription.
2. As a psychological abnormality. This is the so-called *psychological model*, which sees psychopathology as originating from the affected individual's faulty cognitions, which are said to give rise to the individual's behavior being dominated by irrational thinking and beliefs, biases, unfounded assumptions, and fears. This model is also referred to as the *intrapsychic theory of psychopathology*, originally propagated by the Freudian psychoanalytic framework, but now also emphasized by cognitive theorists such as Aaron T. Beck, Albert Ellis, and David Meichenbaum.

   Following this model, the mind is understood as the site of psychopathology. That is to say, under the intrapsychic theory of psychological

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dysfunction, psychopathology (or any kind of psychological illness including *amafufunyana* and *ukuthwasa*; (F. S. Edwards, 1984; Lund & Swartz, 1998; D. L. Mkhize, 1998; Niehaus et al., 2004) is to be seen as something that comes from within, rather than from outside the mind of the individual. To manage the challenge of psychopathology under this model requires the use of psychotherapy or professional counseling to help the client develop an alternative and more adequate way of seeing life and responding to the problems of living.

3. As a product of the stressful life-worlds or social contexts in which people live and work. This is the so-called *social-cultural model* of psychopathology. According to this model, the site of psychopathology is in the society: in people's toxic interpersonal relationships, difficult and unsuccessful friendships, stressful work-settings, pathogenic marital and family systems, and deficient upbringing.

   According to this perspective, such negative human systems and relationships are pathogenic. They drive people crazy. Hence, the problems of anxiety, chronic envies and jealousies, depression, and schizophrenia, according to this Western perspective on psychopathology, often take their origin from negative interpersonal systems.

In his attempt to emphasize that none of these three conceptualizations operating singly is sufficient to serve as a complete explanation in psychological practice, G. L. Engel (1977) published an article in *Science* which was considered to have provided a more inclusive model of psychopathology. His model came to be referred to as the BPS framework. Currently Engel's BPS model has come to dominate Western understanding of psychopathology and has since been adopted in Western psychology (including professional South African psychology under the guardianship of the Health Professions Council of South Africa) as the most comprehensive way of understanding psychopathology.

Of course, a few Western scholars (Clare, 1999; Pilgrim, 2002) have, in several contexts, demonstrated that not everybody in Western psychological practice is in agreement with the extraordinary importance vested in the notion of the BPS model of psychopathology. Yet such protestations have not been able to dislodge the pervasive dominance and control of that framework, even in the South African context of psychological practice. However, Clare, as summarized by Pilgrim (2002, p. 590), points out that those favoring

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a holistic model have recently expressed a concern that psychiatry is simply becoming neuropsychiatry, with the BPS model losing its earlier gains.

Thus, the BPS model being propagated in South African psychiatric and psychological practice as the master model of etiological explanation in working with clients who present with psychopathological conditions is losing its hold and respect in European and North American contexts.

Of course, what is of major interest in this chapter is not the Eurocentric status of the BPS but the view that, although the Africentric paradigm does not reject the Eurocentric paradigm in seeing the BPS framework as containing some relevant and important explanations for psychopathology, it wishes to expand and move beyond on it in order to create space to provide a missing dimension unaccounted for in the Western, Eurocentric paradigm of mental illness.

The Africentric Paradigm of Mental Illness: Closing the Gap

The missing dimension in the Eurocentric paradigm of mental illness is the *spiritualist perspective* encompassed in the Africentric paradigm and accounting for the origin of certain instances of serious mental illnesses in the African context (Berg, 2003; Bodibe & Sodi, 1997; Bührmann, 1981; Cheetham, 1975; F. S. Edwards, 1984; S. D. Edwards, 1985, 1986; Erdtsieck, 2001; Freeman & Motsei, 1992; Gobodo, 1990; Helander, 1989; Hirst, 1993; Holdstock, 1981, 2000; Horton, 1962, 1967, 1995; Kalu, 1978; Magesa, 1998; Mbiti, 1969; D. L. Mkhize, 1998; Naidoo, 1996; Ngubane 1977; A. Nwoye, 2006b, 2014; Robertson & Kottler, 1993; Turner, 1968; Uys, 1986; Whyte, 1981, 1997; Yoder, 1981).

Instances of Abnormality Encountered in Africa Unaccounted for in the DSM-5

In Africa, the following examples (drawn from Whyte, 1997) are taken as some instances of psychopathology that are ignored in Western psychology and the current DSM-5 system.

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1. Women who change partners and cannot stay in marriage (Whyte, 1997)
2. Young men with strange behavior, like disappearing into the bush and refusing to talk or eat for several days, or climbing up a high rock and refusing to come down
3. A woman with "running" sickness or hysteria (as used by Whyte, 1997)
4. Men who were unable to maintain marital relationships, despite the fact that they were wealthy
5. People reporting fits or seizures, fainting, signs of spiritual possession, and unexplainable psychosis (cited in Whyte, 1997)
6. Schoolgirls who remove their clothes in public (an incidence that occurs frequently in Mombasa, Kenya), and is also supported by research among the Bunyole of Uganda by Whyte (1997). A similar incidence has also been found among people in South Africa by Wittstock, Rozenthal, and Henn (1991).

This non-exhaustive list demonstrates that, in Africa, psychopathology does not refer only to the key problems of mental illness, such as psychosis or schizophrenia, but also to irregular or strange behavioral presentations that often arise from mysterious origins. For this reason, the tendency adopted in the African paradigm of mental illness is to view such abnormal presentations or illnesses not as ordinary illnesses or discomforts but as problems that carry a hidden text and message that must first be decoded and its meaning interpreted before a proper resolution or cure can be found.

In this way, in seeing any particular illness, physical or psychological, as a "symbolic illness" or one with a hidden meaning, indigenous African elders routinely assume that, when faced with such strange illness or behavioral manifestations, they must go beyond the "information given" (Bruner, 1986)—that is, beyond the external manifestations of the illness—to determine "who" is speaking through such illnesses and what the relatives or family members are expected to do on behalf of the sick one to effect healing.

In that way, the family members of the sick try to identify not only what is happening to the sick individual (the observable, symptom manifestations of the illness) but also identify the invisible agent suspected to be behind its onset and escalation through consultation with agents (hermeneuts or interpreters) of the hidden forces that are assumed to be responsible for the possible onset of these illnesses (Animalu, 1990; Berg, 2003; Bodibe & Sodi, 1997; Bührmann, 1977, 1981; Chukwu, 2008; Daynes & Msengi, 1979;

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F. S. Edwards, 1984; Erdtsieck, 2001; Freeman & Motsei, 1992; Hirst, 1993; Holdstock, 2000; Horton, 1962, 1967, 1995; O. U. Kalu, 1978; K. Ogbaa, 1992; Magesa, 1998; Mbiti, 1969; D. L. Mkhize, 2003; H. B. Mkhize, 1981; M. A. C. Nwoye, 2011; Peek, 1991; Ngubane, 1977; Oruka, 1990; Robertson & Kottler, 1993; Sokhela, Edwards, & Makunga, 1984; Sundkler, 1961; Swartz, 2002; Touche, 2009).

These observations, taken together, mean that the Africentric paradigm, unlike the Eurocentric perspective, recognizes the possibility of the origin of psychopathology as arising not only from the illness of the body, mind, or social contexts, as emphasized in the Eurocentric BPS model (Engel, 1977), but also at times originating from the spiritual (e.g., the ancestral) background of the individual manifesting the illness.

The Africentric paradigm of mental illness equally teaches that there are intermediaries or hermeneuts to spiritual forces that could be approached for a solution when such illnesses are encountered. This is because, in the Africentric paradigm of mental illness, misfortune can be traced beyond the visible world of the senses to the invisible world of the spirits and the ancestors, where the problem may arise. This follows from the assumption in African culture and worldview that the visible and invisible worlds are highly interconnected and influence one another and that some people (the hermeneuts) have the capacity to communicate as intermediaries with these invisible spirit forces to discover their intentions when they bring illness to human beings (Animalu, 1990; Cheetham, 1975; F. S. Edwards, 1984; Erdtsieck, 2001 Holdstock, 2000; Horton, 1962, 1967, 1995; Kalu, 1978, K. Ogbaa, 1992; Mbiti, 1969; D. L. Mkhize, 1998; M. A. C. Nwoye, 2011; Peek, 1991; Touche 2009; Turner, 1968).

Approaches to Clinical Diagnoses Within the Africentric Paradigm

The notion of clinical or psychological diagnosis within the Africentric paradigm refers to the interventive action that is taken to determine the source of a difficult illness. The need for such an intervention arises in the face of a sudden, strange, or difficult illness that refuses to remit after all medicines (including Western hospitalization) have been administered (Bodibe & Sodi, 1997; F. S. Edwards, 1983, 1984; S. D. Edwards, 1985, 1986; Erdtsieck, 2001; D. L. Mkhize, 1998; Ngubane, 1977; Peek, 1991; Turner, 1968; Whyte, 1997).

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Under such a situation, the tendency within the Africentric paradigm of mental illness is to perceive such types of illness as an abnormal illness, which, like an analogic communication (A. Nwoye, 2002, 2006a, 2006b), has a *meta-message* to transmit to the relatives or family members of the sick individual. The understanding is that it is only by first identifying the import and content of such a *meta-text* that a proper solution to achieving a cure to the presenting illness can be found. Hence, some types of psychopathology, such as sudden psychological illness and other categorical states of incoherent thoughts and actions, are understood in Africa as instances of dramatic, analogic, or symbolic rather than ordinary experiences. The tendency in the diagnostic process within the Africentric paradigm is to "read" such illnesses as "texts" pregnant with meaning. This implies that sudden, severe, psychological illnesses are approached as meta-communications to be "read" and interpreted, rather than to be categorized or classified as emphasized in the DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Recognizing such illnesses as "symbolic illnesses" or metaphors with hidden meanings, indigenous African elders realize that they must go beyond the surface (symptom) manifestations of the illness to determine "who" is speaking through such illnesses and what such causal agents intend to convey through the exercise of bringing illness. Consequently, psychopathology in the African perspective is often viewed as an aspect of social drama, as propounded by Turner (1980). According to Turner (1980), there are two kinds of dramatic experiences that can be noted in human communities: *social dramas* and *stage dramas*.

Social dramas, according to Turner are those that arise from the occurrence of a *breach*, which foments or initiates the development of *crisis* requiring the introduction of *redress* or remedial intervention to ameliorate the situation. Stage dramas, on the other hand, are those that take place on the theatrical stage and are therefore basically social in nature, aimed at mimicking the ways in which triumph is achieved when real social dramas of existence are confronted, addressed or dealt with, and effectively transcended (Turner, 1980).

Seen in this perspective, some aspects of psychopathology in the Africentric paradigm are perceived as the occurrence of a breach in the normal routine of an individual's existence, changing the victim's inner and outer equilibrium from peace and harmony to illness and distress. In the face of such an unexpected disruption in a person's life, the relatives of the

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concerned client, influenced by the spirit of rotational sensitivity, the philosophy of constructive alternativism (Kelly, 1955), or the notion of behavior as an experiment (Kelly, 1985), try to track down the meaning behind a given difficult or "mysterious" illness, tending to interrogate not only the observable manifestations of the illness through the use of symptomatic idioms. They also engage in identifying the agent behind its onset and entrenched stubbornness.

The pragmatics of uncertainty that accompany such illnesses motivate relatives of the sick individual to take a subjunctive mood to organize a wider plan of action to eliminate all possible routes (the cross-roads perspective on where the illness could arise) to arrest the situation. In this way, they resort to personalistic (or agent-related) idioms of explanation in the face of difficult psychological illnesses. In such a context, what is diagnosed is not necessarily the symptom manifested but the facts and details behind its eruption. Following this approach, Black African peoples in this situation invest in a "thick reading" of the text presented in the form of the illness, going beyond the characters composing the text and placing particular emphasis on personalistic (or agent-related) idioms of explanation in their approach to questioning the presenting misfortune.

Seen in this light, the major search or diagnostic questions in the face of a difficult illness, in the African perspective, become "Who is speaking?" and "For what intended message?" (Whyte, 1997).

Rituals of Questioning Misfortune

As a way of gaining concrete answers to these questions, relatives of the sick individual engage in what Whyte (1997) refers to as the *rituals of questioning misfortune*.

Mechanisms of Clinical Diagnosis Within the Africentric Paradigm

As a way of ascertaining the hidden meaning in a particular illness, or whether a particular ancestor or spirit-being is at the root cause of that illness, African relatives of the sick engage in the act of consulting established hermeneuts (intermediaries) of the given community in question. In this

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context, they operate as the sick one's spokespersons in search of meaning to be attached to his or her illness.

In searching for such a meaning, the person rated in most communities in Black Africa to be the relevant intermediary in dealing with such matters is the *diviner*, known in many African communities by different names, such as the *iSangoma* among the Zulu of South Africa, the *N'ganga wa pepo,* among the people of Tanzania (Erdtsieck, 2001), the *Babalawo* among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, and the *Dibia afa* among the Igbo of Nigeria.

In this process of "asking for the basis behind the illness," two major diagnostic mechanisms are followed: mediumistic divination and instrumental divination. Because in both methods the central technique is divination, I first define the notion of divination as understood in Africa.

The first definition to be highlighted is the one proposed by Silva (2018). According to Silva (2018, p. 394), the activity of divination, broadly speaking, can be understood "as the use of particular methods to access spiritually authenticated knowledge." Although Silva's conceptualization of divination is very useful and gives us direction on the kind of knowledge (spiritually authenticated knowledge) implicated in the activity of divination, it fails to give us an idea of what diviners are searching for in this spiritually grounded knowledge formation. A more detailed definition of divination is the one proposed by Peek (1991) in his edited book, *African Divination Systems: Ways of Knowing.* According to that definition one can say that African divination is the skilled process of ascertaining the concealed infuriation and demands of ancestors or other spiritual agencies underlying a given illness.

Following this definition, divination is therefore a kind of cultural way of knowing, through which specialized individuals (the hermeneuts) assist fellow members of the human world to understand the sources of discontent among members of the spirit world that can be said to be a basis for the illness or misfortune being faced by a given family member or the entire community (Berg, 2003; Bodibe & Sodi, 1997; Devisch, 1985; S. D. Edwards, 1985; Erdtsieck, 2001; Gobodo, 1990; Hirst, 1993; Holdstock, 1981, 2000; K. Ogbaa, 1992; D. L. Mkhize, 2003; Olsson, 1989; Ngubane, 1977; Peek, 1991; Robertson, & Kottler, 1993; Sokhela et al., 1984; Turner, 1968; Whyte, 1981, 1997; Yoder, 1982).

And as I have indicated earlier, there are basically two categories of divination (e.g., instrumental divination and mediumistic divination) for achieving this aim. An attempt will now be made to highlight what is involved in both approaches to African divination process.

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Instrumental Divination

In his important article, Professor S. Davis, formally of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, presented the following examples of instrumental divination procedures of relevance to this discussion. One of these is found among the people of Uganda where some "diviners cast . . . powdered herbs into a pot of water, rock the pot and then scrutinize the arrangement of the particles" (p. 132).

Davis observed that, in Gabon, a black earthenware pot filled with water is used for *crystallomancy*, a process in which a diviner looks intently into a calabash of whitish "medicine" in which he described tiny spirits who gave him the guidance he wanted. Again, according Davis (1995, p. 132), "a person seeking guidance or information may even peer into a pool. He sees the unrevealed past or the secrets of the future." Also, among the West Sudanese on the Gold Coast as reported by Davis (1955, p. 132), the diviner "places a brass pan of water between him and his fetishes, and begs them to tell him what he wants to know."

These are concrete instances where instrumental divination is used as a technique of questioning misfortune (Whyte, 1998) or conducting a diagnosis in the African context when people are confronted with a difficult illness.

The Mediumistic Divination

In mediumistic divination, the diviner is the object through whom the oracle speaks. In other words, the speech of the oracular agent or ancestral spirit is delivered through the words of the diviner, who serves as the medium. Turner (1968), in supporting this, observes that the mediumistic diviner's task is to help bring into words what is hidden or unknown about a situation so that people can deal with the "stakes" in an appropriate way. In that case, if it is discovered that an ancestral spirit, another kind of spirit agent, or even a human being is causing the disorder then the diviner will identify the procedure to be followed in dealing with or responding to the situation. In most cases, this may involve a sacrifice or simply a *ritual of recognition* and an affirmation, through verbalization of the name of the ancestor or spirit-being concerned. In that case, the understanding is that the spirit in question will relent since it was aggrieved for being forgotten or not serviced. Hence, the affliction is often interpreted by the diviner as confronting the sick one in his or her own personal capacity or in his or her capacity as representative of a

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kin group, all of whom may have been at fault in the issue provoking the spirit or the ancestor in question.

It must be noted, too, that a peculiar kind of spirit possession involved in mediumistic divination is the type in which the possessed is conceived of as serving as an intermediary between spirits and members of the human group concerned. In that case, the accent is on *possession as a medium of communication*, a point of view which distinguishes the spirit possession that takes place in mediumistic divination from the condition of madness.

However, it is necessary to observe, too, that in mediumistic divination the diviner always goes into a state of possession and becomes an instrument of speech for the possessing spirit. But, even in this, the point to be noted is that in mediumistic divination the diviner can also become in a sense the possessor of the spirit to achieve *illumination.*

In line with this, van Binsbergen (1981) opines that the kind of possession that takes place in mediumistic divination is one that involves an extremely momentary and very intensive state (usually accompanied by drumming, singing, and sometimes smoking). In this regard, what is to be remembered is that the type of dancing that erupts in mediumistic divination rituals is one that can be called, borrowing Kenneth Burke's phrase, "dancing an attitude" and not just ordinary dancing. It is usually believed that the drumming and dancing that accompany the rituals of affliction act as "positive agents" that help the trance state to occur.

Having said these, the following illustrative examples of how mediumistic divination works in practice can be offered. In this regard two models of mediumistic divination, one drawn from among the Shona of Zimbabwe, and the other, the dream process model practiced by a diviner from Uganda interviewed by me, are given here in the order in which they are mentioned.

Mediumstic Divination Among the Shona

Among the Shona people of Zimbabwe, divination-possession involves the diviner/medium going into a trance state, influenced by the sound of the music played for that purpose. As people sing and dance, the medium/diviner becomes possessed. Specifically, according to Turner (1968, p. 29), "as the music continues the medium's or the diviner's head begins to shake, his limbs move up and down, almost vibrating with music, and the muscles become taunt. Many emit sighs and grunts as if inspiring deeply, The movements of the limbs become more violent, the medium may sing, move around."

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Under this facilitated condition, the diviner is able to go into trance and obtain the message of the ancestor or the spirit being concerned regarding the meaning of the illness. In other studies, like those among the Yaka of Zaire, Congo, as reported by Devisch (1991), it is suggested that it is at this stage that questions are put to the spirit, who may respond often by enumerating *breaches* in the community which must be rectified before the problem or the illness under study can be dissolved.

A variation of this process, noted among the Yaka of Zaire, is that at times it is not through direct questioning of the possessing spirit that the vital knowing process occurs, but *through the exploitation of the extraordinary powers of smell, hearing, and sight ascribed to mediumistic diviners*.

In this context it is believed that by smelling articles that have been in close contact with the body of the afflicted client, a diviner is often able to detect the cause of the illness. Magesa (1998, p. 207) suggests that a more successful result is achieved if the articles "are part of the body of the afflicted client itself, such as blood, hair, nails, spittle and so on."

Mediumstic Divination Through the Dream Process, Ugandan Model

A typical example of the use of dream process in clinical diagnosis within the Africentric paradigm is provided from the following report of an interview with a traditional medicine-man in Uganda. The interview was held during the first World Council for Psychotherapy Congress, in Kampala, Uganda (November 23–29, 1997).

In the course of one of our pre-conference activities, I joined the team that opted to visit a popular traditional medicine-man in Kampala to find out the kind of problems he deals with, what he does in his diagnostic process, and the way he effects healing. Our interview with him revealed that he relied heavily on the phenomenon of dream insight and guidance as the major medium of his diagnostic process.

In both his diagnostic process and in his prescription of healing, according to him, after conducting a preliminary examination of the issue disturbing the client through many other means, including observation and listening to their accounts, a time comes when he needs to rely on dream messages to determine the actual source of the problem presented. To induce such dreams he does not sleep in his normal house and bed because he craves for inspiration about what to do to help a given client. He sleeps in a ritual thatched house (the dream house) specifically built for that purpose; it is a

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house with a long vertical roof, with an open space at the tip built by the intersection of the sticks that carry the roof. The house itself, which is round in shape, is supported by four big pillars, not walls (see Figure 8.1 in Chapter 8 of this book).

According to him, during such dream visitations, he is usually told what is ailing the patient and the origin of the problem, as well as the type of medicine to go for as a remedy for the physical damages arising from the illness. He also informed us that to prepare himself for such dream messages he keeps himself in a state of ritual purity through avoidance of contact with elements of culturally defined impurity involving practices like coming into contact with menstruating women or even having any sexual contacts with women. According to him, too, the diagnostic messages he receives through this dream medium usually come to him from either the god of divination or from the ancestor or dead relative from whom he inherited his healing vocation (or *iSangomahood*, among the Zulu). Most of these messages typically come to him during the early hours of the morning, particularly, between 1 and 2 a.m., while asleep.

Instrumental Divination: Illustrative Case Example

I will now give an illustrative case example of the major approach of instrumental divination to effecting clinical diagnosis in traditional Africa. The case is related to the value of divinatory diagnosis in the African perspective earlier highlighted. It concerns the case of a young man from Nigeria, aged 24, at the onset of his illness. The details of the case showed that he was an only child of his widowed mother residing in a rural village. After some period of years as a successful plumber, he became ill, and, because his case could not "respond to treatment," he was advised to return home for a second opinion on the matter.

While home, the mother decided (in line with the African perspective) to try the native approach of consulting a diviner. Unfortunately, the result was a diagnosis and prescription which the young man, as a Christian, totally rejected. It was discovered that a deity from the mother's side of the family was behind the illness. It was reported that the deity had decided to impart to the young man the gift of healing and rain-making. And the challenge was that unless the young man in question was ready to accept this decision, his illness would continue. The story showed that, to the surprise of the young

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man's mother, the son decided, due to influence of Christian principles, to reject this divine call or mandate.

The reported aftermath was devastating: his illness worsened, degenerating to complete insanity that saw him go up and down the village roads naked, to the chagrin, shame, and anguish of his mother and other relatives. His ordeal continued unrelenting for a period of three years.

Then the elders came together and suggested that the mother plead to the deity concerned on her son's behalf, through the auspices of a diviner. This implied that she had to, while on her knees, entreat the deity with the promise of a goat sacrifice if it would suspend its action and give room for renegotiation.

This arrangement was carried out to the letter, and, according to the diviner, the pleading was acceptable to the deity, who suggested to the diviner the type of herbs to be used in influencing a remission. These rituals were performed and the herbal medicine was applied. The result was unbelievable. The son's illness began, for the first time in years, to respond to treatment. It was reported that after taking the first doses of the herbal medicine as prescribed by the deity, he started to calm down and sleep as he had never done before, accepting food and drink thereafter. This was followed by the considerable return of his sanity, and he was able to know who and where he was.

It was reported that while in this state (or remission) he was engaged by the elders in a dialogue of renegotiation for his future: to accept the verdict of the deity or to return to insanity. It was said that, to the relief of every one present, he chose the first option; that is, to yield to the deity's contract. This news was received by ululation by everybody around.

This decision was taken to the diviner for onward transmission to the deity. In response, the deity became friendly and gave further guidelines of what the son needed to get as preparation for his practice, indicating that the dream method would serve as the key avenue for showing him around the bush for needed herbs for effecting healing in his clients.

The prescription also itemized the rituals that needed to be carried out to inaugurate his rain-making practice. All of these were done as had been stipulated. With this, the formerly insane young man came completely back to his pre-illness (premorbid) status and was fully reinserted into the fabric of his society.

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Implications

A number of implications follow from these discussions. The first is that Western psychology's tendency to define humans only in material, tangible, or observable terms (e.g., in terms of body and behavior) should be questioned as it ignores attention to human spirituality, which in African psychology is an important area of influence in human well-being (A. Nwoye, 2015). Second, Western psychology's assumption that human behavior is what it is, with no significant meaning beyond what is actually observed, is again an assumption that must be interrogated and considered unacceptable in African psychology, since human beings in Africa live most of their lives according to what people's words and actions mean to them (A. Nwoye, 2014).

Thus, the African universe, unlike the Aristotelian universe, is an interpreted universe (A. Nwoye, 2006b). In this way, certain psychological illnesses in Africa can only be effectively explained and decisively dealt with through the application of the African perspective. It therefore cannot be emphasized enough that the Africentric paradigm to clinical diagnosis and treatment encompasses not only the BPS model of illness explanation endorsed by the Eurocentric paradigm but also the spiritualist explanatory framework excluded by the Eurocentric perspective on illness causality.

Following the African perspective, a more inclusive explanatory model to mental illness comes to the fore, namely, the BPS-spiritualist (BPS-S) model. Hence, the Africentric paradigm is a more holistic (Sanford, 1966) paradigm of mental illness and deserves more respect and attention in the professional literature of South African psychological practice than it currently receives. This is because the African perspective thrives where the Western medical model is unsuccessful, mainly because it is grounded in other ways of knowing that move beyond explanations of mental illness espoused by the Western Eurocentric model.

Additionally, the Africentric paradigm of mental health and illness endorses the solution-focused approach to clinical diagnosis and treatment. This means that, in contrast to the Eurocentric perspective, which encourages the belief, grounded on the psychoanalytic framework, that the longer the length of treatment, the better the outcome, the Africentric model is influenced by the pragmatic theory of truth. This is a framework which

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believes that, in matters of illness and healing, truth is defined in action. Hence, in the Africentric perspective, the governing assumption is that what works is the truth (A. Nwoye, 2006b) and that the quicker or the less time it takes to achieve a successful resolution of the problem, the better.

Similarly, it should be emphasized that although in many places in Africa the indication appears to be that the role of the diviner is a woman's birthright (as in southern Africa, where most diviners are women), in some places, such as among the Igbo of Nigeria (Achebe, 1958), that office is open to members of both sexes. In this case, the office is not a birthright of any one particular gender as such; rather people have to be "called" or chosen by the ancestors or a given spiritual agency for such a function and that call is not gender-discriminatory.

Furthermore, divination sessions in Africa are always conducted in public, in the presence of an observer-witness, and not in secret. In addition, in the African perspective, a divination session proceeds on the assumption that the ancestors of both the client and the diviner are present or, at least, "on call" (Evans-Pritchard, 1937) in support of the search for a diagnosis of the client's illness.

Finally, another important point is that not all African psychologists who recognize and support the Africentric paradigm of clinical diagnosis and treatment are expected to play the role of *iSangomas* or diviners to those clients who present with a difficult illness. The point to be taken away from this discussion, rather, is that the DSM-5, in espousing the Eurocentric paradigm, is not the only possible diagnostic system for understanding clients with difficult mental illness in the African context. The present discussion suggests that, in the Africentric paradigm, the BPS model, when discovered to be irrelevant, should lead to a referral to an appropriate traditional healing expert (typically a well-acclaimed *iSangoma*, not a charlatan) who is versed in the use of *divinatory epistemology* as an avenue for effecting a clinical diagnosis and intervention of a presenting difficult psychological impairment.

In sum, therefore, one can say that one of the aims of African psychology in general, and the present discussion in particular, is to enable clinicians in the South and other regions of Africa to recognize the strength and limits of Western psychology, particularly when confronted with the needs and problems of Black African clients with difficult illness presentations.

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Conclusion

What overall conclusions can we draw from this chapter? The first is that there are three approaches to promoting healing in people that present with psychopathological complaints. The first is achieved either by means of medication, psychotherapy, or ritual process, depending, of course, on the ascertained causal origin of the illness. Second, while in the case of the biomedical model of explanation of the origin of psychopathology, appropriate medical diagnosis and prescription may be essential, with the spiritualist perspective, the use of divination as a means of diagnosis may, among other procedures, be called for, followed by the recommended ritual process to effect healing. Third, and finally, the Africentric four models of explanation (the BPS-S perspective) for the origin of psychopathologies identified in this chapter are not antagonistic to one another. Each is important, and none can replace the other in importance. Each has something vital to contribute toward our achieving a comprehensive understanding of and solution to the variety of psychopathologies that can manifest in human beings in Africa and other regions of the world.

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13

A Collaborative and Narrative Approach to Child and Family Therapy in Africa

In this chapter I illustrate how Harlene Anderson's collaborative therapy approach and Karl Tomm's method of interventive interviewing could be utilized in promoting the psychological management of a Black African child with psychosomatic presentations. To accomplish this goal, I begin by highlighting the basic tenets of both therapy approaches, starting with Harlene Anderson's Collaborative Approach.

Collaborative Approach to Therapy: Basic Tenets and Assumptions

Among the basic tenets and philosophical assumptions of collaborative therapy are that

- Language, conversation, and relationship are the principal pillars of therapy.
- Psychological healing is effected through conversation and relationship, without the need for the application of instrumental diagnostic assessment.
- A therapist makes a difference in the life of the client through language; through conversation with the client.
- Knowledge is relational, embodied, alive in people, and can be transferred from one person to another through language.
- Therapy is a collaborative practice: it takes at least two to engage in it—I and me or self and other.
- A therapy is a *collaborative partnership* between people with different perspectives and expertise.
- A therapist operates as a *not-knower* who begins conversations with clients in a being-informed position; he or she engages in such a

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partnership to learn from the client and to use that learning to understand and initiate therapeutic assistance with the client.

- A collaborative therapist assumes the role of an expert in creating a dialogical space and facilitating a dialogical process.
- The focus of collaborative therapy is on generating possibilities, or alternative stories that could make a difference in people's lives, emerging from the contributions and creativity of all participants, not least that of the client. Hence there is the phenomenon of epistemological co-centrality (therapist and client) as sources of knowledge creation in collaborative therapy.
- Collaborative therapy is a shared inquiry, a dialogical conversation that relies on the expertise of all persons participating in the conversation.
- Change or transformation in collaborative therapy is seen as evolving through and as the natural consequence of a generative dialogue and collaborative relationship.
- Collaborative therapy works with people as multiple relational selves (e.g., with a client as child, daughter, granddaughter, student, niece of somebody).
- The collaborative therapist and the client operate as co-investigators who participate in creating what they "find."
- In managing the therapeutic dialogue, the therapist offers questions, opinions, speculations, or suggestions as a way of participating in the conversation and in a tentative manner.
- In the collaborative dialogue, the key principle is not to assume or understand too quickly, but rather to take the role of a curious learner and responsively listen to, talk with, and hear the other.
- In collaborative therapy, problems dissolve in dialogue.
- This is because in it, "Dialogue is the condition for the emergence of new meaning" (Mikhail Bakhtin, [1981], as cited in Anderson, 2009, p. 9).

These indications mean that in practising therapy through the collaborative approach emphasis is placed on the notion of interviewing as assessment. And since it is understood in collaborative therapy that problems dissolve in dialogue, we can do successful therapy (among rural African clients who cannot read and write and thus cannot take paper-and-pencil tests) through dialogical conversations with them as a source of gaining knowledge from them about the problem.

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Narrative Therapy Framework: Major Teachings, Concepts, and Assumptions

From the perspective of the narrative therapy approach, particularly the model propagated by Professor Karl Tomm, Director of the Family Therapy Program of the University of Calgary, Canada,

1. Therapy is understood as a process of interventive interviewing—with emphasis placed on the therapeutic potential of conversations.
2. In narrative therapy, as in collaborative therapy, language, conversation, and relationship form the basic constituents of the therapeutic process.
3. In narrative therapy, the clinical interview is not understood as a mere transition stage to intervention time; narrative therapy entails the process of interventive interviewing (Tomm, 1987a, 1987b, 1988, 1998a, 2003).
4. In the narrative therapy process, internalized other interviewing (IOI) is often implicated in many therapeutic conversations. Tomm defined IOI as a method used to explore, enhance, and/or modify a client's inner experience of another person's inner experience and potentially alter the virtual and lived relationships between the client and the other person. IOI is based on a view of the self as constituted by an internalized community.
5. Furthermore, IOI is a unique conversational practice; with it therapists ask a client to speak for another who may be present or absent in the interview and who is able to respond to what gets said. The IOI is therefore a conversational practice that invites partners or family members to speak from hearable yet so far unsaid understandings of each other that recur in problematic interactions.
6. Narrative therapy places emphasis on the notion of reflexivity (which refers to the idea that speaking alters not only listeners but also the speakers *as they interact* [Cronen, Pearce, & Tomm, 1985]).
7. Narrative therapy also places emphasis on positive connotations of behavior (or the belief that good intentions often underlie unhelpful responses [McNamee, Lannamann, & Tomm, 1983]). I present an example of this in the real-life case study presented in the second segment of this chapter.

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8. Narrative therapy, especially the type championed by Karl Tomm, places emphasis on the importance of asking proper questions during the therapy process: Tomm's narrative approach specifically proposes the idea that questions are interventions when properly framed, an idea that challenges the traditional perspective on questions as mere information-gathering tools.
9. In narrative therapy, questions can be classified according to the therapist's intent (orienting or influencing) and assumptions about the source of the problem (lineal or circular) (Tomm, 1981).
10. In orienting questions, therapists ask questions to be helped to understand (i.e., to orient themselves in) the client's situation.
11. Circular questions and the assumptions behind them orient the therapist to look beyond cause-and-effect (lineal) descriptions, toward systemic or interactive patterns (Tomm, 1981).

These principles and assumptions ground my approach to narrative therapy with contemporary African clients, as in the case of Nondu (a pseudonym) highlighted here.

Philosophy and Framework

My philosophy of clinical practice, particularly the one applicable to a collaborative/narrative approach to child and family therapy in Africa is to "make the familiar strange, and the strange familiar." In the therapy conversations soon to be introduced, we will examine how this idea of *making the familiar strange and the strange familiar* takes place in my clinical practice. In achieving this objective, I will start by giving a clinical case example of an African child with a psychosomatic presentation that calls for the application of the collaborative/interventive interviewing approach to "de-solve" the problem presented.

Here, I use the term "de-solve" rather than solve, because in the collaborative or narrative paradigm, psychological cases are not "solved" but "de-solved" in dialogue.

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Illustrative Case Example

Nondu, a 14-year-old high school girl in Pretoria, was referred to a psychologist for therapy by her aunt (with whom she lives in Johannesburg) for treatment of a cluster of psychosomatic concerns. According to the aunt, Nondu's symptoms included tension headaches, chest pain, difficulty in breathing, marked sleep disturbances, incessant migraine, and periodic asthmatic attacks. Nondu also complained of difficulty concentrating on her school work and absenteeism. Before referring her to the nearest Child and Family Center, Nondu's aunt had supported the initial family assumption that Nondu's complaints are biomedical in origin, and she had her assessed by the school physician. After many months of biomedical attention, Nondu's situation failed to improve. Her situation worsened, causing the doctor to recommend a computed tomography (CT) scan. The result showed no organic foundation for Nondu's problems. Abandoned by the physician as a case with no biomedical foundation, Nondu's parents and aunt were puzzled: they did not know what else to do. Out of desperation and as a last resort, Nondu's aunt referred the case to a nearby Child and Family Center in Johannesburg, to find out if the psychologist there could give an alternative opinion of what was wrong and where to go next.

In accepting the appointment to see Nondu personally and hear her story directly, the intake psychologist was influenced by the fundamental idea of the collaborative/narrative paradigm that listening to a client's problem story is the best way to unearth its genealogy. The aim was to use the results of initial consultation with the client system to widen appreciation of the factors and individuals embedded in or associated with its onset. In that way, it was hoped that the psychologist could be helped by the client to "name" the problem and frame its contexts. And, with that, to make the familiar strange by developing a *thick* description of the problem's definition and ramifications.

This mode of attempting to "read" the problem in such a way that its unveiling begins with privileging the client's view of forces involved in its onset is the essential legacy of the collaborative/narrative therapy approach.

Guided by these thoughts, the intake psychologist and the aunt agreed on the date and time for the appointment for the psychologist to listen directly to Nondu's story. The aunt took the responsibility to persuade Nondu to honor the appointment. The specific steps which the psychologist followed

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in attending to this case using the collaborative/narrative therapy approach included traversing the following stages:

Stage 1: Pre-session decisions
Stage 2: Initial meeting with the client
Stage 3: Initial meeting with the parents' subsystem
Stage 4: Second meeting with the client
Stage 5: Second meeting with the parents' subsystem
Stage 6: Third meeting with the client
Stage 7: Third meeting with the parents and prescription of ritual
Stage 8: Feedback meeting/termination
Stage 9: Post-termination feedback

Discussion and Analysis of the Case (Therapy Conversations)

Stage 1: Pre-session Decisions

Two important decisions were taken by the intake psychologist at the pre-session stage. These include the idea that the conjoint family methodology will not be followed in the psychologist's meeting with Nondu. To do so would be to assume outright that Nondu's problem must originate from the family system, which is preemptive. This would be tantamount to sinning against the principles of *neutrality* and the *not-knowing* stance, the key foundations of postmodernist/collaborative practice. It will also disregard the African cultural practice that does not support having children talk freely against their parents in public, in the presence of these parents.

The second decision was to use the psychologist's office as the venue for the meeting.

Stage 2: Initial Meeting with the client

The primary purpose of the initial meeting with the client was to gain two kinds of truth about the problem. The first was *forensic truth*, that is, to get from the client directly her own way of "naming" (Payne, 2000; White, 1995a, 1995b) the symptoms of her problem earlier reported by the aunt. The idea

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here was to give Nondu the voice to "re-present" her case, starting with her view of the *number* and *load* of her symptom distress.

This entails the psychologist repositioning himself from the start in a decentering frame, playing down his specialist position, and bracketing his privileged preview of the problem as reported by the referral person. Through this, the psychologist tried to avoid putting Nondu in a passive voice in her own case.

In this way, the psychologist hoped to assure Nondu that he does not work with gossip or the indirect approach but would be interested to hear her own naming/description of the problem.

The second truth sought at this first meeting with the client is *narrative truth* or Nondu's assumptions or theory concerning the basis for her pain and the factors and people (internalized others) that she might be blaming for its onset, maintenance, and escalation. Through this second kind of truth, the psychologist hypothesized (Cecchin, 1987) that he would be able access the personal meanings (internalized perspectives) that Nondu has framed on the problem. The psychologist's practice philosophy, similar to mine, was grounded on the postmodernist epistemology that, unless this is done and the client's personal (internalized) meanings on the problem are unearthed, the psychologist would not be able to widen his appreciation of the people and factors to include in the problem system definition (Street, 1994). This way of approaching the problem has been emphasized by Tomm (2000), as earlier highlighted.

The psychologist recognized, as I do, that the right practice in searching for this second aspect of truth is to apply adequately the technique of *synoptic listening* during this initial stage of meeting with the client. By the technique of *synoptic listening* is meant the capacity to simultaneously take a multiple listening stance in the face of a case. Thus, as the client tells her personal version of the story, the psychologist is not simply "listening," passively taking in what she says about the genealogy of her distress (Foucault, 1980, 2003).

Rather he engages actively in five dimensions of disciplined/radical listening, encompassing

1. *Empathic listening*, to help him *attune* to and show solidarity with the client's feelings of pain and resentment accompanying her narration. In handling Nondu's case, the psychologist, as I do, engaged in this kind of listening to confer to her the conviction that "he is with her" and that he fully shares her pain and frustration in the manner she takes it herself.

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2. *Credulous listening*, borrowed from George Kelly's (1955) framework, which essentially involves two things: first, to "listen first and question later," to allow Nondu the space to tell her story unimpeded and uninterrupted. And second, to begin with positive belief in the credibility of what the psychologist is being told until proved otherwise. This means giving the client the unhurried time to tell her story and encouraging her to go on, with clear signals of assurance of continuing interest and the *presence* of the psychologist.
3. Deconstructive listening, another level of listening that the psychologist, as I do, engaged in at this stage, is targeted at detecting gaps and ambiguities in the story being told. The goal is to make the client aware, where this is correct, of the "strange" in her story, a story which all along she might be assuming as completely satisfactory, accurate, or impeccable. Where there are such unexpected gaps and ambiguities, and this goal is achieved, the original story starts to lose its grip of restrictive meaning on the client and, with this, the distress that is inflamed by it. Thus when, as a psychologist, the therapist had to listen "deconstructively" to Nondu's story, his listening would be guided by the belief that her version of the source of the problem may have other possible data that might not have been covered. In that case, he would need to search for missing links or some ambiguities that cast doubt on the self-sufficiency of her story, which need to be straightened out.
4. The fourth type of listening implicated at this stage of the therapy process is the one originating from the field of critical philosophy: it refers to the act of *de-structuring, unpacking,* or *negative listening*. Its target is to detect this time, not gaps or ambiguities, but hidden contradictions, inaccuracies, or prejudiced conclusions or overgeneralizations, and unwarranted inferential thinking that inhabit the client's story. Following this approach to listening, the psychologist, as I do, would listen to Nondu with some thoughtfulness about the need to cross-check the accuracy of the (internalized) controversial issues in the narrative with those negatively mentioned in her story. But this cross-checking process, where it is found necessary, cannot be entered into in a secretive manner. For such a move to be ethically acceptable, the client must be put in the picture and her permission sought before embarking on it.
5. The fifth listening dimension that the psychologist needs to engage in managing this case from the perspective of collaborative/narrative therapy is referred to as *hermeneutic listening*, following Tomm (1993).

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> It is concerned with identifying the *personal meanings or interpretations* which the client is giving to the events that she believed led to or predisposed her to the onset of her distress. This angle on *personal meaning* is one that often eludes those who are not able to see the client's distress beyond the prism of the medical model.

Consistent with the collaborative therapy approach, the psychologist, as I do, must carry in his head these five listening dimensions as he begins his initial dialogue with Nondu. In all cases, the aim at this stage is to rely on the client's guidance for entrenching the therapist in the nature of the problem and its various dimensions. In this regard the circular questions (e.g., Have you ever thought about how these problems arose?) that the psychologist could raise are intended to get him oriented (Tomm, 1988) to the case as Nondu sees it.

In that way Nondu, at this initial stage in the therapy process, was made to play the role of teacher/expert in her story while the psychologist took the role of a learner/listener (Anderson & Gehart, 2007; Tomm, 1988). In this way, the fundamental techniques at this stage included those of *active/synoptic listening, neutrality,* the technique of *following*, and a *not-knowing* stance (intended to make the story that is familiar to Nondu look strange to the psychologist, thus warranting the psychologist asking Nondu to teach him her way of understanding how it arose).

In this particular case, Nondu's statement of the content (forensic) description of her symptom complex corresponded with the aunt's earlier report of her symptom presentation. New information emerged, however, when Nondu was asked to offer her own theory of or assumptions about the precipitating factors responsible for her distress onset (exploring this time not the forensic, but the narrative truth).

Her story *attributed* the origin of her problem to a critical incident in her childhood. She reported that at the age of 9, when she was still in primary school, her father decided to send her to live with her paternal grandmother in a remote village in South Africa. She argued that she hated that experience because of the separation problem she suffered in being forced to live away from her familiar place of birth, one of the most beautiful cities in the country.

In the grandmother's home, where she lived for 3 years, starting from grades primary three to primary six, Nondu missed the modern amenities such as electricity, piped water, tarred roads, good teachers, and television in the house and old friends that she had been used to in her city home. She

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blamed the onset of her current asthmatic attacks to the negative impact of the severe cold weather of the grandmother's place.

In further elaborating on the people involved in the entire problem complex, she placed the greatest blame on her father, whom she accused of not standing by the contract to send her junior brother to the same place when his turn came. She interpreted (hermeneutic/meaning dimension) this omission as strange and a sign of partiality on the part of her parents' executive decisions. Nondu felt mistreated or cheated by the inconsistency.

She further presented instances in which her parents (her father in particular) did not take her interests and feelings seriously. She indicated that, for example, her father had promised that if she achieved top of her class in the high school entrance examination in the whole of the province he would buy her a keyboard as a reward.

Even though she fulfilled her own part of the deal, her father never gave her the keyboard. She also complained that her parents showed partiality in their visitation schedule to her and her junior brother during their schools' visiting days, which take place on the same day. They always went to the brother first and spent more time in his school. In her view, when her parents visited her, they always seemed in a hurry to go back quickly, "to beat the traffic."

Nondu argued that these issues of *difference* and *partiality* in the distribution of privileges among siblings by her parents kept her puzzled (the strange dimension) and made her ruminate (in a manner of self-questioning) about whether she was disregarded because she is a female and not a male child in the family. Her time spent trying to understand, she said, caused her sleepless nights and led, she believed, to her present disturbances.

The central aim of this initial meeting with the client was to explore with Nondu her inner world and speculations, attributions, and beliefs about what was happening to her and who (internalized other) she believed must be blamed. This involved the psychologist suspending his personal perspective or professional theories on the etiology of the problem to enter experientially the world of the client in order to see things from her perspective (in line with the collaborative and postmodern paradigm of Anderson [1997] and Tomm [1988]).

It also meant the psychologist had to be able to take note of the *thick* dimension of the problem as named and elaborated by Nondu. This experience of "externalizing internalized discourses" by the client, in this initial interview with her, is considered very enriching, crucial, and the main contribution of the postmodernist/narrative practice. The precious multiple data

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generated from the client at this first meeting was made possible through the go-between role of the therapist in Africa, which the psychologist took in Nondu's case. It is through this agency of the go-between incumbent that her family (Nondu's parents) reached their child's perspective about what was happening to her, including her views of how it arose and who she blames.

That is the kind of truth that African parents are not always able to get at directly from their children because of the cultural *ethos of deference* (Nwoye, 2006) that governs the behavior of children in relation to their parents. Such ethos discourages children from raising, to their parents' faces, any direct indictments they may have against these parents. Where such truths must be known, they are triangulated to the parents in a mediated fashion, as in Nondu's case.

When working with such narrative truths, it must be remembered that they must be respected and cannot be ignored or disagreed with too quickly since they arise from the facts of the client's experience as she *sees* things. But some aspects of such truths tend to go beyond the concrete experience of the client to *speculations on meaning* concerning the intentions and motivations of the person(s) being blamed for what is happening to her.

Knowing this to be the case, the psychologist handling the case needs to remember that the only way to ascertain the accuracy of Nondu's story and theory about the genealogy of her problem and her parents' role in it is to invite these parents to respond to Nondu's "charges." Nondu had no problem permitting the psychologist to go ahead with this cross-checking process. This introduces the benefit and power of *double description* into the story to improve the psychologist's grip on the whole story. Thus encouraged, the parents were invited to come for a meeting with the psychologist on an agreed date. The referral person, Nondu's aunt, invited them to the meeting.

Stage 3: Initial Meeting with the Parents

The recommended tactics in interviewing parents at this kind of meeting is to start with welcoming them together and thereafter breaking into separate sessions with each (Nwoye, 2000). In this structure, the father is interviewed first and the mother afterward, in line with African cultural (patrilineal) practice. In the African perspective, Nondu would not be invited to come along with her parents for this meeting.

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An important level of truth sought at this first meeting with the parents is what, for want of a better term, could be referred to as the *triangulative*, *accusative*, or *deconstructive truth.* This kind of truth emerges in giving the accused the opportunity to dispute another's accusations. In this context, the father is given to understand his daughter's assumptions on the origin of her illness and, in her view, his own role in both its onset and escalation.

Listening to his response to Nondu's version of the story opened the way to a forward thrust in the therapy process. His response led to the making of the parents' "strange" actions (strange to Nondu) look familiar (by being fully clarified and recontextualized). This is because the overall response from the father showed that he was acting in Nondu's best interests, in line with McNamee, Lannamann, and Tomm's (1983) notion of *positive connotation of behavior* in regard to the action he took in sending her to live with his mother for 3 years.

He had considered that by being home with the grandmother at that formative age she would be exposed to her native cultural upbringing and gain vital skills for operating in the strategic position of the first daughter when she grew up, matured, and married. He clarified the basis of why he dropped the idea of letting her junior brother have the same local experience. His explanation was that this came about because Nondu's experience had proved to him and Nondu's mother that the weather was unfavorable to the children's health. He said that once he noted this, he did not want to expose the other children to the same risk.

He accepted the blame for his omission to let Nondu know this aspect of his change in the initial plan. And he assured the psychologist that with this mistake now in stock, he would never attempt such a "mess" again. He pledged to be more consultative with Nondu in the future in matters concerning her interests. He blamed the problem of procrastination as the basis for his failure to honor the promise to buy her a keyboard. Nondu's complaint against her parents' partiality in their school visitation pattern was responded to by the mother, when it was her turn to be interviewed.

The mother explained that they visited the junior brother first because his school opened earlier to visitors and that they considered that, as a younger sibling, he needed more attention than Nondu. However, Nondu had earlier complained that during her first year in school she was rarely visited

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or in good time until the junior brother also enrolled in high school in the Johannesburg, "and then everybody started to care."

To this last charge they responded with a promise to make amends in the future. These revelations and clarifications portray an attempt by the parents to give, as much as possible, a certain *positive connotation* to their actions. The result was access to new information about the father that Nondu did not know.

Consequently, there was a certain repatterning of clinical data beyond the original meanings of weirdness and absolute injustice attributed to them by Nondu. This emergence into the therapy process of the *triangulative truth* helps to transform some of the earlier parents' strange behaviors to patterns less strange and incomprehensible.

Stage 4: Second Meeting with the Client

Just as her parents were eager to find out Nondu's views on the origin of her pain and the factors and individuals that might be connected to it, so, too, Nondu was eager to find out her parents' responses to her accusations. The primary purpose of this second meeting with Nondu involved a certain kind of "coming-back-with-the-results" process, aimed at sharing with Nondu her parents' views on the points she raised against them.

Sharing her father's explanation and justification for sending her to live with the grandmother and why her junior siblings were spared that ordeal gave Nondu for the first time in years a *positive connotation* for those actions. That clarification, magically and literally transformed her negative (strange) (internalized) image of her father and greatly, although not totally, restored her confidence in him and, with it, the dawn of her emotional healing.

Thus the kind of truth that emerged at this second meeting with the client was the fourth kind of truth that collaborative psychologists, like myself, search for in narrative work with families, namely, the *restorative* truth. This is the kind of truth that heals in the context of therapy as collaborative dialogue through clarification of ambiguities and filling in of gaps in information in strained relationships. Such kind of truth emerges where the therapy process is able to enrich a client's original story with some *added data* that help to convince her that the story she came with needed some editing. Consequently, the therapeutic value of restorative truth in

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collaborative/narrative practice is that it comes as a result of therapeutic explanations.

Parents' explanations and disputations of Nondu's accusations made her disconnect from the threatened imagination of being dispossessed by her brother and the idea of losing her worth in her parents' eyes.

This radical development in her spirit points unmistakably to the healing power of explanation, honest reconceptualization of life narratives, and guided discovery of new meanings and information in one's personal narrative. Here what heals is the power of *positive illusion*, for whether the parents are honest or not in their positive apologetic posture, what matters is Nondu's belief that they are until proved otherwise again.

Stage 5: Second Meeting with the Parents

As Nondu had been eager to hear her parents' response to her accusations so, too, were the parents eager to hear her reactions to their disputation of these accusations. Thus one major purpose of the second meeting with the parents was to share with them how Nondu received their explanations and their response to her accusations.

As it turned out, getting to know that Nondu was positive about their explanations, although she disputed some, was for them a big relief and a very encouraging outcome. This discovery and new information obtained drew out their empathy and collaborative attitude in the whole therapy process. It made them eager to find out from the psychologist what more they could do to reassure Nondu of their love.

They accepted the psychologist's suggestion that they might need to do something to appease her for her pain in their decision to send her to live with the grandmother. In this, their belief, similar to that of the psychologist, was that such further positive response and *concrete action* might be able to promote further consolidation of her relief.

Consequently, the homework or the "find-out-for-us-assignment" they gave the psychologist was to ascertain for them from Nondu what she would prefer as an appeasement gift from them. Here one should remember that Nondu by this time was not residing with the parents but with her aunt, the referral person in Johannesburg.

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Stage 6: Third Meeting with the Client

The aim of this third meeting was to find out from Nondu what she would prefer as an *appeasement gift* from her parents. This gift would serve for them and for her as a symbol or practical demonstration of the full return of their love and care in her life and as a means of compensating her for the stress they had inadvertently put her through by some of their actions. Not only was Nondu happy with this positive development in her parents' attitude toward her, but also she was able to make a choice of the kind of gift she would prefer. The choice she made was meant as a test of the honesty in their offering.

She said she only wanted one thing and that was the keyboard her father had promised to buy her some years ago but never did. In making such a request she appeared to believe—and indeed confirmed—that only with that action could her past pains and grudges be annulled.

To the question about how she would want to receive the gift from her parents, she responded that they should give it to the psychologist, who would then give it to her. When asked why she preferred such indirect process of receiving the gift, she gave as her reason her desire to force them to commit themselves to the promise. The psychologist felt good at her response and maturity of vision, and, with that, he was ready for the "taking-it-back-process" in his next meeting with the parents.

Stage 7: Third Meeting with the Parents and Prescription of Ritual

Three important objectives were addressed in this meeting: first, to share with the parents what Nondu prefers as her appeasement gift and the idea that Nondu will not receive the gift directly from them but through the therapist. Second, to discuss with them the need for some behavioral prescription-based ritual. It was recommended to the parents that they alternate their school visitation plan to ensure that they do not always visit Nondu's brother first. In that way Nondu would be able to see a sign of equity rather than a *negative difference* in their pattern of distributing privileges to both children. The third objective was to recommend to the parents the need for a family meal ritual.

This involves the idea of their going out to any place of their choice agreed upon by the children, especially Nondu, where they can stay together as a

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family unit to eat a special family meal. The therapeutic value of such a ritual meal was to reinsert, reintegrate, or *re-member* Nondu into the emotional family fold and restore her breached sense of belonging to the family. A ritual family meal where all the members will be seated together at the same table will serve as a way of returning Nondu's love expression to the parents.

These three recommendations were accepted by the parents. They agreed on the day that the keyboard would be brought to the psychologist. And the psychologist planned to see Nondu that same day, specifically, 2 hours after meeting with the parents. On the appointed day, the keyboard was brought and Nondu came for it as planned.

Stage 8: Feedback Meeting with the Client and Termination

The aim here, as in my practice, was to find out how Nondu felt about the appeasement gift received and whether the prescribed family ritual meal actually took place and had effect. Nondu's response to both questions was good. With such a positive outcome, the psychologist felt convincingly persuaded that the ripe time has come to encourage termination.

Stage 9: Post-Termination Feedback

The specific aim of this last stage was to gauge how Nondu was doing weeks and months after termination. The overall aim was to find out whether recovery was steady or whether there was a relapse. This tactic, in my own practice, does not always involve a face-to-face meeting with the client. In Nondu's case, as in many other cases, the psychologist began with a face-to-face model, then moved on to telephone conversation and, thereafter, to an exchange of letters.

In Nondu's case, the results of this feedback process remained good and encouraging. She continued steadily to improve and was finally able to achieve full symptom remission. She has been able to blossom physically and complete her high school finals in good, steady health.

The most interesting aspect was that she not only passed her high school certificate (her matriculation exam) with flying colors, but also was in the list of the best 100 students in the whole country for the year. This feat was the greatest testimony of the kind of total recovery that clients can achieve

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through the avenue of collaborative/narrative psychotherapy in a case where biological medicine had been tried and failed.

Conclusion

A number of implications and conclusions can be drawn from the present report.

- Everybody, including children, has a story to tell, and will benefit a lot when they are allowed to tell it.
- People record their life experiences, some pleasant and some painful, in story form.
- People's stories are not neutral but partial, told from the angle of vision of the owner of the story.
- Clients with distress who present for counseling or psychotherapy have their own personal theories or assumptions, in the form of stories, of the genealogy of their distress.
- Given a favorable ambience, sufficient respect, and attention, they can connect us to the window that contains a map of the basis for their pain.
- However, although precious, such stories, because they can be partial, must be added to, to change things for the better in the life of the client.
- African children are great observers and take full notice of their parents' malpractices, partialities, inconsistencies, and executive miscalculations in how they handle their children.
- African children resort to analogic communication, particularly through illness presentations, to call attention to themselves and to comment against and regulate their parents' maltreatment.
- Child and family therapy in Africa is not compatible with the conjoint family therapy model emphasized by Salvador Minuchin (1974) and others.
- The Western model involves the presence in the therapy room of both parents and their children in "confrontation" with one another. The ethos of deference which African children owe to their parents makes such a model an impractical option in present-day Africa.
- In collaborative therapy, particularly the type applicable for use in Africa, there is the dominant presence of the adapted type of the circular interviewing technique as emphasized by Tomm (1987a, 1988).

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- Such an interventive/circular interviewing procedure makes the therapy process move in a recursive fashion.

  The role of the therapist in the collaborative/narrative approach to child and family therapy in Africa is not just to listen: he also plays the role of *double agent* (Nwoye, 2000) plus *collaborator* in the production of a story that makes a difference.
- Child and family therapy in Africa, from the point of view of postmodernist/collaborative practice, can be characterized as a dialogue through which people's life stories emerge and are transformed.
- Therapists in this model *repair* stories, often by drawing attention to events not accounted for by client's narratives. This process liberates and transforms clients' ways of re-experiencing themselves.
- Human knowledge is subjective; that is, it is a matter of interpretation. This interpretation (as Nondu's case shows) can be wrong, particularly if concerned with interpreting (IOI) the motives of others
- A wrong interpretation of events in our lives can colonize and turn against us and give us stress (as in Nondu's case). Fortunately, our health can be restored if (as in Nondu's case) this interpretation can be repaired by making the familiar strange and the strange familiar.

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14

Building on the Indigenous

Theory and Practice of Marriage Therapy in Contemporary Africa

This chapter examines and illustrates the theory and practice of marriage therapy in use in my marital therapy process across two regions of Africa. The approach is grounded on an inclusive theoretical perspective inspired by the notion of the conditions of possibility of a healthy marriage as understood in Africa and the place of the role theory approach in intervening between opposing parties. The theme developed is that a viable contemporary African marriage therapy practice derives from its indigenous model. The major discussion highlights the key guiding orientations and processes in implementing such a practice. As a background to such an account, a summary of the theoretical underpinnings of the whole practice is presented. This is preceded by a summary of four key approaches to marriage therapy in the West. This comparative international perspective is necessary to put in clearer context the underlying differences between marital therapies as practiced in the West and the indigenous model influencing my own practice.

The major four Western approaches to marital therapy (Paolino & McCrady, 1978) that I wish to highlight are the psychoanalytic/Bowenian (Bowen, 1966, 1976) model, the behavioral approach (Frank & Frank, 1993; Gottman, 1979, 1982; Jacobson, Waldron, & Moore, 1980; Liberman, 1970; Margolin, 1981; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), the communications framework (Levant 1981; Satir, 1967, 1972), and the cognitive approaches (Epstein, 1982; Epstein & Eidelson, 1981; Mahoney 1974). A summary account of each of these approaches is highlighted here, beginning with the notion of marriage therapy within the classical psychoanalytic framework.

The classical psychoanalytic framework or Bowenian theory emphasizes the role of intrapsychic factors and the problem of the ego in marital dysfunction. Such theories assume that all human couples are fulfilling only a small part of their potential in their marriages due to limitations arising

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from painful or frightening experiences they have suffered in the course of growing up. To avoid further hurts, these evocative theories "postulate that people resort to more or less unconscious self-protective or avoidance maneuvers" (Frank & Frank, 1993, p. 190). Some of these tactics, however, pose maladaptive solutions that impede personality growth and harmonious relationships with others, creating distress and disability in one's marriage and family life. Influenced by such a perspective, psychoanalytic marriage practitioners see as their central aim the provision of a relationship or setting that facilitates clients' total personality development. They believe that in this way clients' focal symptom relief or problem resolution will occur as they overcome, under the safety of the therapeutic relationship, general difficulties such as internal conflicts, faulty assumptive systems, or emotional blocks disturbing the marriage (Frank & Frank, 1993).

Behavioral theorists such as Liberman (1970), Gottman (1979, 1982), Thibaut and Kelley (1959), Margolin (1981), and Jacobson, Waldron, and Moore (1980) assume that spousal conflicts arise as products of maladaptive learnings or behavioral habits emerging from one's reinforcement history. Consequently, the aim is to assist clients to locate these behavioral deficits and how they can be changed to return sanity to their marriage.

Communication theorists like Satir (1972) and her disciples emphasize the role of faulty communications in marital dysfunction. Hence, they propose that marital symptoms issue from the pathology of communication systems in which the spouses are embroiled. Thus, they focus on the aim of analyzing spouses' communication patterns and improving their communication skills in the therapy process.

Western cognitive therapists (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982; Epstein, 1982; Epstein & Eidelson, 1981; Mahoney 1974; and those who came after them) focus on drawing conflicting spouses' attention to the flaws in their assumptive world or their ways of seeing themselves, others, and life events generally. In this way, they work toward helping conflicting spouses review these mistaken assumptions/beliefs and replace them with more workable attitudes and assumptions based on a more accurate cognitive appraisal of self, the other spouse, and life events. In particular, they help them to avoid the bias of being experts only at gazing outward rather than inward when things go wrong in their marriage. This process, they postulate, will enable opposing couples to arrive at behaviors that are more successful and less frustrating in the course of relating with one another.

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The Role Theory Framework

My own framework, the *role theory hypothesis*, is not antagonistic to the best ideas inherent in these foreign-based approaches. But my theory looks at the problems of couples in conflict from the point of view of the indigenous African model, which is grounded on the role theory framework and on the notion of the conditions of possibility for a sane and happy marriage.

The role theory framework is the view that obligations/expectations and privileges go with occupancy of social positions like marriage (Nwoye, 2000). And that harmony and peace result when people attached to such positions perform their expected roles creditably and are honored with some privileges for so doing, while disharmony, distress, and wrangling result when the opposite is the case. In line with this understanding, marriage therapy in indigenous Africa and in my own practice views the problem of marital disharmony or discord as arising from the inability of one or both partners in a distressed marriage to live up to the standard marital role expectations of their position (Nwoye, 2000). And this extends to confusion around the areas of reciprocal rights, duties, services, and basic requirements for promotion of a healthy marriage.

To help such dissenting couples resolve their differences, marriage therapy in both the indigenous model and in my practice takes the character of a mediatorial session. Thus, the role of the practitioner is that of a bridge builder between the dissenting spouses, helping to inject fresh perceptions into the way they conceptualize their conflict.

This means that such an indigenously grounded therapy process involves, in practice, the presence of a mediating professional—the marital therapist—as the jury, with the couples in conflict to the litigation. This way of conceptualizing the situation is intended to demonstrate that, following the indigenous model of marriage practice, I try to preserve in my practice certain qualities not essentially of the Western family systemic interactional model (e.g., of seeing the spouses together from start to finish) but rather that of the "courtroom" trial model (Nwoye, 2000).

Following the courtroom trial model implies that the practitioner, after listening separately to the claims and counterclaims of the spouses in conflict, is expected to make some pronouncements as an arbiter or administrator of justice. In this way, he enables the two spouses to reexamine the parts they have played in promoting the conflict and who is to be deemed as more at fault in generating and "flaming" the conflict. In some cases, the

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therapist may find relative faults in the actions and orientations of both spouses. Opportunity is also created in this procedure for offering an objective assessment of what is "killing" the marriage and who is abusing who or not playing his or her normative roles creditably. This process also goes with the ritual of pronouncing the damages to be awarded to the injured party in cases where the conflicts involved some kind of betrayal or physical abuse, as well as the punishment and other costs to be imposed on the offending spouse when this is clearly determined as a remedy for returning peace and harmony to the afflicted marriage.

The therapist, as the jury, under this model comes to these decisions or pronouncements guided by the standard marriage role expectations of the culture to which the spouses belong and into which they have been inducted. Hence the best framework for use in conceptualizing what goes on in this indigenous model of marriage therapy process is the model of a trial, with the therapist as the jury playing the role of *mediator*, *double agent*, and *mentor* (Nwoye, 2000) to the couples in conflict.

In his role as *double agent* to the couple in conflict the therapist is obliged to take the role of an *ally* to both parties in conflict, thereby *holding an even balance* between the two. He is able to do this having been trained in the professional position to act as an *impassioned mentor* and *judge*, fully disposed to understand thoroughly and without bias the stories of both sides to the conflict. That is to say, before making up his mind about where the major fault lies in the distressed marriage and which of the parties in conflict carry the greater share of the blame for the reported disturbance in the marriage, equal opportunities must be created to give each spouse enough time and space to answer to the charges leveled against him or her by the other spouse.

To improve on his capacity to play this impartial role of *go-between* or "bridge-builder" (Nwoye, 2000) for opposing couples, he allows himself to be guided by the principle of *multipartiality* and by the *ethics of fidelity* (with emphasis on the need for professional neutrality and consistency). In this way, couples in conflict in modern communities in Africa hear the voice of the marital therapist as an impartial verdict or constructive criticism of their improper role behaviors, actions, and reactions in the said marriage—voices and arbitrators that they see as originating not from a corrupt, but a trained specialist and a *double-eyed judge* (Nwoye, 2000) to their case.

Of course, an alternative model to use in conceptualizing what happens in this kind of African marriage therapy process is the model of the *board room* (Nelson, Nelson, Sherman, & Streen, 1968; Nwoye, 2000). In this case, the

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key image is that of a meeting where the mediating therapist as a board listens attentively and seeks to harmonize conflicting claims of the parties in discord. But, in this model, too, there is a hearing and interests in conflict. There is also the presence of a jury in the role of the therapist as the board. And it is the prevailing standard marital role expectations of the local community of the opposing spouses that the mediating therapist, representing the opinion of the board, will rely on as his criteria and basis for his harmonization effort. So, too, with the pronouncements he makes about which of the conflicting parties is or is not doing as well as expected in the marriage and so ought to do something to appease the other spouse in the afflicted relationship.

Thus, in this model, the possibility of reciprocal critical perceptions is opened between the two antagonists: the husband and the wife. Such an encounter, refereed/mediated by a jury (the therapist) enables the spouses to be keen at detailing not only how others have injured or maltreated them, but it also enables them to engage, perhaps for the first time in the history of their disagreement, some kind of self-criticism, bringing into focus what they have done wrong and how they can learn from other people's descriptions of their actions. In that way, each spouse, under this model, is repositioned to reconceptualize his or her perspective of the conflict through sharing the other's account of his or her unjustified and unbecoming way of acting in the marriage. Through this, they are made not to speak about themselves as one of the clean, addressing the other as the dirty (although in some rare cases this particular angle of one spouse as a total embarrassment to the other may be supported by facts).

The majority of couples discover that a loss of innocence in this way enables each to face the other on a more nearly equal ground, as members of flawed humanity. And through adequate listening to both parties, they both will often appear to lose their hitherto self-arrogated positions of a *sense of total purity* from which to condemn the other without at the same time having to condone what they found morally reprehensible in themselves and in the other. And it is under this kind of climate of shared blaming that reconciliation between the two becomes a possible task.

An Africentric Theory of a Healthy Marriage

Effective practice of marriage therapy under this model means that the therapist is very clear in his mind of the distinguishing qualities that promote

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the development of a good marriage and the negative orientations to avoid in seeding and perpetuating a healthy marriage as understood in Africa. Because of their strategic importance in the practice of the indigenous model of marriage therapy influencing my own practice, I present here a summary of the key issues to be engaged in and the negative orientations to be shunned, as understood in traditional perspective, in the making of a healthy marriage. This is important because it is my conviction that most marriage disturbances arise in conditions where the virtues or capacities of healthy marriages are disregarded or not given the opportunity to see the light of day. The qualities of viable marriages, as understood in my own framework, are discussed next.

Marital Role Differentiation, Elaboration, and Assimilation

Like prudent public functionaries, members of a healthy marital dyad, as understood in traditional Africa, are expected to engage in what social psychologists refer to as *marital role differentiation, elaboration, and assimilation* (Stahmann, 2000, p. 104). This means that they should be able to educate themselves on and take elaborate stock of the various dimensions of their roles. Through such inner clarification of their roles, viable couples are able to develop, right from the start of their new life together, an enlarged internalized model or conception of an elaborated blueprint of their respective marital role expectations. By such a process, a wife comes to acquire and internalize her role terms or the practical idea of what it means to be a wife to her husband, namely, that it goes beyond the narrow task of being a bedmate or a social companion to him to include the other tasks of serving as mother, sister, comforter, hostess, nurse, confidante, social butterfly, symbol of economic and professional status, business associate, co-parent, and counselor to the husband. All these she identifies and accepts as being entailed in the broad idea of being a wife to her husband. This broad perceptual sweep in the image of her role influences the attitudes she takes to her career as a wife to her husband.

In the same way, the husband comes out of this process with an equally elaborate idea of what it means to be a husband to his wife, that it means more than just being a provider or a bedmate to her, and also includes the tasks of operating as a father, brother, protector, companion, adviser, teacher, co-parent, and guide to the wife (Martinson, 1960, p. 289).

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This inner process of marital role differentiation and elaboration, under my indigenous model, helps spouses gain or achieve an adequate internal working model of what their status of being married to one another really calls for. It also helps them to conduct, each in his or her own way (interiorly), regular process evaluations of how they are doing, as the years go by, as husband and wife. That is, they can determine whether they are performing according to or below these expectations (in line with the current management language of performance contracts) and where amendments need to be made to restore order in their relationship.

Following this line of thought, my theoretical perspective is that where a marital pair fails to adequately differentiate and elaborate on their roles, they cannot operate optimally in their marriage. And when this is the case, frustration sets in, followed by regrets. Hence the process of marital role differentiation is understood as fundamental in the whole process of building and sustaining a healthy marriage, and it is a key area to focus on when determining whether or not the problem of the marriage emanates from the inability of the spouses to flesh out their roles and practice them.

The Mechanism of Identification

Successful married life is achieved, according to the indigenous model (Fortes, 1945), when members of the marital dyad are able to operate as a unit, in the manner of an attachment partnership (Akister & Reibstein, 2004), through sharing one another's likes and dislikes, values, preferences, views of reality (e.g., how to manage wealth and their in-law demands and obligations), sorrows, and joys. Through such a harmonization of their values, the members of the dyad, as understood in the indigenous model, can then be referred to as a true psychological unit of interacting personalities, conferring on their marital relationship the quality of social impregnability. In the social psychological literature, the process by which this unity of the two parties is practically realized is referred to as the *mechanism of identification*. This is a process through which one marriage partner comes to insert his or her personality into the personality of the other mate by rejecting or avoiding what the other mate rejects or avoids and liking or adopting what the other values and respects.

It is argued that where this factor of interpenetration or harmonization of values among couples is truly achieved, the practical dividend is the

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emergence of the phenomenon of spousal solidarity (Stahmann & Salts, 1993). However, this identification or attachment process never occurs in a vacuum but requires as a precondition a *constant nearness or diligent contact and interaction between the two parties*. It is through such regular exchange of views and feelings that each comes to learn, at first hand, the viewpoints and feelings of the other on any crucial issue that arises in their day-to-day dealings with one another. For this reason, constant spouse truancy is believed in this model to constitute a grave danger to a successful identification process and, therefore, to successful marital unity. This is because when one spouse gets into the habit of keeping long hours away from home or engaging in bad use of silence or in dedicated refusals to communicate with the other mate, the two of them will begin to lose contact with one another's feelings, views, complaints, pains, values, preferences, principles, and support. Under such a circumstance, opportunity arises for outside influences to penetrate and seed a feeling of disunity in the relationship. It is understood in the indigenous model that this identification mechanism never yields its expected dividends by mere physical presence of the couples, but rather through their regular engagement in *marital conversations* entered into at the dying or early hours of their day, within the privacy, comfort, and security of their marital bedroom (which in that case is used as the "boardroom"). It is in the forum of such marital conversations that each spouse's hitherto independent opinions and judgments, preferences and values, and peculiar views of reality are given the opportunity to be aired and listened to, and, where conflicts of viewpoints exist, a reasonable harmony is pursued.

Consequently, the psychological process of identification is a crucial mechanism in the overall career of a successful marriage. If shunned and uncultivated, the couple may well be physically and socially married but remain essentially, emotionally, and spiritually separated. And it is my experience that some of the complaints of couples in conflict often allude to this phenomenon of an unhealthy couple gradually slipping away from one another.

The Mechanism of Emulation

The indigenous marriage perspective assumes that success in marriage is achieved when each member of the dyad is able to recognize, admire, emulate, and adopt the good character traits found in the other. In that way, the *mechanism of emulation* is seen in the African perspective and in my practice

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framework as that psychological mechanism through which each spouse tries to covertly raise and answer the question: What qualities in my spouse do I admire but lack in myself and therefore ought to cultivate or adopt? Martinson (1960, p. 289) opines that where this process effectively takes place in a marriage, the emulated spouse feels not only validated and confirmed as a person, but also tends to think of the other mate as a truly fitting partner in their marriage. Such emulation process, according to the traditional model however, must be mutual or reciprocal before its proper impact in cementing the unity of a marriage can be fully felt. In the African context, of course, the tendency may be for the man to pride himself as being too big to learn something good from his wife, or to change his previous wrong ways of life at the wife's injunction. Worst still, some spouses, such as those in second marriages, tend to engage in the faulty belief that *if they are loved they should be taken as they are*. But what such spouses tend to forget is that humans, unlike stones, are not fixed but malleable. We are what we are by the choices we make (Sartre, 1957). In this way we can always review our orientation to life and make amends where necessary. The traditional model indeed assumes that in building a successful marriage, the humility and readiness of each member to listen to the correctional remarks of the other must have a root in the relationship. Through such a mechanism a marriage becomes "a relation between man and woman in which the independence is equal, the dependence is mutual, and the obligation reciprocal" (Nwoye, 1991, p. 245). Conflict in marriages arises, according to this perspective, where this equation is inverted, subverted, or contested, and this is the kind of imbalance I look out for when a hearing starts.

The Mechanism of Idealization

Under the indigenous model, the understanding is that in operating separately each member of the marital dyad may not be able to grow beyond the good habits formed before they met each other and made the decision to marry. To help each to improve on his or her previous gains in good deeds, each must try to assign to the other spouse positive traits and viable ways of looking at things that the other does not presently possess (at least, not up to the level to which they are being assigned). In practical terms the idealization mechanism takes the form of positive reinforcement by members of the dyad in trying to stimulate and encourage one another in a sort of reciprocal

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socialization pattern, to enable each to grow to greater heights in their every day life with one another. This process is often achieved by praising the efforts made by the spouse to reach the goal that the other spouse has set for him or her.

Achieving true success in marriage under this model is understood essentially as an art. It never occurs on its own, but must be worked for, must be constructed by members of the marital pair, with both spouses trying to do whatever is needed to positively influence the evolution and sustenance of their union. It also calls for the need to acknowledge the effort and sacrifice that each is making to discard his or her previous bad way of doing things and adopt a new, healthy one. It is believed that people become frustrated in marriage when their little sacrifices to keep the marriage in good shape are not appreciated or are merely taken for granted.

Most young people often wonder how to know when one is actually practicing this mechanism in the course of one's life in a marriage. Idealization is to be assumed in operation each time the husband praises the wife for preparing a good meal or for improving her dress according to earlier suggestions. The wife will be understood as making use of the same mechanism any time she praises her husband for coming back in time from work or each time she expresses satisfaction for his helping her to achieve orgasm in the course of their sexual encounters. Where any of these things takes place, the idealized spouse will be gratified and will be inspired to strive to incorporate the new effort that has been recognized and validated into his or her personality structure and try to sustain that effort in the course of their relationship. Where the opposite is the case, each feels slighted and unappreciated, giving rise to distress.

Enhancement Mechanism

The traditional model assumes that no spouse possesses all physical qualities and social skills that may be required for his or her successful performance in marriage. He or she is endowed with only some of the qualities and social skills that he or she may need. Through the social psychological process of *enhancement,* some of the missing vital qualities and/or skills can be acquired. It is through the enhancement mechanism, in other words, that each spouse tries to contribute something new to the life of the other spouse, to embellish the latter in essential characteristics (Guerney et al., 1986).

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A point never to be missed in this context is that the major aim of this process is to help each spouse make up for his or her premarriage deficiencies. It is believed, according to indigenous model, that when such process is not engaged in, the deficiency or deficiencies will act like an open wound to the observing spouse; a painful reminder that he or she has failed to select the spouse whom they had dreamed of or wished for in life. The disappointment and frustration that will be revived in the observing spouse each time the deficiency in question is reflected on, will redirect the wounded spouse away from the home to others outside the home who possess the qualities (e.g., a succulent body) that are admired by the spouse but absent in the mate. In that way opportunity is given for a centripetal (center [home]-fleeing) crisis to arise in the relationship. This involves the problem of one spouse abandoning the home. Enhancement is, therefore, a very vital dimension in any marriage where lasting unity and satisfaction is desired. If disregarded or not practiced in the remolding of each mate, then, soon, each mate will become unable to tolerate the incongruities observed in the other spouse. And once this is the case, they will tend to start to pull apart from one another, as one usually does from a person containing aversive rather than endearing qualities. The art of marrying, as understood in the traditional model and emphasized in my perspective, implies the exercise of *doing things to* one's spouse to help raise him or her up so that he or she can become a durable object of admiration in one's life and a precious element of pride in one's home. In this regard, it is believed in the indigenous model and in my practice, that one must be ready to spend money and attention on one's wife or husband for this process to be successful. And a commitment to a certain *self-maintenance culture* is also called for in the life of both partners, if they are not to allow the original luster and the initial endearing physical properties of one another to fade with time and cause unhappiness in their marriage. Some of the complaints of aggrieved spouses during the hearing stage derive from the failure of the marital pair to help to enhance one another.

The Mechanism of Inter-Habituation

According to the traditional model, the mechanism of inter-habituation is another crucial relationship-building process that members of the marital dyad must try to engage in, following their wedding and in the years after

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that. It is viewed, in my perspective, as the mechanism by which the members of a marital dyad become able to insert their lives into one another's and in that way become a true image of an attachment partnership. Briefly, the process involves the ability of two persons to take turns in handling their family routine responsibilities and form the habit of doing a number of things together in the context of their relationship. Here, among the routine family responsibilities they can share are things like setting the alarm clock, closing the garage door, and taking out the garbage. It also includes other joint family tasks as bringing down the mosquito net before settling down to sleep (where applicable), washing and ironing family clothes, and where applicable, doing the school run.

The mechanism of inter-habituation, however, goes far beyond such routine family tasks. More importantly, in the indigenous model, it involves the couple engaging in routine planning and execution of a number of things together. In the past, in the traditional community, it entails their living and farming together. Presently, however, it includes their having to live together and sharing the same bed, eating together around the table with the children as often as possible; and engaging in recreational activities together even if it is the mere exercise of listening to the news together. Another important practice of inter-habituation is the exercise of attending church and similar religious services together and in the company of the children, where applicable. Through such inter-spousal activities as these, according to the African perspective and in my view, members of the marital pair come to experience a sense of inter-penetration of themselves in the affairs of one another. By doing so, they succeed in creating an attachment condition that produces a sense of vacuum in their lives when one member is away on a journey or is admitted to a hospital on grounds of illness. They learn to feel the absence of one another and thereby arises a psychological yearning for a safe return home of the absent spouse (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1997). With the emergence of this emotional solidarity in the marital pair, my model assumes, their marital unity is preserved or cemented since neither of the two can henceforth opt to live alone after being so intermingled in the life of the other mate.

Some of the complaints of spouses during the hearing stage in the African approach to marriage therapy point to a crisis caused by the omission of this interpenetrating of selves in the affairs of one another, making the supposed marital unit lack the blending quality that is common among members of integrated marriages.

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Negative Orientations to Avoid

Beyond the relationship building actions that are postulated under the indigenous model as essential in creating a successful marriage are unhealthy orientations to avoid. The negative orientations, which become toxins to married life, include the following four, as enumerated by Erich Fromm in his book *Man for Himself,* first published in 1947. These are (1) the *receptive orientation*, (2) the *exploitative orientation*, (3) the *hoarding orientation*, and (4) the *marketing orientation* (Fromm, 1947). These have been further elaborated by Slack (1981, p. 36). A brief description of each is undertaken to underscore why they are understood as a risk or a toxin in the essential fabric of healthy marriages (Stahmann, 2000, p. 113; Stanley & Markman, 1997, p. 14). I look for their presence or absence in the complaints of conflicting couples when a hearing starts.

The Receptive (*bani bani*) Orientation

Practical life in marriages is understood in the African model as a life of service, a life of sharing, a life of give and take, a life of love. A healthy marriage partner therefore is understood, in my perspective, as one who is not only ready to gain, get, or receive in the relationship, but also one who is ready to give and at times even sacrifice for the other to grow. Unfortunately, not many Africans presently are able to submit to a life of service and sacrifice. A good number, perhaps due to the influence of Western education in which individualism is valorized, are rather known to be terribly self-centered and to weigh all their life interactions in terms of what they will gain, not give, to the relationship. These are the people whom Fromm (1947), amplified by Slack (1981), classified as having a peculiar character trait called the *receptive orientation*. The Kiswahili equivalent would be the *saidia saidia* character trait, while the Hausa language equivalent would be the *bani bani* life pattern. People given to the receptive orientation, according to Slack (1981), believe in getting from, not in giving help to, other people: friends, partners, and parents. They are therefore the "good time" spouses.

My experience in marital therapy in the West and East African regions reveals that some of the key complaints of distressed couples emanate from the pain of those married to persons given to this receptive orientation. Such complaints demonstrate that in married life receptive characters cannot

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stand on their own two feet. They live on peer guidance and insinuations, gossip, and directives. And most often their basic complaint is that of not being loved enough while they themselves never do anything to love their partners in return. This explains why such people tend to be disowned by their partners as selfish parasites. Influenced by their self-centered orientation, they tend to go for mates from whom they believe they can gain, abandoning these same mates when the latter have no longer anything attractive to offer. Such orientation is unhealthy as it leads to imbalances in the union and to one-sided gain and loss, respectively, between members of the marital dyad. In that case, the relationship becomes even worse when both parties (a rare situation) have this same kind of parasitic orientation. When this is the case, the result is usually the death of the marriage. This is because in that situation, each starts to scramble for the few good things in the marriage and when there is nothing more to gain from the relationship, both will look away from each other as an exhausted resource. They run away from one another in search of greener pastures in others.

The Exploitative Orientation

People with an exploitative orientation have one thing in common with those who go by the receptive orientation: they believe that life is a place where enjoyment is possible only by feeding off the efforts of others. They differ from the receptive-orientated characters in that, unlike the latter who apply a more positive approach to milk and gain what they want from those they are dealing with, people with the exploitative orientation also try to "milk" their spouses but in a more disguised and cunning manner. In addition, the exploitative individuals are naturally careless about the implications of their actions as long as they get what they want from people. Some can even kill to obtain their victim's possessions. And in this they experience little or no qualms, since their principal belief in life is that *a snake will not grow unless it feeds on others.*

For Slack (1981, p. 36), the greatest irony about people with this kind of orientation is that "what they produce themselves is of less value than what someone else has produced and which they can steal." And, in his view, "men of this type only love women who are adored by other men." Women who go by this orientation, on the other hand, are those who kill or plan to disable their husbands in order to be free to enjoy their husbands' wealth and

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resources with men after their own heart. Some narratives of African spouses have accused their mates of making them impotent or frigid as the case may be to discover a justification to flirt around with other lovers.

The exploitative orientation is thus a grave danger to marital unity. This is because those who go by it love only those who directly or indirectly are promising objects for exploitation. They are thus those who are usually referred to, in common parlance, as "wife snatchers" or "husband snatchers." For this reason, those who marry them have little or no peace. Much of the careful inquiries that people in traditional African societies engage in to ascertain the family background and other personal characteristics of those they propose to marry are most often entered into to make sure that they do not marry a person given to an exploitative orientation.

The Hoarding Orientation

Slack (1981) describes those given to the negative orientation of hoarding as people who measure their security "in terms of what they have saved or own" (p. 36). And according to him "men of this type want to possess women rather than love them. They are often withdrawn from other people and from the intrusion of new ideas" (p. 36). People given to the hoarding orientation are thus understood as highly conservative characters, impervious to correction and new ideas. They are also classified as first-class misers. And the worst thing about them is that they are stingy not only in regard to spending their money, but also with regard to making use of any material things they have. They also rarely express feelings and affection freely to others, including their spouses, seeing this as a kind of opening themselves up to be exploited. These characterizations show why, in the traditional model, people given to the hoarding orientation are a big risk in the practical life and love of the marriage relationship. Being miserly and stingy, both emotionally and materially, they are seen in the traditional worldview as people to be avoided in the construction and maintenance of any serious interpersonal partnership, as we have in marriage and family life. The reason for this is because marriage with such people is like living near the ocean and yet being made to wash one's hand with spittle. Where such is the case, according to my perspective, the marriage will then gradually become an intolerable scourge to the affected spouse. In that situation, the relationship takes on the image of a cage where, due to the conservative posture of the hoarder spouse, one is not allowed to

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change with the times or to pay attention to new influences that promote growth and progress, leading to frustration and distress.

The Marketing Orientation

Marketing characters are those understood in ordinary parlance as "fair weather lovers." Another dimension of their presentation was mentioned by Slack (1981). According to Slack (1981), people given to the marketing orientation see others and themselves "as objects which are to be manipulated in terms of their usefulness and for some practical end" (p. 36). They also do not possess a steady image of themselves. They take themselves as handsome or beautiful, fulfilled or frustrated if other people say so. And they try to dress, eat, walk, and laugh to impress. They are gravely influenced by the dictates of the press, taking their style of acting, dressing, and living according to the view of the media, often to keep up with the Joneses. Under these characterizations it becomes obvious that in married life people of this nature marry for wealth or beauty or the use-value of the mate rather than for the true human worth of those they propose to marry. And so they are often found defecting to an entirely new mate when the money or the beauty is longer there.

Indeed one key problem with people that go by a marketing orientation is that they not only tend to assess people who come around them on economic or physiological terms but also tend to assess themselves (Slack, 1981) on the same terms. They feel secure only when they happen to be in the company of non-starters or those whom they see or classify as inferior to themselves in physical beauty or economic or social characteristics. On the other hand, they tend to feel insecure, worthless, and apprehensive when they come across those whom they consider as superior to themselves in essential characteristics. In other words, people given to the marketing orientation do not have a stable image of their worth. They learn their worth and importance from how they fare or compare in the social market of others. For this reason, to appear superior in the eyes of others, they are forced to live very expensive lives, filled with pretensions, or a life of make-believe. In that way, they try to spend all they have (e.g., their salaries) to buy the latest clothing or accessories to outclass their imagined competitors. Being only oriented to a life of comfort and happiness under good weather, this person therefore easily defects or sues for divorce when hard times hit the marriage. He or she is

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therefore considered in the traditional perspective as a dangerous hawk to be avoided in the adult and mature vocation of marriage.

This run-down is undertaken to give a bird's eye view of the kind of assumptions and perspectives that influence my practice as I study and listen to the complaints of opposing couples about the nature of the distress in their marriage. Knowing about them helps me follow very clearly the psychology of these couples' complaints. In the next section, I highlight the process and structure of my marriage therapy process as influenced by these understandings. A detailed description of each stage in the process has already been undertaken in an earlier work (2000) and will not be repeated here.

Process and Structure

The Setting

Most of my work with dissenting couples in Africa takes place in the city where I reside and practice and only rarely in the rural community, such as happens when I go to my rural home on holiday. The implication of this is that, whereas in the traditional or even contemporary village format in traditional Africa marital therapy meetings generally take place in the bride's father's home, in my own practice the venue of the meetings has shifted from the bride's father's home to the therapist's office. At times I also work with clients in my home. The decision of which setting to use, my home or my office, depends on which venue is more convenient and acceptable to both parties. In many cases, the meetings typically take place in the evenings and often drag on for many hours during hearing sessions. By using evening hours, intermittent interruptions from day clients are controlled.

Number of Therapists in Each Session

Whereas in the past, multiple therapists (elders) have been used as the "jury" or the "board" in the mediation, presently the framework of a single therapist's mediation rather than a multiple therapist structure is what I use. My special training for dispassionate listening at five levels—empathic, inductive, deconstructive, unpacking, and hermeneutic (Nwoye, 2006; see also

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Nwoye, Chapter 13 of this book)—to opposing views is designed to assuage and compensate for the usually fair and balanced compositional structure of the jury in the indigenous model. In the traditional setting, the jury of mediators is composed of members hand-picked from among the immediate or extended family constituents of the two sides of the marriage.

Through an *empathic listening stance* I try to reach the feelings accompanying each spouse's narratives of distress and show that I am with him or her in their pain. Through the *inductive listening stance* I try to give voice and space to each to tell their story without interruptions, to enable me to generate conclusions with which to confirm or disqualify the argument of victimization against self by other expressed in the narrative. I invest in *deconstructive listening* to enable me to keep track of *omissions, gaps,* and *ambiguities* in the story being told. The spouse concerned will be challenged later in the therapy process to fill in these gaps and clarify the ambiguities and detected omissions in the accusations they have made against the other. Through the *unpacking tactic* I listen to the story of each spouse with the posture of a *de-structuring critique*, noting where *contradictions, generalizations, prejudiced thoughts, mind readings*, and *unjust accusations* exist in the story being told and confronting the spouse concerned at appropriate instances during the hearing stage. Through *the hermeneutic listening stance* I try to discern the personal meanings invested by each for the particular actions they took in maintaining or responding to the conflict.

Thus, a detailed listening framework is an essential ingredient of my approach to marriage therapy. This is crucial because my model of marriage therapy practice assumes that people invest meaning in what they do and that stories are used as the basic explanatory medium for conveying meaning. Couples, I believe, use stories when they are challenged to reconstruct and clarify the history of their present disturbance in their marriage. I also believe that the whole truth of events in a difficult marriage cannot be understood from one point of view (Bruner, 1986, 1990); since people's stories are known to be non-neutral but partial, aimed at putting the self in a better light.

Indeed I not only believe that there are different ways of reading meaning into things, I also work with the belief that the comprehensive truths of events can only emerge through a process that encourages a *thick description* (Geertz, 1973) of the problem, the type that gathers information on the basis of things *from more than one source of evidence*. In this way marriage therapy in my own practice does involve giving space and voice to each spouse to tell

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his or her own story or give his or her own report of the factors and forces that constitute the genealogy of their distress.

I also emphasize in my practice that spousal accounts of the nature of their pain and humiliation in the marriage are not expressed only in words. They are also expressed analogically through crying, manifest anger, shouting, and other wordless mediums. For this reason special attention is made to ensure that the environment of the narrative and mediation is relatively protected to avoid a resumption of spousal exchange of blows during hearing sessions. The way this feat is achieved in my practice is summarized next.

Ambience Protection

The architectural design of the traditional African homestead provides the opportunity for temporary and tactical separation of the parties in a conflict while listening to their accounts in turn. This is a tactic that promotes a calm ambience for the sessions to proceed without interruptions from the opposing parties and is achieved through the practice of making the wife stay in the mother's hut and therefore away from the therapeutic room while the husband is giving his own story. Unfortunately, the modern architectural design of the homes within which we do our work presently has no such ambience protection value. We (Ben-David & Good, 1998, pp. 40–41; Nwoye, 2000) improvise by taking the following precautions when a hearing starts.

I inaugurate the mediation in a joint session. Thereafter I break into individual sessions during hearing stages and end with a joint session at the reconciliation and the re-enactment of the unity stage of the mediation. The reassembling of the parties, in my practice, takes place later in the process, after each spouse has felt completely listened to and his or her complaints are fully registered. The full structure of my practice therefore proceeds as follows. First, when the couple agrees as a team to seek intervention, I see them together at the beginning to inaugurate the meeting at the *socials* level. After the *socials* stage, the wife departs, leaving the husband to give his own story first. Where the two do not present themselves together on the first day, the person (usually the wife) who presented the problem will be listened to first and then the other spouse will be encouraged by the therapist through the emissary of the wife to enter into a discussion.

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At times, of course, the ideal situation occurs where both parties agree to present themselves together for therapy. This is exemplified and amplified in the illustrative case example presented here.

Case Study

Mr. and Mrs. L. had been married for 11 years when they sought therapy for the wrangling and quarrels in their marriage. The major complaint was that of each partner's failure to live up to his or her marital role expectations. The wife complained that the husband has abdicated his husband and father roles, using his money on outside friends. The husband, on the other hand, holds the belief that it is not he but the wife who is contributing little or nothing to keep the family going, spending her money in training a younger mate (a former *matatu taut*) in high school. This misunderstanding has resulted in many open quarrels between the two, with these quarrels often leading to the phenomenon of wife battering by the husband. And yet each partner goes on with the view that he or she is the victim and is on the side of justice in the wrangling that is disturbing the marriage. Failing to resolve the problems by themselves (since they marginalize, disqualify, or dismiss the complaints and voices of the other with levity), and living in a city very far away from the homes of their primary family members, they decided to take their marital differences—with each claiming to be in the right hand of justice—to a therapist (the present author), who they believed should be able to function as a fair and neutral arbiter to their conflict.

In handling this case, the following stages of action were followed:

1. Inauguration/social/induction stage
2. Initial hearing
3. Second hearing/distortion checking/accusation disputation
4. Reconciliation
5. Re-enactment of unity
6. Departure ritual
7. Termination

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Inauguration/Social/Induction Stage

Where the embattled spouses agree, as in this case, to present themselves together in search of peace in their marriage, the first stage of action from the point of view of my practice is the inauguration meeting of seeing the two together, at the social level. Afterward, the wife departs, leaving the husband to give his own story first, as the head of the family in the African perspective. The content of the inauguration meeting involves the act of setting the tone for the whole mediation process, starting with an invocation or inaugural prayer said over the welcoming gifts presented to the couple who are approached at this stage as my guests, with myself acting as their host (Minuchin, 1974). The invocation prayer (conducted by me) invites God to bless their search for unity in their marriage with a lasting peace that will come through the process of my listening to their complaints and bringing a fresh perspective to their case. What follows the invocation session is the period of inducting the couple on my practice approach. I let them know that I will listen to them separately, one day for each person, beginning with the husband. In this way, I will be able to assist them to reconnect to one another and see new meaning in what each is straining to put across to the other in the story of their marriage. I also inform them that, after the hearing stage, they will be met together again for reconciliation (where possible) followed by the re-enactment of a unity stage and then the dismissal ritual.

The Initial Hearing

After the invocation, social, and induction stage, the husband stays to give his story first. He is listened to fully as his presentation lasts, with my professional listening mode tuned simultaneously to the five channels of listening stances that I engage (clarified earlier).

After listening to the husband, say, on a Monday, the wife's hearing will take place not on the following day, Tuesday, but rather on Wednesday. The short interval separating the two meetings is intended to give me an opportunity for self-renewal and recuperation after Monday's session before I book the next hearing. The wisdom in this is that listening to husband's and wife's stories, at least in my own experience, is usually winding and convoluted. It typically takes a long time to finish, often dragging into the night with a hearing started at 5:00 PM. The tactic of breaking up hearings into 1

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hour a day sessions until each person's story is completed is not followed; hearing the stories uninterrupted encourages coherence and discourages the overrehearsal and vigilance tendency at subsequent meetings by the same spouse. And it is this same point that Ben-David and Good (1998, p. 40) were alluding to when they noted about their practice experience in Ethiopia that when a hearing starts "the length of the session was not guided by the clock."

However, when the wife appears on her own day, she is listened to fully and carefully. While doing this, I try to note down in my mind, in written notes, or through a tape recording, what is her major basis of annoyance in the marriage. I also note where the wife has left unanswered some of the issues earlier raised by the husband. These omissions and gaps in her own report are the issues she will be faced with at a strategic moment in the session after listening to her and demonstrating that her viewpoint on the problem has been well understood.

The meeting with the wife comes to an end after receiving her responses and disputations to her husband's accusations.

The Second Hearing

This involves the process of reinviting the husband for another consultation; hence the technique of "circular interviewing" (Tomm, 1985) is implicated in my practice. Again, the meeting in not scheduled to take place on a day immediately following the day the wife's hearing took place. If the wife was seen on a Wednesday, the husband's second meeting with me will take place on Friday of the same week. The first aim of this second meeting with the husband is for *distortion checking*. That is, to give him an opportunity to hear the wife's response to and disputation of the accusations he had earlier leveled against her during his own submissions. The second goal is to listen to his counter-disputation on the wife's charges. Apart from this, the second meeting gives me the opportunity to tactically confront him with some aspects of the problem in the marriage that were omitted in his own account but that came up again and again in the wife's own story. He must respond to these charges, too. The way he responds should give me some clues about areas of possible misperceptions and where fresh perceptions and corrective learnings are needed; in other words, this tells me whether the husband needs to be helped to reconstrue and alter some of his assessments of and attitudes to certain aspects of the marriage and to the wife's actions within it. The same

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techniques that are applied in the indigenous model to achieve a similar impact are also made use of in my practice: proverbial observations, metaphors, short wisdom story messages, and therapeutic rhetoric that involve the use of well-chosen words and fixed expressions to influence and transform difficult attitudes. I engage in this when I sense a need "to seed a new or different idea or promote a different view" (Sisodia, 1997) in the husband of what marriage entails and the roles he is expected to play as a husband in maintaining it.

This is another way of saying that, at the second meeting with the husband, hearing goes hand in hand with opportunities for interventive interviewing (Tomm, 1985), leading to an alteration of the perceptions, inflated expectations, negative attitudes, and misunderstandings about the marriage held by the husband. And these reframings (Sluzki, 1978), corrective learnings, and injection of new information and learning services (Epstein, 1982) that are made available to the husband at this second meeting (i.e., where these are called for) are intended to promote his better orientation to the marriage and to his wife during the post reconciliation stage of the entire mediation process. It is also at this meeting that, if he is found to be the spouse largely at fault for the anomaly in the marriage, he is made to know this. He is assisted to own up to his fault through the technique of *practical analogy* to drive home the point and explain the remedy rituals he needs to undertake to placate his spouse.

After the husband has been seen for a second time in this way, the wife is given her own opportunity for a second meeting with the therapist. As usual, a day is skipped after the therapist's meeting with the husband. The wife is normally anxious and interested to hear her husband's response to her key complaints. And that is the first thing the therapist shares with her when the meeting formally resumes. The same counter-disputation ritual is made by the wife in response to the disputations of her complaints by the husband. At the end of the day, the larger truth about the problem will disclose itself from the inconsistencies and possible indications of misconceptions, faulty logics, and unwarranted conclusions and generalizations that the therapist uncovers in the wife's or the husband's attempts at further clarifications and disputations on the problem. Where this is the case, the same effort made in the case of the husband is repeated here; that is, helping the wife to alter some of the faulty cognitions, faulty generalizations, mind readings (Sluzki, 1978, p. 367), and inflated expectations (e.g., "special person misconceptions," Raimy [1975]) surrounding the marriage and the husband. These often take the form of statements such as "That is the way I am," or "If he claims he

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loves me, he should be ready to take me as I am," all conceited cliches that I have already indicated are based on wrong attitudes to the dynamic nature of human personality. When I discover from the available evidence low problem-solving and objectification skills on the wife's part (what the Igbo people of Nigeria refer to as lack of "*anya ilu ani*" or sense of pinpointing), I engage in coaching her on these skills, using the approach of the behavioral marital therapy model (Gurman, 1978).

Thus, as with the husband, a lot of relearning, imparting of new information, and presenting opportunities for meaning reframing and shifts are possible at this second meeting. And where the wife is found to be the spouse at fault in the marriage, she is made to know of this, too, and the costs required to regain the other spouse's trust.

Truth and Reconciliation

Now, after meeting each spouse for a second, third time, or more (where necessary) on the problem, a time will come when I will gauge from the new temperaments of the couple in conflict that a new discovery of meaning in their marriage and in one another has taken place and that they are now ready to be formally reconciled to one another.

When this is the case, a joint reconciliation meeting with the two is scheduled and the two are requested to appear together on the appointed day, usually on the second day following the day of last meeting with the wife. Such a reconciliation session is the same as the so-called *re-enactment of unity* stage in the mediation format of the indigenous model (Nwoye, 1991, 2000).

Before this date, as we have seen, each spouse is already acquainted with where the fault lies in the marriage and who bears the lion's share of the blame. But, at this stage, they know this only individually, during my separate meetings with them. My general and conclusive verdict statement on the case has not been made clear to them at a joint session. And this opportunity is vital to uphold the truth and uncover the injustices in the story that bring special pain to the aggrieved spouse. It is at this final reconciliation meeting that the general verdict about who is to blame for what in the afflicted marriage is made open before the two of them. Such a pronouncement has a healing impact on the offended. With justice declared to be on his or her side, he or she feels vindicated and is thereafter encouraged to forget and to annul the past and look forward to a better future in the marriage and to a new

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orientation in the offending spouse. Similarly, the faulty spouse, on seeing his or her former aspects of approaching reality in the marriage convincingly "delegitimated" by an outside second and neutral opinion, comes to gain a new view or a fresh perception of what is appropriate and inappropriate in the marriage from then on.

This reparative aspect of the reconciliation meeting also involves the therapist declaring the damages to be awarded to the offended spouse for appeasement purposes (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1973). In this case, the idea of the offending spouse only saying "I am sorry" is not taken as enough. Consequently, a time usually comes in my practice for the final and most significant part of the reconciliation meeting: the ritual of unity re-enactment in the marriage.

Re-Enactment of Unity

This involves, as in the traditional model (Nwoye 1991, 2000), the ritual of sharing of wine or tea (another beverage may be used) from one glass by the two formerly warring parties to reflect their current decision to re-accept each other. The same process that is taken in the indigenous model reported in Nwoye (1991, 2000) is also followed here. The difference is that whereas in the traditional model the wine that is typically used is palm-wine (particularly among the Igbo of South Eastern Nigeria) in the present dispensation, with the scarcity of palm wine in the cities, imported wine, malt, soda, or tea is used instead.

When the time comes, I speak solemnly over it and eventually end with prayers of thanksgiving to God, whom I will implore to touch the hearts of the two parties with the gift of lasting peace and reconciliation so that the wine they share together in my presence now will stand as a new sacrament or outward manifestation of their inner resolution to accept each other fully back to one another and forge ahead in the marriage in unity and harmony ever after.

When this prayer of reconciliation is concluded, I then serve out the wine into the spouses' unity glass and then invite the wife to take it from me and to go to where the husband is sitting, sip a little of the wine, and hand the rest over to him. When everything has gone well in the mediation, she will do this (even if she is the offended, but now fully appeased by the mediation

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process). When she does this, the husband receives the wine from her and drinks from the same glass.

Once this is done, the full circle of mediation is assumed to have arrived. For when this is done, they both will hug each other amidst an exchange of very deep emotions of love and recovery of one by the other, after which they will sit down again to complete the sharing of the wine. And what follows this is the husband's vote of thanks to the therapist. It typically encompasses and reflects a voice of promise on behalf of the marital pair. It is directed to avowing that the new-found peace, harmony, and understanding in their marriage will not be allowed to elude them again, putting into consideration all they have come to learn about themselves and the marriage during the whole mediation process.

With this vote of thanks concluded, I end the entire process with a concluding prayer intended to ask God to fortify the spouses with His grace to stand by their resolutions.

Conclusion

This illustration shows that a model of marriage therapy practice in contemporary Africa can be drawn from the ingenuity of the indigenous model. The whole description shows that such a model follows the dictates of the processual form of social drama as enunciated by Turner (1981), encompassing four processes: *breach, crisis, redressive action*, and *restoration*. This implication shows that a marriage therapy process, as understood in my model, is an intervention that follows the occurrence of a *breach* in the life of a given marriage and the emergence of a *crisis* in the marital experience of a given couple. In that way, the pattern of my practice is perceived as a kind of *redressive action* that is called for to interrupt the crisis and *restore* harmony and peace to the marriage. The presentation also shows that, although like our indigenous predecessors I follow the courtroom trial model in my work with opposing couples. Following the principle of multidirected partiality valorized in African psychology and highlighted in Chapter 4 of this book, I have learned to enrich that model with relevant perspectives and principles drawn from our colleagues in the West (Gurman, 1978; Minuchin, 1974; Sluzki, 1975, 1978; Tomm, 1985; Turner, 1981; etc.). For example, with Tomm (1985), I share an emphasis on the role of circular and interventive interviewing during the pre-reconciliation stages of the therapy process. And so, too, is the

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concordance in my practice with the emphasis placed on the importance of rituals, tasks, the posture of neutrality, the feeling of unknowing, and positive connotation as highlighted by Sisodia (1997) as well as by Turner (1981). Even my use of metaphors, teaching proverbs, and didactic storytelling during the interventive interviewing process can be discovered to be similar to what is done in Milton Erickson's model. With authorities like Michael White and David Epstein (cf. Sisodia, 1997) of the Adelaide Family Institute, Australia, I share emphasis on the role of narrative approaches or the need for deconstructive listening to clients' accounts before taking a stand on who and what is responsible for the crisis in the marriage. Finally, with authorities in the Vico Institute, Ireland (e.g., Nollaig Byrne, Imelda McCarthy, and Philip Kearney) I share a common emphasis on the role of creating spaces for forgiveness and healing among the warring spouses (Sisodia, 1997). Even the idea of the therapist's home or office as a neutral place or "the fifth province" for the therapy process is emphasized in my practice, much as it is in the Vico Institute's model (Nwoye, 2000).

Finally, an important observation to note in this discussion is that, in my practice, I do not restrict myself to sources of knowledges emanating directly from established marital therapy models. Influenced by a pragmatic perspective, I cross to neighboring disciplines (particularly sociology, anthropology, personality theory, philosophy, cultural theory, etc.) to enrich my practice principles and models of action in responding to the needs and challenges of my various clients. In this way my practice encourages the spirit of promiscuity (McName, 2004) and globalectics (wa Thiong'o, 2012/2014) in search of viable theories and perspectives that can facilitate my task of marriage therapy here in Africa. My practice orientation to marriage therapy in Africa is thus antagonistic to "the illusion of single-model practice as the ideal," fiercely and rightly discredited by Flaskas (2005). Like Flaskas (2005, p. 197) I believe that "dialogue about practice and across theory boundaries is one way of transcending the limits of oppositionality and opening up greater space for the generation" of practice knowledge in marriage therapy in contemporary Africa.

In conclusion, therefore, what this chapter has shown is that an African perspective on marriage therapy that is not averse to the orientations and practice of Western perspectives and to the idea of drawing knowledges and metaphors from non-practice disciplines to enrich the services we provide is not only feasible but is already being implemented in my own practice. Its principal stages follow a clear-cut "diachronic profile," including

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inauguration/socials, listening to the accounts, distortion checking/accusation disputation, reconciliation, re-enactment of unity, and the departure ritual and termination.

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15

Psychological Processes and Rituals of Hope-Healing Communities in Contemporary Africa

This chapter reports on the psychological processes and rituals of hope-healing communities organized by religious ministers in two regions of Africa. The chapter gives narrative accounts of the key hope-generating processes incorporated into the eight-stage structure of their practice. The chapter presents new concepts and highlights the psychological healing factors in these communities intended to help people cope with the devastating conditions in today's Africa. The chapter is framed against the background of the enduring grim and disappointing conditions of the African experience in the past 40 years, during which persistent economic depressions and ethnic, military and armed civil conflicts have continued to bedevil the many nations that make up the continent. Perhaps the most deadly year in Africa in this regard was 1994. Okafor (1997, p. vi), supporting this observation comments that,

> For the continent of Africa, the year 1994 was a year of disasters. Across the continent, there was lamentation and great suffering caused by genocidal and fratricidal wars. It was a year of ethnic plague. In Rwanda, the ethnic conflict between the Tutsis and Hutus was climaxed by the gruesome massacre of thousands of Tutsis and moderate Hutus. At the West Coast of Africa, Liberia was being ravaged by an internecine war. Nigeria, on the other side, was at the brink of civil war following renewed crisis on the annulled June 12 presidential election results. In the northern fringes of Ghana, bloody ethnic confrontation had erupted leaving many people dead. Northward, Somalia was bleeding as the two rival factions engaged themselves in bloody combat. In Sudan, too, military operations were mobilised against sessionist groups killing many and rendering others homeless.

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The net effects of all these conflicts and wars are the unprecedented human, economic, social, and ecological disasters that have become a regular feature of most parts of Africa today. Under such a grim situation, the majority of the population had paid dearly with their lives. Indeed, most people in Africa presently see themselves as living literally at the edge of chaos (Shulman, 1997). The growth of refugee populations, street children, and homeless orphans in the cities, coupled with the collapse or destruction of most social facilities and economic infrastructures in many parts of the continent have given rise to the current state of multiple social/psychological problems: unemployment, hunger, poverty, social anomie, disorientation, meaninglessness, and life aspiration difficulties among most of the people. In addition to the human-made problems of wars and political conflicts and their negative consequences that have become the order of the day in most parts of the continent, there is emotional anguish emanating from such natural disasters as drought in Ethiopia and Somali, and floods in Mozambique, Madagascar, and even recently in some parts of the city of Durban in South Africa.

Against this grim background, the greatest test for the people became the test of their hope and endurance of faith in their potential to transform their present circumstances in the future. In this regard, while some members of the general African population have their spirit already crushed by the enormity of these stresses, some have still lingering hopes. But, for many, the problem is that of excessive demoralization. Frank (1974) asserts that "demoralization results from persistent failure to cope with internally or externally induced stresses that the person and those close to him expect him to handle" (p. 271).

The Emergence of Hope-Healing Communities

The creative and therapeutic response of many trained psychotherapists in modern Africa, particularly members of the clergy, in the face of these circumstances has been to direct some of their skilled assistance toward the development and management of hope-healing communities intended to inspire and encourage the people in their difficult circumstances. In this context, the concept of hope-healing communities is used to refer to those interfaith (Christian) prayer-healing ministries aimed at using the power of Christian prayer and other rituals of religion to bring God's intervention and healing to the needy. The bulk of the members of those communities are

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the sick, disabled, poor, jobless, childless, old, and other categories of the general society who are deeply troubled by how their lives have been going. The leaders and organizers of such communities are typically ordained religious ministers, most of them well trained in the art and practice of the healing sciences. They include some charismatic Catholic priests as well as bishops and other ordained ministers of the African Independent/Pentecostal Churches. Others, particularly those popular in the rural areas, are lay members, some of them well-trained psychotherapists, who claim to have received the "call" to intercede and act as a channel of healing for the sick. Members of this last group see themselves as prophets or prophetesses.

The most popular of these communities, such as those led by Fr. Edeh at Elele near Port-Harcourt (Nigeria) or by the now late Fr. Bill in Nairobi (Kenya), maintain a live-in and an outpatient services structure. In the majority of cases the prayer sessions or services organized by these communities take place in an open-air theater platform to accommodate the mammoth crowds that come from far and near to attend the hope-healing sessions/services. Indeed, some healing sessions/services of the most popular of these ministries very closely resemble the atmosphere of healing in *agoral gatherings* as reported by Biela and Tobacyk (1987).

> The agoral gathering (Biela 1989) is a large-scale public gathering inspired by some higher moral and social ideas. It is differentiated from other collective behaviour concepts, such as the crowd and the mass, by six characteristics: (a) voluntary participation, which distinguishes the agoral gathering from state-managed large-scale demonstrations where persons participate under coercion; (b) publicity, that is, the gathering is open to the public both directly and via the mass media; (c) mass scale attendance, that is, a large proportion and cross section of members of the society participate, and knowledge of the gathering and its effects reach virtually every member of the society; (d) higher-values-oriented, nonviolent behaviour in participants, which distinguishes the gathering from mass-scale sports events, music performances, and violent demonstrations; (e) the message expressed in the agoral gathering is so universally congruent with the values/beliefs of the society that it facilitates a sense of identification among the participants; and (f) this leads to expression, clarification, amplification, and verification of values underlying the message and, for some participants, to the experience of horizontal self-transcendence. (p. 395)

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This description shows that these communities serve as a place of spiritual renewal for those who participate. The participants use them as a place where they can go to be taught by God and report their problems to Him.

Up to the present, there are many such hope-healing communities found scattered in all the corners of the continent. But a closer observer cannot fail to note that such ministries are, in fact, of different levels and categories. Some are very popular and nationally patronized. Others are moderately popular and regionally patronized, while others are less popular and only locally patronized. It is also important to mention that although all such hope-healing communities are interfaith in membership and patronage, some are organized by members of the Catholic clergy, while others are organized by charismatic bishops and ministers of the Pentecostal churches. Thus, the leadership of these communities typically goes along denominational lines. This is why it is amazing to see the enormous similarity of pattern in organization and theme emphases in the services and sessions of the six communities studied and reported in this chapter. This was the case in spite of their being selected to represent the different levels and categories of such communities.

Methodology

Among those hope-healing communities visited in gathering data for this study are three from East Africa and three from West Africa. The three from East Africa are (1) the late Rev. Fr. J. K. Bill's Total Healing Retreat (with particular reference to his special healing Mass); c/o Vincentian Prayer House, Lenana Road, Nairobi, Kenya; (2) Jesus is Alive Ministries, led by the senior Pastor Margaret Wanjiru (with particular reference to her special Miracle Services on Tuesdays) c/o Haile Selassie Avenue, Nairobi, Kenya; and (3) Jesus Healing Sanctuary, led by Pastor Lambert Mbela, c/o Millindani, Mombasa, Kenya. These have been arranged in their order of popularity, with the first, being the most popular and the third, the least popular. The three sampled from West Africa include (1) the Catholic Prayer Ministry of the Holy Spirit, led by Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Edeh, C.SSp., c/o Elele, Port-Harcourt, Nigeria; (2) Christ Healing Ministry, founded and led by Bishop (Dr.) John Obi Okeke, c/o 206 Road, Road 2, A Close, House 4, Festac, Lagos, Nigeria; and (3) Faith in Christ Spiritual Healing Church, led by now late Prophetess Jacinta Nwaji, c/o Low Cost Estate Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. This

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group again has been arranged in their order of popularity; the first, the most popular, and the third, the least popular.

To decide which of the communities to draw into the study sample, the purposive/stratified sampling procedure was adopted. One of the guiding criteria used included the need to cover instances from both East and West Africa where these communities are organized. The researcher ensured that in both regions those to be included reflected the existing variation in the order of popularity across the communities. This means that the three selected from each Region included one most popular, one moderately popular, and one least or only locally popular ministry. Another criterion used was to ensure that the selection gave attention to the issue of gender balancing in terms of the leadership of the communities drawn into the sample. In this regard, effort was made to include instances where men are in charge, as well as any instances where women are in charge of the communities concerned. The last criterion concerned the issue of language. In this regard, preference was given to communities where the language of service was either English, Igbo, or Kiswahili, all familiar to the researcher. Following these criteria, six study communities were selected.

Sources of Data

Participant Observation Data

The participant observation method (POM) was adopted as a strategy for the field study of these communities. This approach involved the researcher visiting each community twice and taking part as a member and an observant participant in their services/healing sessions. This approach was preferred to the questionnaire method (Mbon, 1996). It enabled the researcher to study the proceedings of these communities "in vivo," to gain a direct impression of what goes on in them, to study the sessions as "lived" by the people, and to observe the operative acts of the leaders carrying out their healing practices. The key religious expressions and body movements of the participants were also observed.

Tape-Recorded Data

The songs and prayers that constituted the ritual process in the meetings were recorded and analyzed from the point of view of their therapeutic emphases or meanings. Most of the songs and prayers were rendered in a language

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familiar to the researcher and his research assistant. The recruitment of one research assistant for the entire research process was adopted to promote observer triangulation and to aid in comparing findings and conclusions made at the end of each observation session.

Theses and Framework

The major theses of the study were that participants in these communities usually come with high expectation of healing and that they derive much inspiration for continued faith in God to see them through their difficulties. A major point of reference for the interpretation of the findings came first and foremost from Adler's (1967) and Vaihinger's (1925) views on the role of fictional ideologies in helping people frame and orient their lives. Adler (1967) showed that Nietzsche held a similar view on the same theme. Another theoretical guide came from Frankl's (1969) view of the role of the abstract attitude in helping people to transcend the insults and wounds of the human experience. In a similar vein, the interpretation of the observations was guided by Frank's (1974) notion of "psychotherapy as restoration of morale." Frank (1974) suggests that

> The primary function of all psychotherapies is to combat demoralization. . . . Through restoring the patient's sense of mastery. . . . all psychotherapeutic rationales and rituals perform this function. (p. 271)

Two important explanatory humanistic concepts provided a framework for interpreting the dynamics of healing in the six communities studied: (1) the concepts of vertical and horizontal self-transcendence as articulated by Frankl (1969) and further elaborated by Biela and Tobacyk (1987); and (2) the concept of analogical thinking as reconstructed by Biela and Tobacyk (1987). Frankl (1969) opines that a constitutive human capacity is the capacity for self-transcendence or the capacity of human beings to reach out beyond themselves or to point to something other than themselves. In this way, participants' yearnings and petitions for divine intervention in their lives are understood as indicative of their capacity for vertical self-transcendence. On the other hand, the spirit of identification expressed by them at certain stages in their hope-healing process is understood as facilitated by their capacity for horizontal self-transcendence (Biela & Tobacyk, 1987). The researcher also

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drew from the view of Biela and Tobacyk (1987) that "analogical thinking was the major cognitive mechanism that led to the experience of horizontal self-transcendence" in the hope-healing process in these communities.

John Keats's notion of "negative capability" is also relevant for explaining one of the psychological gains derived by members by virtue of their participation in this hope-healing process. The phenomenon of negative capability is used by Keats to refer to the poetical ability to "experience mystery, uncertainty or doubt without that irritable reaching after fact and reason" (Kearney 1986, p. 50). These indications show that a lot of the ritual activities incorporated into the hope management processes of these communities can be fully interpreted in humanistic perspectives.

The specific purpose of this chapter is to show that those who engage in this community approach to hope-therapy follow a certain systematic structure in their practice and have evolved a number of ingenious ways of generating hope in people demoralized by circumstances. What stages of actions are entered into in the hope-healing processes organized by the leaders of these communities? Responding to such a question entails some identification and discussion of an eight-stage structure of their hope-management process. It is not claimed that all the six communities adhere equally and/or strictly to this eight-stage structure. What is claimed, however, is that. in the final analysis, the healing procedures they construct imply and encompass them. The central aim is to highlight what they do to generate healing in each of these stages.

The Eight-Stage Hope Management Process

The key eight stages in the hope-healing process in each of the investigated six communities are

Stage 1: Invocation and Spiritualization: Inauguration of the Liminal Space
Stage 2: Promotion of Memory of Universality
Stage 3: Exhortation and Foregrounding
Stage 4: Encouragement of Testimonial Narratives
Stage 5: Defocalization of the Hero/Adoption of the First-Person Standpoint
Stage 6: Ritual Presentation of Petition
Stage 7: The Offertory Ritual/Investment in the Transcendence
Stage 8: The Dismissal Ritual and Celebration of Limit

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Discussion

Following are highlights of what happens at each of the eight stages.

Spiritualization and Invocation: Inauguration of Liminal Space

The results of the study show that each HHC Healing session starts with the tuning of members to the spirituality of the meeting through the use of some opening songs. This process aims at breathing a spiritual aura into the atmosphere of the gathering. This first process is considered important by the organizers based on the implicit understanding that the best way to start off a lasting healing process in an African setting is to begin with a ritual that recognizes and accommodates people's spiritual views. Mbiti (1969) characterized African people as being very religious and strongly influenced in their life by double causality; that is, belief in the existence in the universe of a power superior and external to human agency. The key intention of this stage is thus to tune each member's mind into the spirituality of the meeting; that is, to make each person believe that he or she is in the presence of that superior power from whom all good things come. This stage is therefore used in each of these communities as a warm-up stage, and it is intended to bridge the space between the Divine and the human world, making it possible for participants to penetrate to the so-called liminal space (Turner, 1969) vitally necessary for the promotion of healing. According to Turner, liminal space is the space beyond the ordinary space of the mundane world, inaugurating the spiritual realm. For this reason, all the prayers and songs-with-dance engaged in at this stage (the text of which often differs from community to community, although all carry the same meaning) are intended to promote one effect on the members: to mold their spiritual consciousness to such an extent as to direct their attention to the transformed context of their experience. And with the atmosphere of the meeting spiritualized in this way, the members start to see themselves as under a divine or liminal rather than a mere ordinary space. At this point, they start to see God's presence as being drawn into the day's healing effort. The phenomenon of vertical self-transcendence (Frankl, 1969) among members is thus a regular feature of this stage of the process.

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A typical example of such spiritual warming-up songs for the proceedings at this stage goes as follows:

Come, Come, Come Holy Ghost Come
Co-o-o-me,
Come, Come, Come Holy Ghost Come
Holy Ghost Come, Come-o-o, co-me,
Holy Ghost co-o-me, come-o-o, come, come, come!!

Come, Come, Come Jesus Come
Co-o-o-me
Come, Come, Come Jesus Come
Jesus Come, Come-o-o, come,
Jesus co-o-me, come-o-o, come, come, come!!

Come, Come, Come Father Come
Co-o-o-me,
Come, Come, Come Father Come
Father Come, Come-o-o, come,
Father co-o-me, come-o-o, come, come, come!!

Such opening songs and prayers direct participants' attention to the transformed context of their experience.

Promotion of Memory of Universality

After the atmosphere of the group has been sufficiently charged to the spiritual plane in this way, then comes the second stage of the meeting. In this stage, the effort of the leader is to help stimulate in the memory of the members the idea of the universality of human suffering, distress, misfortune, and disability. Leaders in these communities thus invest a lot in the members' capacity for analogical thinking, as emphasized by Biela and Tobacyk (1987). Here the key impact intended is to historicize/challenge each member's travail or distress and demythologize members' usual tendency to believe in the uniqueness of their pain and wretchedness, a feeling which usually arises from the phenomenon of social distance and isolation among suffering people. This particular objective is achieved by bringing people together as

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a community with a similar theme (Hanna, 1953) and through reading to the members select passages from the Bible that contain the lesson (one example would be the story of Abraham and Sarah). The Bible stories illustrate that human suffering and misfortune are universal. They also reflect God's capacity in every generation to heal the distress of the downtrodden. The overall impact expected is that of promoting hope in all members of the community. The process heals partly by its consoling power. This stage also serves for members as a method of reconciliation with reality (Frosh, 1987; Jacoby, 1975). It thus promotes in them the poetical power of negative capability. The accompanying stages demonstrate that these communities offer more than a source of mystical consolation for members.

Exhortation and Foregrounding

The major highlights of this stage include (1) the group leader's attempt to aid the hidden author in the texts read to the people in the preceding stage, to speak to the people; and (2) to exhort or advise members on a new way of looking at themselves, their problems, and their future. He or she achieves this effect, essentially, through the use of the technique of foregrounding or "defamiliarization" of the texts. *Foregrounding* is the process of helping people to get behind the surface meaning of the texts' central message and, in this way, expand (by use of fresh stories and metaphors germane to the people's culture and time) the practical applicability of the message contained in these texts to the people's lives and circumstances. It is important, of course, to mention that while speaking to and exhorting members of the healing community at this stage, the leader draws from stories, wise sayings and proverbs familiar to and extant in the cultural memory of the people. The central gain in all this is to restructure and transform each member's understanding of human problems as well as the initial opinions they have formed of themselves and their future before they joined the group. In this case, the overall goal is to use the power of the Word to expand and restore people's confidence and hope in spite of the grimness of their present circumstances. They come out of this stage seeing their values, faith, and beliefs essentially "clarified, amplified, or verified" (Biela & Tobacyk, 1987) by the leader's exhortation and exposition of the readings of the day. This stage shows that the psychological procedures in these communities partly heal by their transformation power. It also shows that one way healing takes place among participants is

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that opportunity is created throughout this meeting, but particularly at this third stage, where members are helped to derive some meaning or message by which to live (Frosh, 1987). This stage also heals by encouraging members to become a deliberating and patient community.

Encouragement of Testimonial Narratives

This fourth stage is, strategically speaking, one of the most spectacular stages in the whole process. The main thing that happens encompasses a three-stage structure (1) a call for testimonies on the part of the group leader of hopes fulfilled, (2) an orderly and dignified response by some members of the healing community with victory or "Mandela" stories to tell about their hopes fulfilled, and (3) a song-with-dance by all present, in honor and thanksgiving to God for His abiding care and support. In all the communities studied, the narratives volunteered tend to follow a similar pattern of enactment. In each presentation, for example, there is usually a beginning, indicating a period of hardship and setback in the life of the narrator; a middle, attesting to a period of the narrator's effort to find solution to his or her distress; and an end, attesting to a period of eventual recovery and victory by the narrator after protracted hardship. In the typical narratives volunteered in these meetings, yearnings for practical human fulfillments are involved and not impossible hopes and aspirations.

The usual order of presentation in most of the communities involves the narrator rising to the dais or the altar (if the process is being organized by a priest) after the announcing song-with-dance has died down to start the story of his or her woes, followed by the story of how he or she had to wait and suffer for so long before the redress or final relief or triumph could come, and then a demonstration by him or her of concrete evidence of his or her hope fulfilled. Each narrative, of course, is expressed in gestures, actions (body movements), and words, with all intent at manifesting the nature of reality that is lived in hoping. One regular thanksgiving song among the Kenyan communities that is intoned by members in honor of God's intervention in the lives of some members at this stage goes like this:

> Moyo, moyo wangu wamtukuza Bwana (Roho)
> Roho yangu inafurahi.
> Kwa kuwa amemwangalia, Kwa huruma mtumishi wake,

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hivyo tangu sasa watu wote wataniita mwenye heri.//Moyo. . . .
Kwa sababu Mwenyezi Mungu, amenifanyia makuu, jina
Lake ni takatifu.// Moyo . . .
Huruma yake ni kwa watu wote, wote wale wanaomcha,
kizazi hata na kizazi// Moyo. . . .

(Translation)
My spirit glorifies the Lord
And my spirit rejoices in God my savior (Chorus)
For he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.
From now all generations shall call me blessed.//Chorus
For the mighty One has done great things for me
Holy is his name.//Chorus
His mercy extends to those who fear him
From generation to generation.//Chorus

In one of Nigerian communities studied a similar thanksgiving song-with-dance at this stage reads thus:

Omere nya mgbe natughi anya
Omere nya mgbe natughi anya
Omerem nya mgbe natughi anya
Eze Jesus aka m di nenu nara ekene!

(Translation)
He did for me when I didn't expect it
He did it for me when I didn't expect it
He did it for me when I didn't expect it
Jesus the King, I surrender to you, accept my thanks

Essentially, one major gain of this stage is that it invokes in struggling "hopers" or those members of the community whose hopes are yet to be fulfilled two crucial hope-sustaining principles: (1) the principle of anticipation of completion, or the "expectation that things will come together or add up in some way" with time (Guignon, 1998), and (2) the principle of "anticipation of truth" or that the story of one's hope process must have some "truth" to tell the hoper in the end (Gadamer, 1975). By supplying members with stories of success experiences, the meetings heighten the members' sense of mastery

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over the inner and outer forces assailing them. And so, both these formal anticipations are similar in their emotional power (Tompkins, 1994) to what Kant calls "regulative ideas": they are the assumptions which the hoper carries along with him or her and finds sustaining in his or her response to the trials of life. They are also similar in their impact to Adler's (1967) concept of *fictional ideologies* or to Vaihinger's philosophy of *as if* (Vaihinger, 1925) in regulating people's lives. Consequently, the testimonial narratives received at this stage of the hope process heal by generating in those whose hopes are yet to be fulfilled the sustaining memory of anticipation of eventual completion, in their favor, of their hardship and pain. This induces in them the belief that the real truth about the story of their present distress will eventually come to light. These narratives, in other words, operate as a causal unit, positively organizing the life and meaning of those whose yearnings are yet to be fulfilled, giving them some kind of foretaste of how the story of their own hope journeys will eventually end: namely, that they will prevail. The narratives, therefore, effect healing in the lives of members essentially by their inspirational value. They encourage struggling hopers not to lose patience in their waiting, indirectly exhorting them to be more resilient in their search for a final answer to their distress. In this context, the assumption is that certain earthly hopes or yearnings are redeemable here in the earthly realm and not just, like the promise of the heavenly Jerusalem, in the spiritual realm. These meetings, in other words, convince "the participants of the stability, vitality and social validity of their beliefs and values" (Biela & Tobacyk, 1987, p. 400).

Defocalization of the Hero/Adoption of the First Person Stand-Point

This is another spectacular stage in this aspect of the hope-generating process incorporated in the activities of these communities. The central thing that happens is the enactment by members, but particularly by middle (struggling) hopers, of what one can call "tears of affliction" in the form of a song-with-dance of petition containing a key request to God to multiply and extend His protection and benediction to all members of the group, particularly to those whose yearnings are yet to be fulfilled. In this, the chief contention is that it will not be good if God allows only a few of them to go home as heroes of hope. Rather, the main request is that God should end the story of their pain and distress on a hero's note, too. In this way, each person

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is enabled to find his or her own voice before God, in his or her continued wretchedness and pain. Keats's notion of negative capability is also reflected in the members' posture before God at this stage.

Group members then seal their petition with a pertinent song-with-dance. One native rendering of such a song goes like this:

Agbabanam aka
Nna/Jesu agbabanam aka
Onye bi n'igwe
Agbabanam aka
N'anom n'iru gi/n'ulo gi (2)

(Translation)
Do not leave me empty- handed
Papa/Jesus do not leave me empty-handed
The Lord in Heaven
Do not leave me empty-handed of your blessing
Because I am in your presence/ in your house (2)

The dynamics involved at this stage substantiates a similar experience noted by Biela and Tobacyk (1987) in their study of agoral gatherings. According to them,

> The realization that so many other participants share one's own beliefs and values (a) enhances identification with other participants and thus the experience of being a part of a greater whole, (b) directs the consciousness of the participants from their own individual concerns toward the locus of a shared universality of beliefs/values, and (c) convinces the participants of the . . . social validity of their beliefs and values. (p. 400)

Formal Presentation of Petition

The tears of petition for Divine intervention in the lives of members that began at the previous stage is continued here. This time, however, that ritual (of petition) is formally enacted by the leader's official request for each member to bring up to the dais or the altar a written record of what he or she would want God to do for him or her. By doing this, the group leader,

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in effect, seconds the pleading initiated mainly by middle hopers in the preceding stage for God to spread His hand further in bringing rescue to all members of the community in distress, thereby creating, by that very action, heroes of hope out of the members at large.

Before arriving for each session, members of the community usually prepare in writing their personal requests for God's intervention in their lives. And it is these written requests that they now submit to the altar or bring up to the dais in response to the leader's formal call for submission of personal petitions or requests to God. The ritual of presenting these petitions first requires that each member brings up his or her own requests to the altar or dais personally. The leader then prays over the entire collection. In some communities (e.g., Fr. Edeh's Catholic Healing Ministry in Elele, Nigeria) the whole collection is thereafter set ablaze as a way of sending them to God through the medium of smoke.

While each member is sending up his or her petition to the dais or altar in this way, he or she joins in the relevant song-with-dance going on at this time. One typical song that is used in most of these communities is one which enjoins members as follows:

Leave them there, leave them there
Leave them there, for the Lord,
If you trust and never doubt,
He will surely set you free,
Take your problems to the Lord
And leave them there (twice)

The Offertory Ritual/Investment in the Transcendence

This seventh stage is where members try to invest in God's goodwill by giving Him a gift. The gain in this arises from their conviction (the seed-yam mentality), rampant in most parts of Africa, that he or she who gives usually receives, a saying which indirectly tends to agree totally with Hellinger's (1998, p. 13) observation that

> When we receive something from someone, we lose our innocence and independence; when we take, we feel indebted and beholden to the giver. We

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> feel this obligation as discomfort and pressure and we try to overcome it by giving something back. We can't truly take anything without feeling the need to give.

And this is exactly what members intend to achieve here: to provoke guilt in God. Their private logic here is simple. They know they have made a number of important requests to God, submitted to Him formally in the preceding stage. Here, what they try to do is start off by a gesture of their readiness to share with God the little gifts they have as human beings. And this they do in their overall belief that if they give, surely God will reciprocate by giving them abundantly in return. The returned gift invariably, they believe, will mean causing their hopes to be fulfilled. For this ritual to have maximum effect on members, each is encouraged to bring up his or her own gifts to the altar or dais, not through the help of intermediaries but personally, through their own agency. In that way, they believe that they are dealing directly with God, that power from whom all good things come. One native song-with-dance used at this stage in some of the communities goes as follows:

> Agam ewere onwe m nye-e-h
> Agam ewere onwe m nye-ya-ooh
> Agam ewere onwe m tinye n'aka Jehovah oo
> Agam ewere onwe m nyechaya, kpam kpam kpam.
>
> (Translation)
> I shall give myself,
> I shall give myself to Him (God)
> I shall give myself up to Jehovah
> I shall give my entire self to Him completely).

The Dismissal Ritual and Celebration of Limit

What follows the gift-giving stage is the departure ritual that typically includes a closing prayer and a song-with-dance. The prayer is said by the group leader. The theme of that prayer is to hand over to God the lives and worries of all the people present, imploring Him to take charge of their yearnings and needs as they depart to their various homes. The leader

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reminds God in particular of the people's total dependence on Him as the basis of their being and a final answer to their distress. He or she reminds Him that each member has come invested (through their gifts) in His support and assistance and that they should not be disappointed because they have no power they can turn to in response to their needs, other than He who created them. A final statement in such a prayer is one that involves a sign of blessing and good wishes to all. All members leave in the belief that the blessing the group leader has wished them will come true in the end. In that way intermediate setbacks to expected hope fulfilment are viewed as temporary frustrations to be defeated in the end. And that belief carries a lot of "sentimental power" (Tompkins, 1994) that sustains the people between the sessions and in their day-to-day dealings with life. Consequently, one major philosophy that lifts the members' spirit at this stage is the philosophy of "as if" as enunciated by Vaihinger (1925) or the power of fictional finalism as emphasized by Adler (1967). And so, as they depart, they usually join in a special kind of song-with-dance in which they celebrate their awareness of the limits of their personal agency in their confrontation with the burdens of life and their declaration of confidence in God's power to stand by them all through dark and difficult moments. In this case, one of the most popular songs-with-dance used by most members of such groups at this period of sealing their hope in God as they depart is one which in English means the humble declaration that

> Jehovah has the final say. . . .
> No matter how deep down your sorrow may be,
> Jehovah has the final say.
> No matter how high the mountain may be,
> Jehovah has the final say. . . .
>
> My security is sure, is sure
> No weapon turned against me shall prosper. . . .
> I am what God says I am.
> I am only what God says I am.
>
> The Lord says I will never be brought down. . . .
> Never, Never, Never.
> I am what God says I am. . . .
> I am a winner all the time.

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I am a success all the time
A success not a failure
A victor not a victim.
I am a winner all the time. . . (since)
Jesus (my Lord) is a winning Lord.

It is possible for people given to radical positivism to begin to underrate the impact of fictional ideologies in the life of the members energized by the healing assumptions embedded in these songs. But to do so is to forget that no less important men of history than William James and John Dewey (1957) had held similar views. For example, James's pragmatism and John Dewey's instrumentalism have a similar trend. Both authorities interpret thought as an activity which fulfills the biological function of assisting the organism to adapt to its environment (Thilly & Wood, 1951). And the following remark by Nietzsche must be seen as a corrective to those who see no value in the impact of "guiding fictions," as Adler (1967) called them, in organizing people's lives. According to Nietzsche, as quoted by Adler (1967, pp. 86–87),

> The erroneousness of a concept does not for me constitute, an obligation to it; the question is, to what extent is it advantageous to life? Indeed I am convinced that the most erroneous *assumptions are precisely the most indispensable for us*, that without granting the validity of the logical fiction, without measuring reality by the invented world of the unconditioned, the self-identical, man could not live.

The transpersonal assumption inherent in the songs used in these hope-healing communities may thus be based on fictions or fabrications, but their healing potential for those who use them is nevertheless powerful. Albert Camus (1942/1991), in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, wrote "We must imagine Sisyphus happy" (even through his rock keep rolling down).

Figure 15.1 shows that the flow of activities in hope-healing communities in modern Africa ends, at each session, in a kind of face-up U-curve position. This means that each session ends in a spirit that still looks up to God for extension of His healing on those whose hopes are yet to be fulfilled. The ritual stages do not form a closed circle by the end of each session. This is to give opportunity for a repetition, in the next session, of a search for God's salvation on behalf of those still in distress. The image of the figure at the last stage shows not only the spirit of openness to God's succor but also the

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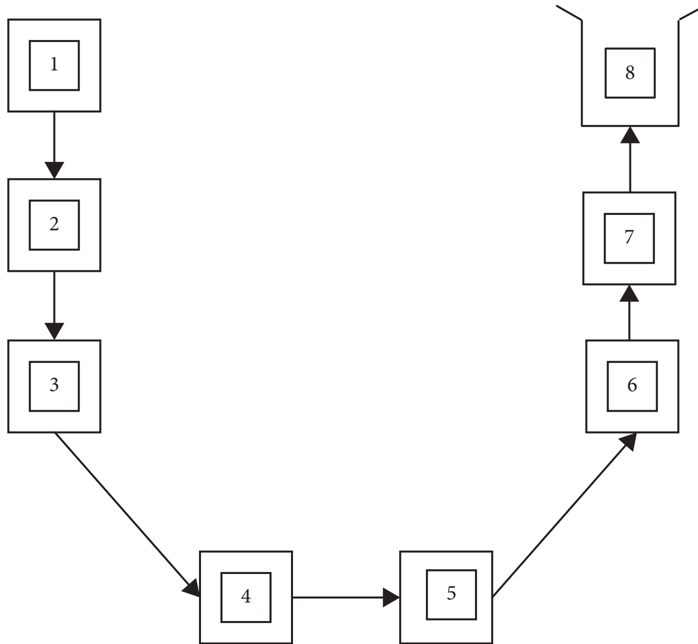

Figure 15.1 A U-curve depiction of the flow of stages and movements of the rituals of activities in hope-healing communities in modern Africa.

hands of surrender to God's will observable in members as they depart after each session. The number written inside each figure stands for the number of the stage.

Conclusion

What can one learn from this discussion about the nature, structure, and dynamics of healing in the hope-management process in use in modern Africa? One way to answer this question is to note that modern African psychotherapists are influenced in their practice by the needs and problems of the people among whom they live and work. They try, from what we have seen here, to adapt their theoretical and professional practice to suit the needs and aspirations of their modern African clients. Their current emphasis, for example, is on the role of hope and religion as well as on the value of fictional ideologies (Adler, 1967; Vaihinger, 1925) and of sacramentals (such as the holy water, candles, incense, and holy pictures) as transitional

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objects. Such an emphasis gives eloquent testimony to the fact that they are ever ready to construct their professional practice in line with the humanistic perspective that accommodates not only the religious sentiments and ideologies of the people, but also does so in such a way as to still remain relevant to Western healing emphasis (e.g., Winnicott's). In this light, the impact of abstract attitudes (Frankl, 1969) and other healing symbols and myths as transitional objects in stabilizing people's lives become therapeutic tools for their practice. According to Winnicott (1989), for example, transitional objects are healing symbols that have the effect of comforting people during their painful and stressful moments of life. Each community, in its capacity as a therapeutic method, acts as an approach that induces emotion and challenges members to change. This indication shows that some of the theoretical ideologies influencing the work of the hope process in modern Africa are founded not on mere superficial concepts or sentiments, but rather on strong psychological concepts deeply rooted in intercultural relevance.

Indeed, when critically considered, one can see that the strongest appeal of the hope-generating activities in use in Africa today derive their inspirational value from the lives of the people. The salience of their power is such that many people who take part in them go home at end of the day with inspiring feelings of anticipation of release from their various travails: that is, that it will not be long before their own distress and problems can pass away just as they did for their colleagues, as reported during the testimonial narrative stage of their healing meetings. Thus, the whole framework finds anchor in Vainhinger's (1925) philosophy of *as if*.

The various components of the process command this potency in that in such healing meetings the general character of the human environment created is one where people in distress feel enormously supported, protected, and understood. The whole situation therefore encourages the phenomenon of identification. In addition, the image one gets within the milieu of these communities comes close to the notion of *healing as participation* enunciated by Hanna (1953). Consequently the atmosphere of healing at such meetings is generally known to be extraordinary, religious, numinous, and emotionally gripping for participants. Sessions in such communities are typically organized amid a rich context of myth and symbol which accommodate and recognize the most treasured and sacred values of the people concerned. When one remembers that such healing symbols and myths are combined in the context of these communities

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with exhausting physical activities (e.g., singing and dancing) that lead to heightened experiences of feeling and connectedness with the group, it can be claimed that something much deeper than the observed is involved, lending potency to the hope management process practiced in these communities. Indeed, as Turner (1969) argues, the hope-generating activities in use in these communities produce good effects on members because a powerful bodily experience is connected through symbol and ritual (songs and dances) with social values and religious feeling (Shulman, 1997, p. 60). All these can thus be taken to mean that professional therapists from the West who aspire to adopt all or some parts of this hope process for use with non-African groups must be ready to take into account the fact that the full impact of this process can only come about in a culture or under a framework that does not give excessive regard to the scientific paradigm or the medical model at the expense of the cultural model or the role of religion or the idea of the sacred in ordering people's lives and in healing their afflictions.

Similarly, a number of therapeutic implications and conclusions can be drawn from this report. They include the following:

Language, dialogue, and relationship constitute the central parts of healing in both the Western narrative approach and in the hope-healing communities studied.

Participants in hope-healing communities in Africa make a difference in the life and well-being of one another through language (e.g., through the spontaneous songs and narratives they share and the meaning for their lives that they derive from those songs).

Hope-healing is relational and can be transferred from one to another through testimonial narratives transmitted in language.

The focus of healing in hope-healing communities in Africa is on generating possibilities or alternative stories for inspiring members, and this is delivered through language that help participants to find new and more positive meaning by which to live.

Hope-healing occurs from a dialogical conversation that brings participants in contact with God and with one another through the medium of language. Hence, in the hope-healing communities studied, positive change or transformation is seen to evolve as the natural consequence of a generative dialogue and collaborative relationship among participants and their God.

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Finally, in hope-healing communities in contemporary Africa, as reported in this chapter, problems dissolve in dialogue with God and with one another. This is because dialogue (between God and participants, between participants, and between leaders and participants) is the condition necessary for the emergence and planting of new meaning and new vision in the lives of the participants, and these help in sustaining the participants in the various challenges they face.

On a final note, of course, one must draw attention to a few negative aspects of some of these healing communities (particularly some of those not covered in this study) in contemporary Africa. The first comment refers to the point mentioned by Mwaura (2001, pp. 95–96) which shows that among some of these communities

> Too much emphasis is put on the activities of evil forces and there is evidence of great influence of the office of the prophet healer. . . . The position of the prophet-healer or leader is also fraught with problems. The prominence of the charismatic healer cannot only be empowering to the members, but it can also be a stumbling block to their spiritual development. Although patients for example . . . are encouraged to cultivate their own spirituality and learn to relate to God directly, some become dependent on the prophet-healers. They can neither pray for themselves nor seek solutions to even mundane activities without consulting him or her. The prophet-healer hence becomes like a cultic personality and can easily control the lives of the members, who obey his or her every whim without question.

These indictments show that, psychologically, one major misgiving that some enlightened members of the public have against some of these communities is in the area of poor ethics of practice. In terms of the psychological development and health of the clients, the greatest danger with some prophet-healers for the unsuspecting client is their tendency to subject their members to some kind of intimidation and humiliation, thereby making them lose their capacity for psychological independence. Instead, the clients' participation often ends up making them acquire a kind of captive state in the group "through a combination of coercive factors, for example the prophetess' claim that she can discern evil plans against members" (Mwaura, 2001, p. 96). These indications show that while some of these communities are

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genuine and operate in the best interest of the members' existential struggle over the travails of life, others are operated by quacks who, by their actions and pronouncements, can provoke the experience of "de-healing" in some members present. In that case, the greatest challenge for the unsuspecting public is essentially how to discern correctly the genuine from the non-genuine communities in their search for a spiritual solution to their distress. A related challenge for live-in members is the ability to discern or assess correctly when they must terminate participation without any dependent guilt after they have been healed. The challenge of discernment, however, is in itself a spiritual and healing endeavor. So, in whatever context hope-healing communities may be viewed, they have become a powerful force for inspiration and transformation in contemporary Africa. Through engaging in the eight-stage hope-healing process, people in such communities are inspired to transcend their daily problems and keep moving forward. Through a process of sharing rituals, song, and dance and in identifying with others, life takes on greater meaning and significance, and hope, fueled by a spiritual and humanistic resonance, points the way toward self-healing.

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16

Expectations and Dilemmas of African Immigrants in Europe and North America

Rewriting the Narrative

My initial inspiration for this chapter came from reading a very incisive and perceptive article contributed in the *Sunday Nation* (a premier Kenyan newspaper) by John Makeni, “Chasing Greener Pastures: Mixed Tale of Kenyans Who Won the Green Card.” The article was intended to uncover hidden contradictions which go with the experience of winning and implementing the American visa lottery. The writer (Makeni, 2007) considered it necessary to institute such a timely discourse influenced by his view that although the American green card visa may appear on the surface to be an investment in the right direction, it often turns out to be a grave disappointment for many. He offered as a reason for this pessimism the view that, although one can say that the American green card promises some relative advantages such as “allowing the holder to move around and legally work and live in the United States without fear of deportation” and to “access loans, and after five years [the holder] can petition for American citizenship,” there are some discriminatory conditions that go with it which tend to nullify its benefits. According to him, among such negative baggage is the idea that “a green card holder in the United States cannot work for either state or federal governments—including the civil service and the police. But [he] can join the US military” (p. 4).

For Makeni (2007), this aspect warrants the need to issue potential immigrants with a warning intended to make them more vigilant as most American visa lottery winners in Africa tend to dream of enjoying a better life in the United States by means of the green card.

Makeni (2007) speculates that the basis for the lofty image of the card and the United States is fueled by the misleading impression of the nature of life in America circulating in many parts of Africa today. In his view, however, the idea of the United States as a land of opportunities where big dreams

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are realized must be deconstructed and placed side by side with the huge contradictions that in reality tend to go with it.

The Psychology of African Immigrants: A Four-Dimensional Perspective

This chapter is an attempt to follow-up on Makeni's views (2007). My plan is to generate a four-dimensional perspective for understanding the psychologies and perturbations of green-carded African immigrants. This framework draws attention to the complexities of the inner worlds of these immigrants and widens the scope of the literature for gaining a proper appreciation of the tensions and challenges that confront African immigrants who come into Europe or the United States, not as students/minors, refugees, or asylum seekers, but as the "lucky" beneficiaries of official government-sponsored visa lotteries.

The central aim of the chapter is to open clinicians' eyes to perspectives they might not consider in the context of bringing therapeutic interventions to African immigrants in Europe and North America. Specifically, I hope to create in the course of this chapter a new map to guide us through the inner worlds of African immigrants in Europe and North America. Next, I clarify each of the four perspectives that form the framework.

Perspective 1: African Immigrants and the Phenomenon of the Journey Motif

Most winners of the American visa lottery do not emigrate to the United States because they are the least successful in their home countries. Most of them are rather graduates and others known to be moderately successful in their various life occupations who undertake emigration in search of a place where they will have the opportunity to contribute something valuable to humankind. Hence their *journey motif* is driven by *a quest for being substantial* and *the need for self-affirmation and resolution*. In particular, they are propelled by the sense of America as an ideal country for rediscovering opportunities to introduce significant differences into their lives.

This means that their principal urge to emigration essentially derives from an attitude of openness to possibilities of improving their personal

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significance in the world. In this regard, their characteristic orientation can be sourced from the essential human longing to determine truth of what the best their lives could amount to, and they search for a place where that self can be realized. Prospective African immigrants, in other words, see their emigration first and foremost as a kind of investment project for enhancing their lives.

These observations mean that, for many African immigrants, the American green card visa emigration does not necessarily mean that those involved do not have a job, house, car, or landed properties in their home countries. It mainly means that they are driven by the quest for the experience of betterment in their lives. And they seem to be influenced in this spirit, perhaps, as Makeni (2007) speculates, by persisting images and beliefs about the United States embedded in public discourse in various parts of Africa that promote the misconception or the inflated *optimistic bias* that "the United States is a place where there are no beggars" (Makeni, 2007, p. 4), where everyone has a job, a good home, and other basic necessities; where the sky is the limit for the industrious and the talented; and where there is equal opportunity for all.

Operating under the regulative influence of these lofty assumptions, most winners of the green card lottery see no reason to hesitate resigning from their former jobs even as doctors or professors in lieu of the ones that they assume await them in the country of immigration. And most of them do not hesitate to sell off properties and various assets and engage in further fund-raising exercises targeted at gathering enough money to enable them process their visa.

To further ensure that all is well for the entire process, some of them even resort to borrowing, promising to pay back as soon as they settle and restart their lives in the United States. Hence, although there is still little research on this, indications show that many well-established members of the population who happen to win the visa lottery, such as teachers, engineers, doctors, nurses, and professors/lecturers, frame their decisions for emigration under the influence of the idea that when they cross over to the American system (a system they believe is more perfect than the one in their own countries) they should be able to regain their former job positions or something much better.

These indications suggest that it is the motif of *the great upward drive* that is at the base of the African immigrants' search for and embrace of the American green card visa. Their preoccupations with the journey lead to a

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picture of their beliefs and values which reflect an inner sense of purpose in each of them.

What is, however, disturbing and puzzling in studying the psychology of African winners of the American visa lottery is the fact that the data on which they base their inferences about the assumptions and possibilities of improved life in the country of their destination arise not from any concrete provisions documented in any section of the advertisement for the visa lottery. They draw their conclusions mainly from the *unsaid* or the *assumed* messages in such advertisements. Hence the impact of *isomorphic perception* or the tendency to go beyond the information given is seen to influence their decisions in this regard.

Their grounds for this naïvety may lie not only in "the myth of the glorious America" in public discourse all over Africa, but also in their African cultural assumptions regarding the ethics of responsibility of the host to the guest. This ethics requires that the host, in accepting the guest, must be ready to feed, shelter, and care for the guest within an acceptable period of time intended to promote the guest's soft landing in the host's country. In the African context, for example, the host is typically required to attend to the basic needs of guests in this way before expecting guests to participate subsequently in promoting the economy of the host's household. Hence, there is a proverb among the Igbo of Nigeria, the equivalent of which is found in many parts of Africa, that "after feeding a guest for one or two days, he or she becomes ready to be given the hoe, the next day."

The problem, however, is that this ethic of host responsibility to the guest involving a short period of "adoption-lag" into the host's family, taken for granted in African culture and tradition, has no place in the provisions of the American green card immigration policy, which states that, on arriving in the United States, the immigrant is basically on his or her own and that it requires a period of five years before they are eligible to apply for citizenship (Makeni, 2007).

Based on these realities and considerations, it is, therefore, not far from the truth to speculate that *the journey motif* propelling most African immigrants to America, in particular, is erected on a misleading belief that there exists a mutual recognition of ethics of reciprocation of care between the immigrants and the country they have chosen to emigrate to and to serve. In other words, it is based on naïve assumptions and beliefs right from the beginning.

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Perspective 2: Positive Expectations of Dividends of Migration

All African immigrants who step into Europe or North America by virtue of winning a permanent resident card are persons with great hopes and ambitions, motives and expectations, and potential creative growth. They are people who took the decision to emigrate to the United States, for example, on the basis of their conscious and unconscious expectations of that country as a land of opportunities for refurbishing their personal destinies. This means that certain *narratives of significance* shape and influence the lives of these immigrants. And the existence of such narratives points to the fact that some important inner systems of forces are at the root of their desire to emigrate: their interior realities of hopes and aspirations, and expectations of the United States as a place of last resort for the reconstruction and realization of their hitherto broken dreams and lives. In this way, they see their emigration in a positive light, armed with the conviction that the move will be decisive in yielding dividends of a comparative advantage in their lives.

Thus for the African immigrants, green card emigration is conceived of, essentially, as a movement of gain rather than loss. Not only that, their relatives and other extended family members happily welcome the emigration and construe it as a joint project targeted at promoting growth and improvement in their lives, too. In concrete terms, that is, the great expectation of such relatives is that they should be able to share in the abundance of dollars and other benefits that will accrue from such a project.

Based on these positive calculations, African immigrants depart for the United States and other similar destinations with a sense of enormous stakes on their shoulders. But the crucial question, in each case, becomes the extent to which these longings and aspirations can be quenched or fulfilled through the benefits of immigration.

Perspective 3: Problem of Failed Constructions

The key issue here is that most African immigrants come into the host country embroiled in these high stakes only to discover the existence of a great mismatch between their lofty pre-emigration aspirations and assumptions and the reality on the ground. For those caught in this disturbance, the result is depression, destabilization, disorientation, and cognitive dissonance—and

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for some great few, agonizing regrets and guilt for investing in the green card project in the first place. According to Makeni (2007), this disabling embarrassment is not uncommon. The reason for this, according to him, arises from the fact that immigrants soon learn that the United States is a country where, despite the big name it has in Africa, "everything was not perfect" (p. 4), where one would be "shocked to learn that there are beggars," where "there are wooden houses like in Kenya," and where "there are many Kenyans and other African nationals with green cards that are homeless, unemployed and languishing in US jails for breaking the law" (p. 4). And yet, those (the disappointed immigrants) are, according to Makeni, among the thousands of fellow immigrants escaping from broken dreams in various countries to migrate to the United States where they thought they would be "an inch away from poverty—or riches" (Makeni, 2007, p. 4).

Based on these contradictions, Makeni (2007) concludes that although some immigrants with the American green card who decided to join the military may have success stories to tell about their lives in the United States, for many more others their search for the American dream through the green card project ends in disappointment. The reason for this, according to him, is that when immigrants do finally arrive, they immediately discover that the green card visa policy is a project intended to serve America and its need to find workers for jobs that citizens shy away from or consider as "infra-dig," such as

- Washing dishes in hotels/restaurants
- Cleaning supermarkets at the end of the day
- Serving as night and day guards at various firms and companies and at car parks
- Serving as gatekeepers and home guards at various levels
- Sweeping streets
- Taking up cleaning jobs at airports/railways
- Serving as nursing assistants in nursing homes, group homes, or hospitals, doing menial jobs,
- Serving as cab drivers in various cities
- Working as garbage collectors at various levels in the city
- Playing Father-Christmas jobs in supermarkets
- Picking fruits and gathering eggs on farms
- Serving in the US army (for those younger than 35 years)

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These menial jobs are offered to African immigrants, some of whom are doctors or professionals of long-standing experience. Many, on finding no appropriate job placement on arrival, end up as assistant librarians or assistants in pharmacy stores. Some professors among them are denied tenure but are recruited as adjunct professors in various institutions where they operate with “scattered energy” (on account of their having to throttle from one university to the other in one day, as adjunct professors, to give lectures, to make ends meet).

Of course, the surprising irony of the situation according to Makeni (2007) is that, despite this possible unfortunate state of affairs that can befall winners of the visa lottery, today more than in the past, millions of people in many parts of Africa continue to embrace their usual high hopes and throng to the United States through the green card visa. Presently, “through the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program, the US State Department offers 50,000 permanent resident visas annually to countries like Kenya that have low rates of immigration to the United States” (Makeni, 2007, p. 5). By this statistics, Makeni (2007) means to show that thousands of African immigrants every year spend a lot of their efforts and resources, some selling their assets to get the mandatory fee of Ksh100,000 (currently nearly $1,000) for processing a single visa to relocate to a place where most of them are bound to meet with untold hardships and disillusionment.

Furthermore, and perhaps most perplexing, is that “despite being told it is not so, many of those interviewed for Makeni’s newspaper story insist on believing that if they win a green card, the US government will automatically give them an air ticket, accommodation, and a guaranteed job” (Makeni, 2007, p. 5). But the US Consul General in Nairobi, then Mr. Richard Appleton, who Makeni (2007) had contacted, clearly states that this image is a misconception. In his own words: “None of that is true. There may be some non-governmental programmes that help new immigrants and even some state and local government programmes which assist [with] the lodging and job identification, but new immigrants are largely on their own” (p. 5).

Based on such a bleak view of things, it becomes easy to see why, for many of these immigrants, the green card visa will end up becoming a source of frustration rather than satisfaction vis-à-vis their earlier grand calculations for undertaking emigration.

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Perspective 4: The Challenge of Transnational Demands and Commitments

Over and above the possible negative outcomes for immigrants just outlined, there are others they face arising from the burden of family fragmentation in which they are embroiled. In this connection, the tension they must bear is that even while "out there," they still are disturbed by a sense of invisible loyalties for maintaining two homes—one in the host country and the other (often consisting of parents, siblings, relatives, and in-laws) left behind in their home countries.

Some immigrants, in particular, suffer guilt over the unwise decision they made to leave some of their nuclear family members (e.g., wives and children) behind, planning to come back for them within the shortest time possible, but realizing that this plan must now remain in abeyance almost indefinitely. For some few others, the distress is not grounded on a wrong decision to emigrate. What nags them is the thought of the anger of relatives from whom they borrowed money they cannot repay as they pledged so soon after their emigration. Before they emigrated they anticipated that within a year or two of arrival they would be able to clear these debts. But for a good number of them, this time span would not be sufficient to yield the dividends to make repayments possible. The result is guilt persecution, shame persecution, belittled self-esteem, and enormous embarrassment and humiliation for those concerned.

On the other hand, for many more others, crises that entail what to tell relatives who are expecting immediate financial gains and support from the "deal" of immigration is part of the stress load to endure. The negative implication of this practice is to put pressure on African immigrants to internalize the regulative belief that they carry the destinies, welfare, and survival of a lot of their transnational relatives on their own shoulders. But the main burden or challenge in this comes not when the wealth is available, but when they realize that the possibility for meeting these transnational expectations and obligations is not there. Worse still, as Helen Cousins and Pauline Dodgson-Katiyo (2016) would put it, "a further aspect of the post-independence return [of the migrants] is disillusionment—a disillusionment which is not just that the protagonists [the migrants] who return and are disappointed by what they find, but is also that of their families, friends, and colleagues who had expectations of them which are not met" (p. 3).

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These, then, are the kind of inner tensions and frustrations with which most green-carded African immigrants carry along with them in their day-to-day lives in their country of migration or when they happen to visit their home country during the period of their emigration. Having examined them, I next deconstruct the currently existing Western perspectives for understanding and working with African immigrants in Europe and North America found scattered throughout Western literatures. The chapter concludes with recommendations targeted at highlighting new emphases and strategies that need to be introduced into the African psychological counseling practice for understanding and working with African immigrants in Europe and North America.

Existing Western Models on the Psychology of African Immigrants

Three important theoretical frameworks often drawn upon in the Western literature to explain the psychological task of migration are reviewed here. They include the *attachment and loss theory* credited to Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980), the *psychoanalytic theory of migration* (Akhtar, 1994, 1999a, 1999b; Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989), and the *refugee trauma framework* (Papadopoulos, 2001; Sveaass & Reichelt, 2001).

I will review them in turn to clarify their claims and to show why they do not fully fit as comprehensive models of explanation for understanding the psychology and challenges of African immigrants in Europe and North America.

The Attachment and Loss Theory

Bowlby, the originator of this framework, explains how instinctive behavior leads to the development of an emotional attachment between the mother and child, thus providing an understanding of the response the child makes if the bond between mother and child is broken or interfered with in some way. This bond, according to him, is mediated by specific behavior patterns—not simply by the mother's role in satisfying the infant's physiological needs (Joffe & Vaughan, 1982).

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Furthermore, according to Bowlby, the bond serves as a model for social interactions which form the basis of the child's sense of self, which persists into adulthood. The original theory (1969, 1980) and its modern counterparts (Fisher, 1989; Ward, 2001; Ward & Styles, 2002, 2007) emphasize the importance of early experiences in determining the stability and degree of successful adjustment of the self in new places.

Extending the theory to the theme of physical and psychological impacts of being exposed to a new and often strange place, Garza-Guerrero (1974) asserts that "as a result of migration a person may experience multiple loss, which includes loss of family, friendships, language, cultural heritage, and, importantly . . . *familiar environment*" (quoted in Ward & Styles, 2007, p. 319). Hence, to survive the impact of migration, the attachment framework proposes that the migrant must generate a new identity to facilitate living in the new culture.

I argue that, contrary to this perspective, grief processes in migration for African immigrants are not inevitable (Nwoye, 2005). They occur only in situations where the migrants failed to confirm their expectations of the new host environment as more containing and a means of personal enhancement in their lives.

The Psychoanalytic Model

Some psychoanalytic writers have made their own contributions in the context of explaining the psychological task of migration (Akhtar, 1994, 1999a, 1999b; Blos, 1962, 1967; Mirsky, 1990; Mirsky & Kaushinsky, 1989; Mirsky & Peretz, 2006). Most of them tend to liken the psychological meaning of the native culture as comparable to that of the primary caretaker serving as the repository of childhood attachments and internal parental representation. Understood in this way, the experience of migration, in their view, poses the task of mourning for comforting familiar objects (human and cultural) left behind in the course of the migration.

Akhtar (1994, 1999a, 1999b), a major contributor in this regard, further introduced the idea that emigration entailed a "third individuation," as it posed the challenge of separation-individuation not unlike that occurring during the first 3 years of life and again in adolescence (Blos, 1962, 1967).

These indications suggest that for psychoanalytic writers, the psychological task of migration is essentially an individual migrant's responsibility. In

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such a model the host country has no responsibility or contributions to make to facilitate such a process.

What is proposed in this chapter is that the host (the country of destination for African migrants) owes to the latter some "soft landing" services (at least temporary lodging and other services and structures) and a short adoption-lag (the probation period) within which the immigrant can apply for citizenship status and be integrated into the normal workforce of the host country. It is argued that it is the absence of these factors which instigates the spirit of failed constructions, frustration, despondency, and depression on the part of migrants (African or Asian).

The Refugee Trauma Framework

Much has been written in the Western literature on the notion of "refugee trauma" (Papadopoulos, 1999a, 2001a; Papadopoulos & Hilderbrand, 1997; Sveaas & Reihelt, 2001; Young, 2001), and some Western professional workers have tended to approach African immigrants' issues through the tinted and deficit lenses of that discourse. Commenting in this regard, Papadopoulos and Hildebrand (1997) noted that the usual way professionals tend to conceptualize refugees (and, by extension, African immigrants) was within a "pathology or deficit model" (p. 209). In their view, the damage here is that, influenced by such a discourse, most observers, including the media, politicians, and the general public, tend to freely apply the concept of the trauma discourse to the extent that all assume that, more or less all African immigrants, including those who are not refugees, are "traumatized."

However, construing African immigrants in the image of the traumatized is quite problematic and unfortunate. It tends to draw only sympathy to the negative aspects rather than empathy and attention to the strengths and promise of these immigrants as valuable people with the potential to contribute something substantial to the development of the host country. In this way, emphasis on their strengths and possible contributions to the host country becomes subjugated and overshadowed by the prevailing attention paid to the trauma discourse.

The main error here is that, shaped by this image, counseling work with these immigrants tends to focus on questions about what they may have suffered in their countries of origin. In that way, the macro-level background of life in their countries of origin ends up degenerating into "becoming the

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main theme of the therapeutic focus" (Papadopoulos, 2001b, p. 412), shortchanging the task of addressing their needs and frustrations in the host country.

I argue that working with such a model is a limited option which, like the other two models earlier reviewed, must be rejected because they tend to lead therapeutic work with these immigrants into wrong directions.

Alternative Model for Clinical Work with African Immigrants

An important theoretical framework which relates very closely to my four-dimensional perspectives for understanding the psychologies and anticipating the problems and distress of African immigrants in Europe and the United States is the *ritual theory approach* developed and popularized by Turner (1981). The basic tenet of Turner's theory is that social dramas (like frustration narratives in African immigrants) occur out of anomalous life situations. Applied to the situation of African immigrants, Turner's theory (1981) assumes that emigration to Europe or North America with high hopes of success that end in failure and frustration stands for a condition of *breach* of expectations in the lives of these immigrants regarding their emigration. This results in a crisis of disappointment in affected migrants, leading to their loss of the innocent idea of Europe or the United States as a place of last resort for their personal enhancement.

Healing in this model refers to the capacity of caregivers to draw on new specialist knowledge and strategies that bring redressive action to bear in support of the immigrants to enable them to restore a measure of control in their individual lives. For potential immigrants, on the other hand, healing involves intervening at a larger systems level to interrupt immigration policies that promote cycles of frustration and turmoil for green-carded African immigrants.

Strategies for Improved African Psychological Counseling with African Immigrants

Three levels of career counseling practice are proposed for working with clients from the African immigrant population. The first is at the individual

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level, where there may be a need to coach clients on how to positively handle disappointments and unfulfilled career hopes, including the need to train them on how to draw from the spirit of compromise that can promote resilience in the face of present challenges (e.g., their need to accept the second-best career option if the first is currently unavailable).

The second is at the family relationships level, where the pain of role reversal may occur between husband and wife, causing strain on this subsystem and, in some cases, their inability to act as a unit in the difficult task of parenting children in a multicultural environment.

The third is at the larger systems level (Anderson, Goolishian, & Winderman, 1986), directed toward social action that will change the discriminatory immigration or labor policies in various migrant destination countries. This means that, specifically, counseling work with African immigrants must go beyond the task of dealing only with individual immigrants, where the focus is on inner pain and stress, inner longings, and failed constructions. In this regard, my view is that all counseling approaches that search for problems only within immigrants' inner beliefs and thoughts will not be comprehensive enough if effort is also not made to work with the larger systems that go beyond their personal distress. Thus, one of the big challenges facing the field of career counseling in the context of helping African green-carded immigrants is how to address larger social issues of unequal power and social injustice (Tomm, 2000) particularly those that derive from negative foreign policies on immigrants (e.g., refusing to recognize their legitimate academic qualifications and job experience). Thus, we must take seriously the view advanced in this chapter that many of the mental difficulties that persons in African immigrant families experience arise to a certain extent, or even to a major degree, through social processes of unfairness and injustice and discrimination in policy provisions governing the American visa lottery vis-à-vis the privileges and rights of winners. We need to pay attention to those larger social processes and not only work with individual African immigrants exclusively. And one way we can do this is through career counseling activism that might entail encouraging policymakers to think about these issues, pay particular attention to how their policies become sources of psychological unhappiness for solicited immigrants (Anderson et al., 1986), and work out corrective means for improving the situation. This will entail an advocacy role on our part as teachers of the nation and opinion leaders. Focusing on this, we will be expected, through writing and presentation at local and international forums and meetings, to take

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appropriate action to draw the attention of the American State Department, for example, to the notable lack of vital data in its visa lottery manual that would provide proper guidance and information to prospective candidates. What is proposed is a policy document that guides and informs rather than entices or provokes images that attract the reader interested in applying for the visa lottery. Such a manual will discourage unjustified optimistic bias in a client who might like to read "beyond" the advertisement a meaning not intended by the US State Department.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I propose that a section is needed in the American green card visa manual that provides clear warning statements to prospective candidates against selling their property when planning to emigrate. It is of note that this particular caution is already entrenched in a related policy manual by the Canadian Immigration Department. I recommend that other Western countries should borrow from this Canadian example.

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17

The Therapeutic Use of Songs in Apartheid South Africa

An African Example of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed

The Apartheid regime in South Africa was riddled with a past that was infamous for its inhuman racial segregation and oppression. The selfish political and discriminatory social system that the regime implemented inflicted untold hardships and physical wounds on the nation's Black majority populations. The horrifying psychological damage that the oppressed endured was met with various methods of attempted alleviation. This was achieved through the use of locally produced songs of hope, consolation, and resistance by the oppressed majority. The purpose of this chapter is to showcase some samples of these songs, analyze their contexts and contents, and foreground some of the sources of their psychological potency and therapeutic value.

This chapter explores the social change mechanisms implemented by the oppressed majority in South Africa during the Apartheid period (1948–1991). This is offered as an alternative to the prevailing social history of ideas of Apartheid South Africa which refers to the literature of criticism and disavowal of the role played by professional psychology during that time. Following that literature, several scholars (cf. Hook, 2012; Macleod, 2004) have drawn attention to the negative and appalling use that was made of professional psychology by some South African psychologists such as Hendrik Verwoed, a North American-trained psychologist who was instrumental in promoting the social and political machinations of the Apartheid system. Commenting in this vein, Chitindingu and Mkhize (2016) aptly summarized the situation as follows:

> Psychologists (in South Africa) continue to reflect on their profession as the country enters the third decade of democracy. Cooper and Nicholas (2012) and Long (2014) provide a comprehensive overview of the development

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> of South African psychology, *its collusion with Apartheid*, the racially defined professional societies, leading to the development of a unified psychological society (PsySSA) in 1994. In an interview with Barnes (Barnes & Cooper, 2015), *the latter spares no punches in detailing how the South African Apartheid government relied on professional psychological expertise to achieve its objectives in the management of political prisoners in Robben Island*. (emphasis added)

I argue in this chapter that while this more dominant account and repudiation of the negative history of the role played by received (Eurocentric) psychology in Apartheid South Africa is very important and has its place, it needs to be recognized alongside the positive role of Black psychology in that same period. This is especially the case if by psychology during the Apartheid period we mean not only the professional (Eurocentric) psychology used by the oppressor to further the political objectives of the Apartheid system but also the positive use made of the local psychology of the people by the oppressed Black population in combating and surviving the pains and cruelties of the Apartheid years. The chapter begins by exploring the pedagogy of the oppressed (in the form of the Black Consciousness Movement [BCM]) that was drawn upon by revolutionary leaders of the Black majority population to transcend their culture of silence and confront and challenge the oppressive Apartheid regime in search of social change. It shows how, influenced by the incisive impact of that pedagogy, the Black majority in South Africa were able to unite to fight for their freedom against the oppressive Apartheid system. They used as their weapon of resistance various songs of hope and consolation that enabled them to draw strength through bonding with words. To clarify the content of this influential pedagogy in revolutionizing the life and vision of the oppressed at that time, a brief theory of the two-tiered psychology of the oppressed in Apartheid South Africa will first be reviewed.

Theory of Two-Tier Psychology of the Oppressed in Apartheid South Africa

There are two possible ways of making reference to the positive psychology of the oppressed in Apartheid South Africa. The first is the psychology of the BCM, or what Paulo Freire (1968/1970/2007; 1970/1993) referred to as the *pedagogy of the oppressed*, championed by Steve Bantu Biko and other elites

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of his generation such as Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe and Anton Muziwahke Lembede (Hook, 2016). The second of the two African-derived approaches to the pedagogy of the oppressed, less known and expatiated, can be referred to as the *kuku-nku psychology* or, as understood among the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, the use of songs of provocation or social correction as a weapon for lashing out against a negative system or social practice. Among the Xhosa, such songs of social correction are referred to as *umtshotsho* and social *intlombe* songs (Ntshinga, 1993, 1994a, 1994b). It is perhaps this aspect of the local psychology of the people, which Derek Hook (2012) has referred to as the *vernacular psychology* of the Black population of South Africa, that was used to good effect by the oppressed majority during the Apartheid period.

This two-sided psychology of marginalized people in South Africa was complementary rather than antagonistic to one another: BCM thought operated as the theoretical arm of the vernacular psychology of the people, which was the conscientized action component of that same psychology.

Corroborating this observation, Steve Bantu Biko (1978) pointed out that the BCM came into being in opposition to the established order of White supremacy and domination aimed at combating Black subservience in South Africa. Specifically, according to Biko, "it [Black Consciousness thought] seeks to influence the Black community with a new-found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value system, their culture, their religion and their outlook to life" (Woods, Biko, p. 38, as cited by Fergusson, 1996). In particular, the BCM championed by Biko, Sobukwe, and Lembede intended "to overcome an otherwise flawed mode of political resistance—the gradualist, petitioning stance of the African National Congress in the 1950s—with something altogether more radical" (Hook, 2016, p. 9). As a social change–oriented pedagogy of the oppressed majority of Apartheid South Africa, Biko's BCM, together with the unique contributions of Sobukwe and Lembede, was intended to articulate and propagate a locally sensitive psychological perspective aimed at enabling awareness and inspiring the oppressed majority to courageously and confidently confront the Apartheid government of South Africa. The key objective was to "conscientize" the people with the radical conviction that it is possible to combat and subdue White oppression and racism through their own effort and, with that, to herald the emergence of a future in which Blacks could regain their freedom in the land of their birth.

A foundational theme in both Biko's BCM and Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed is the idea that education should be seen as a political

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enterprise and a cultural project for creating a reflective and critical awareness of the people's situation and in that way empower them. In other words, education is contextualized within both frameworks as a cultural project through which the oppressed can take their destiny into their hands by confronting the oppressive system within which they live and work.

Coupled with Robert Sobukwe's direct critique of White supremacy, Biko's BCM, in line with Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, served as an important mechanism of public education for the mental reorientation of the oppressed Black majority, investing them with a vision. This vision was to radically fight for their future, heralding democratic freedom in South Africa and the return of peace and stability in Black families. Biko and his team's intellectual leadership were powerfully instrumental in creating pragmatic inspiration and mobilizing popular energies in the service of the peoples' struggles against Apartheid oppression. The result was the emergence of the use of locally produced songs of resistance, persuasion, confrontation, indirect insult, and hope as the Black people's commanding weapon for challenging Apartheid oppression.

On the one hand, Black Consciousness operated as the theoretical catalyst that invigorated Black people's awareness of their true situation of subservience, including the idea that the White supremacist government of Apartheid South Africa was not invincible but could be confronted and dismantled. Creating that important intellectual awareness in the mind of the oppressed was of immense benefit to the psychology of the Black people of South Africa at that time. On the other hand, the second tier, the *kuku-nku*, the *umtshotsho*, and social *intlombe* psychology, served as the local, grassroots action/implementation arm of Black Consciousness thought in Apartheid South Africa. In this way, the social change role of the BCM was indirect.

Role of Liberation/Therapeutic Songs as the Psychological Weapon of the Oppressed

Over and above other strategies (e.g., poetry, fiction, painting, and theater), it was the persistent and cumulative use of *kuku-nku*, *umtshotsho*, or *intlombe* (Ntshinga, 1993) songs and dance of indirect insult and the vernacular embedded in them that did much to sustain and heal the oppressed Black majority. Most of the songs were composed by the native men and women of

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South Africa with enormous natural musical talent. These illustrious locally generated musicians include Hugh Masekela, Miriam Makeba, P. J. Powers, Letta Mbuli, Brenda Fassie, Mbogeni Ngema, and Vuyisile Mini. Songs produced by these gifted South African musicians constitute what is now often collectively referred to as *struggle*, *liberation*, or *revolutionary songs* (see Gilbert, 2007; Le Roux-Kemp, 2014; Nkoala, 2013; Pongweni, 1982). The songs they created paralleled those used by similar revolutionary groups in other countries like Brazil, Congo DRC, Burundi, Uganda, Malawi, Nigeria, and Kenya. One typical example is the use of songs of indirect insult and provocation by the frustrated Kenyan public to tell their long-serving and aging President arap Moi that "Kenya would do better without him." In Malawi, a similar poetic voice was introduced to tell the autocratic and iron-fisted President Banda that "he has turned into a hawk that eats the chickens [the citizens] he was elected to protect" (Mapanje, 1977, p. 28).

Methodology

In the following, I highlight through a purposive or an intensity sampling strategy (Patton, 2015) what some of these songs are by name, the contexts and occasions in which they were used, and the local and therapeutic psychology of the people embedded in them. Psychology honors students were requested, as part of a take-home assignment, to nominate any three of the most popular struggle/liberation songs in Apartheid South Africa. After receiving the nominations, the criterion of high popularity or frequency of mention was used in determining which of the nominated songs to include in the study. Songs included for analysis were aimed at Black assertion, hope promotion, political resistance and confrontation, and the psychology of consolation for victims of Apartheid violence and their families. A total of six songs were selected for the study.

In analyzing these songs, I argue three claims regarding their psychological economy. First, they can best be characterized as songs of hope for people in the midst of their distress. Second, most of the songs acted as sources of consolation in the face of limit situations (such as physical restrictions, deaths, and imprisonments of loved ones) in the Apartheid years. Third, these songs, in some of their poetry and contexts, operated as instruments or critical weapons of Black assertion, provocation, and resistance against Apartheid oppression. Here I highlight their therapeutic value for the people.

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The Songs and Their Lyrics

Among the most influential of these songs are the following six:

1. Senzeni na?

Xhosa/Zulu Original Lyrics	*English Translation*
Senzeni na senzeni na	What have we done?
Senzeni na senzeni na	What have we done?
Senzeni na senzeni na	What have we done?
Senzeni na senzeni na	What have we done in this world?
. . .	
Kuyisono 'kubamnyama	Is our sin the fact that we are black?
Kuyisono 'kubamnyama	Is our sin the fact that we are black?
Kuyisono 'kubamnyama	Is our sin the fact that we are black?
Kuyisono kulelizwe	Is the fact of our being black why we are being killed?
Mayibuye I Africa (×4)	Return Africa (×4)

(Nkoala, 2013; le Roux-Kemp, 2014, p. 256).

Context

The origin of this anti-Apartheid song is unknown. But it was usually sung at funerals, in churches, and as a march or civic demonstration song by Black South Africans. According to Nkoala (2013), the song has been in circulation since the 1950s, but became most popular during the 1980s. Its influence among the people has been so great that it is often compared to the influence generated by the American protest song "We Shall Overcome." The format of the song, which consists of two main verses of rhetorical questions, was intended to evoke the emotion of guilt in the leaders of the oppressive Apartheid regime. The aim was to highlight the absurdity of the racial and discriminatory laws of Apartheid South Africa. The song indirectly urges the oppressors to rethink their ways. The use of the indigenous psychology of repetition helps to reinforce the message and persuade the protestors to persist in their protest action as the only way that they could "Return Africa" to its former glory (Nkoala, 2013). This encourages the protestors and the listeners to anticipate a bright future.

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The song was expected to make its impact by inducing guilt in the oppressors. Indeed, the efficacy of struggle songs such as "Senzeni na?" lies not only in their accusative mood but also in their ability to probe and persuade. By verbalizing their concerns it brings a sense of relief as bottled-up emotions are released. The firm tone in the two verses of the song also helps to create an assertive stance that makes the people believe in the force of their existential agency.

2. Pasopa Verwoerd

Xhosa/Zulu lyrics	*English translation*
Nantsi' ndodemnyama, Verwoerd (×4)	Here is the Black man, Verwoerd (×4)
Pasopa nantsi' ndodemnyama, Verwoerd (×4)	Watch out here comes the Black man, Verwoerd (×4)
Nantsi' ndodemnyama, Verwoerd (×4)	Here comes the Black man, Verwoerd

(Nkoala, 2013)

Context

According to Nandi Modise, "Pasopa Verwoerd" is an important struggle song that was usually intoned when anti-Apartheid activists and oppressed people of South Africa came in direct confrontation with Apartheid officials (whether the army or the police). It was said that the Afrikaans word "pasopa" which means "watch out" was deliberately adopted in the lyrics of that song to provoke Apartheid authorities, the majority of whom were of Afrikaaner origin and could understand the language, vocabulary, and import of the song. Indeed, according to activist Nandi Modise (as cited by Le Roux-Kemp, 2014, p. 256), "when you really, really wanted to make the Boers (Afrikaaners) mad, you sing Pasopa Verwoerd because you are almost daring them." It is thus a song of deliberate provocation and perturbation of the emotional ease of the Apartheid leaders of the time. It was a warning song, too, directed particularly to Henrik Verwoerd, who was popularly known as the chief architect of the Apartheid system of government. He was Prime

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Minister of Apartheid South Africa from 1958 to 1966, and it was during his time in government that Black liberation movements such as the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress were banned. Also, he was usually described as the key point-man of the Apartheid system because it was during his time as Minister of Native Affairs (and thereafter as South Africa's Prime Minister) that the policy of racial segregation was formulated and formally passed into law.

3. Safa Saphel'Isiziwe

O Safa, saphel'isizwe'esimnyama	The Black nation is dying
O Safa isizwe sabantsundu	The African nation is dying
Anitshelen'inkokheli zethu zisilamulele	Tell our leaders to do something about this matter
Kuloludaba	Humming

Context

The origin (in terms of the composer) of this song is again unknown. But it is often spontaneously intoned in the context of grieving and mourning for the demise of fallen heroes, particularly at official funerals organized to mourn and celebrate the lives of Black activists or fallen heroes of the struggle. It was, therefore, fundamentally a song of consolation, communal reflection, and grieving.

4. Oliver Tambo thetha

Oliver Tambo thetha	Oliver Tambo speak to Botha
noBotha akhulu'uMandela	Tell him to release Mandela

Context

This song was sung at the time of struggle when Nelson Mandela and other influential Black activists were arrested and sent to serve prison terms on

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the infamous Robben Island. Nelson Mandela was one of the most articulate and well-known liberation struggle activists at the time. The singers intoned the song to announce that members of the Black nation in South Africa were adamant in demanding the immediate release of Nelson Mandela to enable their struggle for liberation to continue. They therefore sang this song as one way to protest against the oppressive government of Apartheid South Africa, a movement that operated from "the psychology of as if" (Vaihinger, 1925) their demand will be met.

5. Sarafina: Freedom Is Coming Tomorrow

If I don't live to see the day
You better believe it.
I'll be there
This is my home and I'm here to stay.
Freedom is coming tomorrow
Get ready mama prepare for your freedom
Freedom is coming tomorrow
Get ready for your freedom.
Yaahooo woza uzojaiva mama
Yaahooo woza uzojaiva mama
Yaahooo woza uzojaiva mama

Freedom is coming tomorrow
Freedom is coming tomorrow.
Freedom is coming tomorrow. Hey.

Context

This song is said to have been composed by Mbogeni Ngema during the 1976 Soweto, Sharpsville massacre following an uprising by primary school pupils protesting against being forced to learn all school subjects in the Afrikaans language. Many students who resisted being taught in that language were killed during a peaceful protest. The song, "Freedom Is Coming Tomorrow," was therefore meant to be a defiant song of mourning and consolation for the affected pupils, their families, and Black people in general. Through this song the oppressed emphasize their existential agency despite the structural

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constraints of the Apartheid system imposed on them (Allen, 2004; Blacking, 1967; Gilbert, 2007; Groenewald & Makopo, 1991, 1992; Memela, 1991).

6. My Black President

The lyrics of this prophetic song of hope are:

The year 1963
The people's president
Was taken away by security men
All dressed in a uniform
The brutality, brutality

OH no, my, my black president
He and his comrades
Were sentenced to isolation
For many painful years
For many painful years
Many painful years
Of hard labor
They broke rocks
But the spirit was never broken
Never broken
Oh no my black president.

Hmm maa, hmm maa, hmm ma mama
Hmm maa, hmm ma mama
Hmm maa, hmm maa, hmm ma Madiba.
Hmm maa, hmm maa, hmm ma Madiba.
Abh uyem-yem

They broke rocks.
But the spirit was never broken.
Never broken.
Oh my Black president.
Let us rejoice for our president.
Let us sing for our president.

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Let us pray for our president.
Let us sing, let us dance.
For Madiba, Madiba's freedom.

Now in 1990.
The people's president.
Came out from jail.
Raised up his hand and said.
"Viva, viva, my people."
He walked the long road.
Back, back to freedom.
Back to freedom.
Freedom for my Black president.
Let us rejoice for our president.
Let us sing for our president.
Let us pray for our president.
Let us sing, let us dance.
For Madiba, Madiba's freedom.

We thank You Lord, for listening to our prayers.
Oh, my president. I will die for my president.
I will sing for my president.
I will stand and say. Viva, viva, viva, viva, viva,
Viva my president.

Context

It was generally believed that Brenda Fassie's "My Black President" was a visionary, tipping-point song, offered a year before Mandela's exit from jail in 1990. In both content and presentation it was a thrilling song, filled with the sound of Black South Africa: namely, a harmonious choral group, smooth as chrome, humming through the song while Fassie sings. It imagines the moment when Nelson Mandela will be released to take up the position of president, marking the final dissolution of the obnoxious Apartheid system and ushering in a reality where the notion of Black presidency in South Africa would no longer be unthinkable. Consequently, the song made its impact by helping to hold up in people's imagination the precious image of a day of victory for their cause when the Apartheid system will no longer be there

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and when the great nation of South Africa would be ruled by a Black, not a White, president. The whole song therefore serves as a subjunctive transitional object for the people in the context of their oppression (Blacking, 1967; Gagiano, 2002; Groenewald & Makopo, 1991, 1992; Gunner, 2007; Kaschula, 1991; Nyberg, 1990).

Discussion

A close reading of these songs in the people's confrontation with the Apartheid system uncovers several issues of importance. The songs, whether alone or in combination, helped to motivate the people's endurance and unbelievable resilience. Indeed, the presence of these songs demonstrated that the lessons of Black Consciousness thought or the pedagogy of the oppressed propagated by Steve Biko and his colleagues bore the expected fruits. The inspiration they provided enabled the people to cope with their situation through the use of the critical (*kuku-nku*) and therapeutic songs to achieve their freedom. In particular, the songs helped the people in a variety of contexts. For instance, they were used

- To accompany protest marches against Apartheid policies and harassment
- To mourn and celebrate the lives of fallen heroes of the struggle
- To alleviate the social misery of politically instigated imprisonment, isolation, and suffering

Users of the songs can be divided into two categories—active (interactive) and receptive (passive). In the active form, participants were musically engaged and encouraged to create or describe their experiences with music (Gilbert, 2005; Groenewald & Makopo, 1992; Gunner, 2007). Receptive forms of the songs involved members of the society (as audience) simply listening to either the live or recorded versions. By this means, the songs spread all over the country because they could be bought in music shops in all corners of South Africa (as they can be to this day). Their value or impact was not restricted to a given time and place or to a specific group or ethnicity of the oppressed.

In the prison context, these songs offered inmates (whether as choristers/composers or listeners) the opportunity for distraction from negative

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thoughts and feelings, as well as motivation for a sense of autonomy and creative expression. In the same way, after listening to any of these songs, people tended to manifest feelings of renewed self-confidence and empowerment; they knew what others were doing or saying in different parts of South Africa and they could believe their struggle was progressing and that they were not alone in their pain or resistance. That is, the oppressed majority came to use the medium of the song as oral history to circulate information and messages about their struggle (Dolan, 1996; McAllister, 1988).

Therapeutic Value and Psychological Potency of the Struggle Songs

The songs had psychological benefits for people in desperate circumstances; for instance, they improved mood, decreased stress, pain, and anxiety, and enhanced relaxation, particularly for those serving prison terms (Hendricks, Robinson, Bradley, & Davis, 1999; Kent, 2006; McClellan, 1988). They eased the boredom and alienation of Apartheid imprisonment, helping Black political prisoners to cope with symptoms such as tension, depression, and nausea (Kent, 2006; Weinberger, 2004). The songs also facilitated interpersonal processes such as interaction, communication, and verbalization (Blood & Zatorre, 2001; Kent, 2006; Krumhansl, 1997; Meyer, 1956; Panksepp & Bematzky, 2002). One of the most important functions of the liberation songs was to help people verbalize their experience of oppression in order to cope with it better (Bright, 1999). Participating in the songs through active engagement or listening facilitated an increased sense of community and belonging (Gallant & Holosko, 1997; Hendricks et al., 1999; Trehan, 2004). Indeed, these songs textualized the Black people's presence in the negative context of Apartheid South Africa. The Black voices they transmitted constituted the faces of defiance and revolt that their Apartheid oppressors forced them to wear (Hooper, 2002; Kent, 2006).

In addition, Black struggle songs nurtured and enhanced group morale, promoting the indestructibility of resilience in facing political oppression (Gallant & Holosko, 1997; Hooper, 2002). As in music therapy interventions, they helped to promote wellness, improve group communication, express feelings, enhance memory (such as in Brenda Fassie's "My Black President"), and promote appropriate frames of mind (about the struggle) (Kent, 2006). Their creative, poetic, and emotional qualities facilitated contact, interaction,

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self-awareness, learning, self-expression, and social communication (Blood & Zatorre, 2001; Meyer, 1956; Panksepp & Bernatzky, 2002).

The songs also enabled the injured and their families to cope with negative emotions (Bright, 1999). This benefited the distressed in a complex way because music affects people spiritually, emotionally, socially, and physically (Kent, 2006; McClellan, 1988). The songs helped to distract the minds of the people from the decadence and injustice of the present and encouraged their belief in the future as a period of redress for the distressed. The power these songs carried helped people to cope with the loss of their loved ones from Apartheid violence "beyond the pain of the instant." They also helped people of diverse tribal and racial identities to bond together (Blacking, 1967; Gallant & Holosko, 1997; Hooper, 2002) to oppose a common enemy: the unjust system of Apartheid government in South Africa. They were able to put the audience and members of the choir into a certain frame of mind, promoting hope, consolation, and resistance or the spirit of defiance against the Apartheid system (Gagiano, 2002; Gilbert, 2007; Gunner, 2007). The songs' voice melodies became an inimitable presence or a kind of "neutron boldness" in the face of Apartheid leadership, exposing the lies the leaders tell themselves about who the Blacks of South Africa were (Gunner, 2007; Kent, 2006).

Finally, some of the songs, like "Sarafina" (or "Freedom Is Coming Tomorrow"), composed by Mbogeni Ngema in 1976, served to "inspire progressive and prophetic social motion" among the oppressed (Byerly, 1996, 1998; Gunner, 2007; Ntshinga, 1993). They initiated and activated a resurgence of faith and belief in the eventual collapse of the Apartheid system and the emergence of freedom and democracy in the country (Dolan, 1996). That is, the social theory of prophetic pragmatism as articulated by Cornel West (1989) and highlighted in Chapter 5 of this book, permeated and embedded the songs in their power and insight to identify, analyze, and condemn various forms of evil within the Apartheid regime. Thus they healed through forging vision, hope, and courage, enabling the people to overcome and transcend the atrocities of the Apartheid system (Byerly, 1996, 2007; Maree, 2011). For instance, songs like Brenda Fassie's 1989 "My Black President" spoke the language of prophesy or social vision that mobilized undreamed of popular energies. In the end, the song's devotion to the freedom of the oppressed had the last laugh. The Apartheid system eventually collapsed and in its place the democratic rainbow nation of South Africa was erected (Gray, 2008; Pongweni, 1982).

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Conclusion

This chapter explored the pedagogy of the oppressed (in the form of the BCM) that was drawn on by revolutionary leaders of the Black majority population to transcend their culture of silence and confront and challenge the oppressive Apartheid regime in search of social change. It showed how, influenced by the incisive impact of that pedagogy, the Black majority in South Africa were able to unite to fight for their freedom. Here, members of the oppressed during the Apartheid period in South Africa used as their weapon of resistance various songs of hope and consolation that enabled them to draw strength through bonding with words. A brief theory of two-tier psychology of the oppressed in Apartheid South Africa was reviewed to clarify the content of this influential pedagogy in revolutionizing the life and vision of the oppressed at that time. The first arm referred to the psychology of the BCM or what Paulo Freire referred to as the pedagogy of the oppressed. The second arm referred to the *kuku-nku* psychology or the use of songs of provocation as a weapon for lashing out against a negative system or social practice. This two-sided psychology was complementary rather than one being opposed to the other, as the first, Black Consciousness thought, operated as the theoretical arm of the second, the vernacular psychology of the people, which was the conscientized action component of that same psychology.

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18

From Mind to Relationship

A Five-Stage Theory of Community Participation in Grief Work in Africa

In his remarkable presentation at the Winter meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association 1999, published as the first chapter in *Meaning Reconstruction and the Experience of Loss* (Neimeyer, 1998), George Hagman (2001) addressed what he called the sea change that has taken place in the Eurocentric view of bereavement and mourning. The essay began with a sustained review of Sigmund Freud's foundational theory of mourning, initially presented in his 1915 paper "Mourning and Melancholia" published two years later under the same title (Freud, 1917). His effort in this regard encompassed not only a brief overview of the standard psychoanalytic view of mourning and the recent critiques of that model but also some proposals for its revision. At the core of his argument, Hagman targeted the asocial, intrapsychic nature of the standard model and its failure to address the full complexity of mourning reactions including the role of other persons (1996c) apart from the bereaved in facilitating mourning.

At the end of the first section of his presentation, Hagman came to the conclusion that Freud's view of grief and mourning that had formed the foundation for subsequent psychoanalytic practice on mourning is no longer acceptable because it was based on the notion of the human mind as a closed system free of the influence of a background and the impact of others. This, according to Hagman, amounts to the incorrect view that the work of mourning is a private and personal process, which leads to the notion that bereaved persons mourn and heal on their own. He cited the following definition of mourning, which was one of Freud's best known and most influential writings, to substantiate this conclusion:

> Now in what consists the work which mourning performs? The testing of reality, having shown that the loved object no longer exists, requires forthwith that the libido shall be withdrawn from its attachment to the object.

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> Against this demand a struggle of course arises—it may be universally observed that man never willingly abandons a libido-position, not even when a substitute is already beckoning to him. . . . The normal outcome is that deference for reality gains the day, nevertheless its behest cannot be at once obeyed. The task is carried through bit by bit, under great expense of time and cathectic energy, while all the time the existence of the lost object is continued in the mind. Each single one of the memories and hopes which bound the libido to the object is brought up and hyper-cathected, and the detachment of the libido from it is accomplished. . . . When the work of mourning is completed the ego becomes free and uninhibited again. (Freud, 1917, pp. 244–245)

Hagman (2001) opines that this basic understanding of mourning articulated by Freud describes what for Freud is "a normal, even universal, intrapsychic process the main function of which is the incremental divestment of libido (decathexis) from memories of the lost object." This means that, according to Freud, it is through the painful private process of mourning that psychological equilibrium is restored and motivation to love is renewed. In other words, for Freud, according to Hagman, "with the successful completion of the work of mourning all ties to the lost object are relinquished and pre-morbid functioning restored" (2001, p. 4).

Additionally, Hagman (2001) noted that, in 1961, there was another important addition to the standard model—the idea that the mourning process, by then accepted as an indubitable reality, was a biologically based process characterized by specific, identifiable stages (Bowlby, 1961; Parkes, 1981; Pollock, 1961; Volkan, 1981). Hence, for years, according to Hagman, the central concern of bereavement theorists became the identification of the nature and quantity of these stages. For Hagman, once again, this idea was enormously influential as with the advent of Kubler-Ross's (1969) work on death and dying the idea that mourning unfolded in predetermined phases became accepted as nothing short of a universal truth. No one, according to Hagman, seemed to raise a dissenting voice as the stage model began to dominate the Western cultural perspective on mourning.

Given this, Hagman (2001) notes that the best summary of the standard psychoanalytic model of mourning as it is held up to today can be found in the most recent edition of *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts*, published in 1991 as the standard reference of the American Psychoanalytic Association. Hagman's summary highlights how little has changed since Freud's original

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discussion in 1915. He cited the following extended quotation from Moore and Fine (1991) to substantiate this claim:

> Mourning is . . . the mental process by which man's psychic equilibrium is restored following the loss of a meaningful love object . . . it is a normal process to any significant loss. The predominant mood of mourning is painful and is usually accompanied by loss of interest in the outside world, preoccupation with memories of the lost object, and diminished capacity to make new emotional investments. Uncomplicated mourning is not pathological and does not require treatment. With time the individual adapts to the loss and renews his or her capacity for pleasure in relationships. Although reality testing is preserved and confirms that the loved object no longer exists, in the internal process of mourning the aggrieved person initially is unable to withdraw attachment from the lost object. Instead the mourner turns away from reality through denial, and clings to the mental representation of the lost object. Thus the object loss is turned into an ego loss. Through the stages of the mourning process, this ego loss is gradually healed and psychic equilibrium is restored. The work of mourning includes three successive, interrelated phases, the success of each affecting the next: (1) understanding, accepting and coping with the loss and its circumstances; (2) the mourning proper, which involves withdrawal of attachment to and identification with the lost object (decathexis); and (3) resumption of emotional life in harmony with one's level of maturity, which frequently involves establishing new relationships (recathexis). (Moore & Fine, 1991, p. 122)

Drawing from this quotation Hagman enumerated in his presentation what survives as the key components of this standard psychoanalytic model of mourning. These assumptions, according to Hagman, have been highly influential in psychoanalytic circles as well as modern Western perspectives on grief and mourning, generally. These components of the traditional standard psychoanalytic model of mourning as summarized by Hagman (2001, pp. 8–12) include the notions that

1. There is an identifiable, normal psychological mourning process.
2. The function of mourning is a conservative and restorative one, rather than transformative.
3. Mourning is a private, intrapsychic process, rather than social and relational.

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4. The affect of grief arises spontaneously from within the individual, and denial or suppression of grief leads to pathological states.
5. Mourning has normal, standardized characteristics, rather than being unique and personal.
6. Mourning is painful and sad, rather than involving a range of affects.
7. The central task of mourning is detachment (decathexis), rather than continuity.
8. The vicissitudes of psychic energy is the basis of the standard psychoanalytic model; the meanings associated with the loss are not emphasized.
9. The normal mourning process leads to a point of full resolution, rather than being open and evolving.

Hagman's (1995a, 1995b, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 2001) key argument in the light of these assumptions can be outlined as follows, namely, that

1. Freud's original depiction of mourning was not valid as a general model (Hagman, 1995a, 1995b).
2. A model of isolated mourning does not recognize the important role of others in mourning (Hagman, 1996c).
3. We must look beyond decathexis and relinquishment to the central goal of continuity in mourning. Hagman (1995a, 1995b, 1996a, 2001), Kaplan (1995), and Shapiro (1996) each argued that the emphasis on relinquishment has so dominated the psychoanalytic perspective that normal processes of preservation and continuity have been neglected if not pathologized.
4. The psychic energy model is too concrete because meaning and dialogue are at the heart of mourning.
5. The classical view of pathological mourning does not capture the positive function of the attempt to preserve meaning in the face of disruption (Hagman, 1995a, 1996a).
6. The standard model's perspective on grief as private does not capture the complexity and fundamentally communicative function of grief affects (Hagman, 1996c).
7. The stage model of mourning does not recognize the complexity and uniqueness of each mourning experience (Hagman, 1996b).

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Following these indications, Hagman (2001) offered the following as a way forward in providing a new definition of the psychoanalytic perspective on grief and mourning. That definition states that

> Mourning refers to a varied and diverse psychological response to the loss of an important other. Mourning involves the transformation of the meanings and affects associated with one's relationship to the lost person, the goal of which is to permit one's survival without the other while at the same time insuring [*sic*] a continuing experience of relationship with the deceased. The work of mourning is rarely done in isolation and may involve active engagement with fellow mourners and other survivors. An important aspect of mourning is the experience of disruption in self-organization due to the loss of the function of the relationship with the other in sustaining self-experience. Thus mourning involves a reorganization of the survivor's sense of self as a key function of the process. (2001, pp. 17–18)

The African Perspective

I have gone into detail in drawing attention to the fine work by Hagman (1995a, 1995b, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 2001) to demonstrate that, while recognizing and appreciating the enormous work being done in the modern psychoanalytic literature to improve human understanding of the phenomenon and dynamics of grief and mourning, the current psychoanalytic perspective on mourning as an intersubjective phenomenon (no longer merely an intrapsychic) process (Stolorow & Atwood, 1992) is still limited and needs to be expanded to accommodate the African perspective on grief and mourning, in which there is an emphasis on the role of culture and the community in facilitating mourning.

Hence my key point of departure in this chapter is that, although some influential Western theorists and scholars (including Sigmund Freud himself) have emphasized the role of intrapsychic factors in the management and resolution of grief and mourning and have tended to give the impression that people heal on their own in the face of bereavement, I argue in the remainder of this chapter that, across the different cultural groups of Africa, bereaved persons neither grieve alone nor heal on their own—they are instead assisted by the community and culture to grieve and mourn the pain of their loss. To clarify and substantiate this claim, a five-stage theory of community

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participation in grief work in Africa is offered. The constitutive fabric of the theory is intended to provide answers to the following three questions: What practices do indigenous/present rural Africans have for helping their members in grief and loss? What is the psychological capital embedded in such practices? And how do they effect their healing?

Five-Stage Theory of Community Participation in Grief Work in Africa

My five-stage theory of community participation in grief work in Africa proposes that successful mourning in the African context is brought about by the systematic presentation of a number of biological, cognitive, social, spiritual, and cultural works of the community in its supportive care of the bereaved. The details of the theory are highlighted here to specify and discuss the stages and the healing rituals (cognitive, social, psychological, cultural, and spiritual) that go with them. Before going into this, however, I first present the following case study drawn from my previous work (Nwoye, 2005) on this theme, which will form the background to the rest of the discussion.

Case Example

In July 1980, a very painful death occurred in a village in Igboland, an ethnic area in Nigeria, West Africa. A 15-year-old boy, Anayo, the only child of a widow, died in a motorcycle accident. Being a learner and yet speeding on the motorcycle, Anayo was unable to locate the brake. Unable to stop, he collided with a mosque, his head hitting the wall. He died on the spot. When the news got to Anayo's employer (until his death he was serving as an apprentice in timber merchandise), he sent word around to a network of his fellow male villagers in the city, informing them of the incident. Each, on hearing the news, reported to Anayo's master's house. When they all came they were sad, but quickly went into a crisis meeting aimed at deciding how to send the distressing news home. They divided themselves into two groups. One group was to stay back and arrange for hospital preservation of the body until after everything had been set for taking it back home to his village and mother. The second group

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(composed of three villagers) was sent to take the news home in advance of the body. They did not go straight to Anayo's mother. Rather, they went to Anayo's uncle who fortunately was at home when they arrived. They shared the news with him and then planned with him how to go about breaking the news to Anayo's mother, who was on the farm. They planned how to bring her home first, since the news could not be announced to her on the farm where she was working (see later explanation). They decided to send somebody she trusted to go and bring her back. This person went with the message that Anayo had just reported home on his way to Ibadan (Western Nigeria) and would like to see her before leaving again. Not suspecting anything in the message, she quickly left her work to follow the messenger. By the time they reached her home it was already late evening, a time considered conducive to the breaking of bad news or for holding serious discussions. When Anayo's mother could not find him at home as she had expected, she began to be disturbed. At that vital moment, Anayo's uncle and the three gentlemen from the city poured into the compound, as if from nowhere. Anayo's mother had scarcely finished welcoming them before they requested that she sit down for a while. Anayo's uncle took up the task of breaking the news to her in the presence of the others. She was told the true story: that Anayo had a motorcycle accident, colliding with the mosque, hitting his head on the wall, and dying on the spot. She was told that his body was already on its way home for the burial. Before she could hear all these details she had broken down in uncontrollable wailing, attracting the attention of neighbors and passers-by, who came and joined her, crying in solidarity. And from that day until some days after the burial, Anayo's family home was understood to be a house of death and wailing.

Seen from this case vignette, the central core of my five-stage theory of community intervention in grief work in Africa is that in facilitating mourning in the context of bereavement in a typical African community, the following separate but interrelated stages are traversed. They are discussed in the order in which they are presented, starting with stage one.

Stage One: *Breaking of Bad News and Solidarity Crying with the Bereaved*. The key point developed in this first stage is that one of the major contributions of the community in helping to attenuate the grief and mourning of the bereaved in the African context is the planned and judicious effort that is made to break the bad news of the death to the bereaved

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at the appropriate time and setting as dictated by the culture and the community in which the death occurred. Thus one of the basic components of grief work in traditional Africa is the effort made by members of the community to break the news about the death at an appropriate time and setting. The home of the bereaved (if he or she was away when the death occurred) is considered the appropriate setting. The market, the farm, the hallway or somewhere along the road are considered inappropriate settings. Traditional wisdom considers that such bad news requires a calm ambience for it to be properly told and assimilated. Similarly, early morning and late evening are considered appropriate hours for assimilation of such stressful information because they constitute the liminal periods of the day, between rest and work, when the majority of neighbors and friends will not have gone out in pursuit of their daily business. It is considered beneficial that neighbors and friends be in their homes when the news is broken, since the bereaved's weeping on receiving such news needs the emotional support of familiar people. An important healing component of this stage is the presence of an intervening/witnessing community consisting of fellow villagers, neighbors, and friends. They cry with the bereaved in joint protest against the loss, thereby manifesting that quality of empathic availability enunciated by Marcel (1956) and Lantz (1994). Their supportive crying at this period carries an enormous psychological power (Tompkins, 1994). It validates for the bereaved "the relevance of tears" (Sutcliffe, Tufnell, & Cornish, 1998) and signifies that his or her crying is not a sign of immaturity or weakness (Raphael, 1983) but the appropriate response in the face of loss. This was the pattern that took place when Anayo's death was announced to his widowed mother. The care, physical presence, and maturity of the community (in the case of Anayo's death, three elders officiated in the process) added credibility to the news and addressed the needs of her *fact memory* (Nwoye, 2005; Williams, 1996). The community's presence and crying in solidarity with her further addressed the needs of her *behavioral memory* (Nwoye, 2005; Williams, 1996). By the notion of her behavioral memory here is meant the idea that in the community's solidarity crying with her in the face of the loss, their actions matched her expectations of support at such a difficult moment in her life, and she derived healing from being guarded and protected by their supportive shoulders. In addition, the shared crying confirmed her belief that weeping about the death is part of the essential process of mourning. In this way, the community supplied her behavioral memory with the objective cues for grieving appropriate at this period. In this case, removing ambiguity facilitates her healing.

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Stage Two: *Limited Re-parenting and Systemic Practice.* At this second stage, a different orientation is involved. Crying in solidarity is suspended and attention is directed to how the community can help the bereaved to get back the physical energy expended in the previous stage. Here, the impact of the loss on the bereaved's ability to function as the home keeper and caretaker for the family is one of the basic considerations. In the case of Anayo's mother, extended family members, neighbors, friends, age mates, and other members of the larger local community volunteered to take over the responsibilities of cleaning the home and compound and preparing it for the guests who came from far and near to express condolences. They fetched water for the home. Even the burial and funeral arrangements (as the use of the undertaker is not entertained in rural Africa) were taken over by these volunteers. Because Anayo's mother was encouraged to sit in one place and receive visitors, thereby being placed in a comfortable position of *detached attachment* (for more information on this construct, see Chapter 5 of this book), her relatives and other close friends prepared her food. The attention and supportive care she got at this period is equivalent to that made available to a hospital patient by relatives and friends. It follows from the conviction of traditional African culture that a person in a painful state of bereavement is usually weak, confused, destabilized, unfocused, and incapable of attending to day-to-day responsibilities (Engel, 1961; Frederick, 1976–1977; Lindemann, 1941; Lundin, 1984; Pollock, 1989; Parkes & Weiss, 1983). Allowing her to rest, they assume, will promote her health and resilience. A number of healing practices that the volunteers undertake at this stage on behalf of the bereaved are also worth mentioning because they reach out to other members of the family. In cases where children are bereaved, their needs are attended to not by their mourning mother or father, but by relatives and friends. In addition, the volunteers take on the task of feeding the family goats, sheep, and cows, attending to the family farm and other concerns. When Anayo died, friends, relatives and neighboring women offered to sleep at his mother's house for some days—some of the most closely related slept there for weeks (one Igbo week being equivalent to 4 days). They do this to encourage her to sleep through their own example. Thus, grief work in Africa helps to attend both to the intrapsychic and the interpersonal needs of the bereaved. Her behavioral memory (her internalized memory of what the friends and relatives usually do to support the bereaved), which was attended to at the previous stage, continues to be served at this second stage, too. The various supportive intrapsychic and interpersonal interventions made available to her by volunteers

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match her expectations of continued supportive care from her relatives and friends (Taylor, 1983a, 1983b; Taylor & Brown, 1998). Her prospective memory (Nwoye, 2005; Williams, 1996) or her fear of what will happen to her various personal interests following the loss is healed by the volunteers' thoughtful care for her animals, farm, and other family concerns, which she cannot supervise because she is engaged in complying with mourning rituals as dictated by the culture and the community in which the death occurred.

Stage Three: Promotion of Positive Cognitive Adaptation. In traditional African culture, it is assumed that the way a mourner experiences a death depends on how he or she interprets the loss or, in modern psychological parlance, its "personal meaning" (Lazarus & Lazarus, 1994). For this reason the community's intervention at this third stage entails an attempt to challenge the negative meanings the bereaved makes; for example, Anayo's mother's predictions regarding her life prospects now that her (only) son has died. During funeral ceremonies in Africa, people make emotionally sustaining speeches aimed at promoting "multiple descriptions" of the meaning of the loss. The effect is to uplift the bereaved's self-image and prospective memory (Nwoye, 2005; Williams, 1996). Such speeches include stories and parables intended to teach the bereaved a new way of looking at the loss. Thus, most of the speeches made to Anayo's mother at this stage were aimed at helping her to make a "downward comparison" (Taylor, 1983a) to help her to realize that others were less fortunate than her, rather like Western cognitive therapy's "positive comparison." Lazarus and Lazarus point out that "a judgment that we are better off than others is sometimes a way of coping with adversity. . . . Positive comparisons can sometimes change the personal meaning of a situation enough to mitigate some of the distress" (1994, p. 32). In the same vein, influential health psychologist and researcher Pennebaker (1988) points out that coping with recent traumatic experiences is facilitated by confronting and working through the threats they produce. The therapeutic impact of these speeches, some of which focus on the bereaved person's memory of the dead, call to mind Walter's "biographical model" (1996) in which opportunities to talk about the deceased with others who knew and loved him or her are crucial in resolving grief. Walter's position is that these speeches create a fuller "biography" of the deceased's life. Klass (1996) emphasizes the importance of shared conversations with loved ones in transforming the relationship with the deceased into a continuing and positive internal dialogue. And Klass's work with the Compassionate Friends shows that those rituals that promote opportunities for exchanging stories and recollections

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about the life of the deceased help to transform the nature of the relationship from one centering on actual physical interactions to one based on internal representations (Riches & Dawson, 2000). Such mourning speeches thus heal by promoting "conversational remembering" of the deceased. In addition, it might also be considered therapeutic that memories are edited, rearranged, and repositioned in order for the bereaved person to make sense of life without the deceased's physical presence (Giddens, 1991; Riches & Dawson, 2000, p. 369). Two memory systems (event and prospective) as articulated by Williams (1996) were served when the speeches and condolences helped to impress upon Anayo's mother that all was not lost in her life when Anayo died. Other people's presence and contributions were designed to promote in her the sustaining belief that, despite Anayo's death, she could still go on, trusting herself to reinvest in the dedicated assistance of friends. Promoting "constructive illusions" (Taylor, 1983a, 1983b; Taylor & Brown, 1988) in the bereaved functions as an essential component of the healing process.

Stage Four: Rituals of Cleansing, Breaking of Bonds, and Leave-Taking. This fourth stage introduces a number of processes and indigenous mourning rituals intended to symbolize for the bereaved the idea of formal leave-taking and the severing of bonds with the deceased. Among the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria and the Bukusu of Western Kenya, some of the parting rituals conducted by the community for the bereaved at this stage include the following:

- *Cutting the Bereaved's Hair or Shaving His or Her Head*. In some places, such as among the Igbo, this parting ritual takes place on the twelfth day following the burial. In some, an ordinary close cut of the hair is considered sufficient; in others, such as among the Bukusu, the bereaved's hair is completely shaved. The hair is thrown away into the natural refuse disposal area of the village, such as the gullies, from where, it is reasoned, it will be washed away forever to an unknown destination during the rainy season. This indicates permanent severing of bonds with the deceased, inaugurating in the memory of the bereaved the phenomenon of detached attachment in his or her subsequent relationship with the deceased. The hair removed in this process is the hair the bereaved was carrying at the time the death took place. For widows and widowers this is a very important transition in their adjustment. It helps them to embrace the technique of detached attachment as they negotiate the process of rebuilding and reinvestment in other people without guilt about

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betraying the former bond with the deceased partner. It is thus a ritual that signifies for the bereaved the exit of the old order and the opening of space for the inauguration of a new one.

- *The Bereaved's Ritual Bath*. In many places, such as among the Igbo, enactment of this second ritual is a gender-specific process. Only widows are considered in need of the ritual bath. On the appointed day, which is usually the twelfth day after burial, she is accompanied to the village stream in the early hours of the morning. The ritual includes "leaving behind" and eventually throwing away after the bath the dress (or wrapper) she has been wearing all through the period of her grief up to this time. She exchanges this for an official mourning dress, which she is expected to wear from that day until the full mourning period is over. This ritual, like the one previously outlined, signifies the community's effort to "neutralize" in the bereaved's mind the space previously occupied by the deceased. During the ritual of throwing away the old dress, the bereaved is instructed to make certain (verbal) ritual pronouncements to the deceased, to the effect that their original bonding has been broken and that, from now onward, the two of them are no longer one. This is a way of instilling in the bereaved the formal recognition of the end of the old order and the beginning of a new one. It is also a way of orchestrating the practical psychological emergence in the mind of the bereaved of the condition of detached attachment between the bereaved and the deceased.
- *Formal Removal of the Official Mourning Dress*. During this ritual the bereaved takes off official mourning dress at the expiration of the approved period. The length of this period differs from community to community—in some places between 6 months and 2 years. The bereaved burns or throws away the mourning dress. Here, as the dresses (usually a pair is involved) are removed and burned, they are immediately replaced with new clothes that are intended to symbolize to the bereaved the formal end of her mourning and that he or she now remains in the transformed condition of detached attachment with the deceased. Essentially, this ritual of re-clothing concretizes for the bereaved the fact that he or she is permitted to reenter the full social life of the community. This gives him or her the social permission to remarry and, in the case of a widow, to become pregnant (where need be) without shame. African Christians these days usually celebrate this official end to their mourning process by requesting friends

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> and relations to accompany them to a thanksgiving Church service conducted on their behalf on that day. I argue that the elaborative processes involved in these rituals heal by addressing the behavioral memory of the bereaved. Through them, the bereaved experiences the relief of knowing that he or she has followed the mourning protocol socially approved by the community. Bereaved individuals feel satisfied that they have been able to do all that was required to honor the deceased by socially appropriate mourning before struggling to reinvest in the people around them and forge ahead with life. The healing effected at this stage also positively affects the bereaved's prospective memory. With the ritual of parting fully conducted, they feel empowered to go on with life without any fear that they might incur a curse or other punishment as a result of the deceased's grudge arising from some disservice or disrespect shown during the mourning period. Ifesieh (1989) provides details about how these performative parting rituals are shaped differently in some parts of Africa, such as among the Nri (Igbo) of Nigeria. But such variation in the details does not detract from the common therapeutic goal of these experiences: to promote behavioral pattern breaking between the bereaved and the deceased and to inaugurate and consolidate the phenomenon of detached attachment in the relationship that now exists between the bereaved and the deceased. In all accounts, the psychological relief that is expected and experienced is the same: the bereaved is now free to reestablish his or her life in the absence of the dead without experiencing feelings of guilt or disloyalty.

Stage Five: Rehabilitation and Reconciliation. The stage of rehabilitation and reconciliation is not an ubiquitous part of community intervention in grief work in Africa. When the loss involves the death of a child, for example, it is not relevant. It becomes a crucial component in the case of the death of a young married man with little children and a widow left behind. It is also part of the grief work when a husband with several wives dies. In these latter instances, the traditional culture encourages some kind of rehabilitation process for the widow and children. A space is created within the context of community participation in the grief-work process for a family council meeting, organized by members of the deceased's extended family, to attend to urgent family matters. On the agenda in that meeting are

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- Property settlement among the dead man's children
- Need for the continued education and training of the young father's children
- Need for the rehabilitation of the widow

Among the Luhya people of Kenya, another important item on such an agenda is the settlement of debt claims before family council members disperse. Some people bring up claims that the deceased was indebted to them before he or she died. Or, conversely, there are instances where the bereaved people themselves could bring up claims that certain extended family members or the community owed the deceased some amount of money, cattle, goats, sheep, or land. One important practice is for either the relatives of the bereaved or of the deceased to offer to take some of the children along with them as they depart, to take care of their education and training, as their personal contribution to the full rehabilitation process in the deceased's family. This is a vital process in village communities where the option of government-provided social security for children is unavailable. Gestures like these constitute the community's restoration strategy to enable the bereaved to repair some of the secondary losses caused by the death. Here, emphasis in many cases is on the bereaved's preoccupation with "identity projects" disrupted by death (housing, family car already ordered but not yet fully paid for, loans received in the deceased's name, children's education, etc.). All these are issues that could cause sleepless nights in the mind of the bereaved and delay successful mourning. They show that it is the prospective memory of the bereaved (their anxieties about how to face the future) that is targeted for healing at this stage. With the outstanding matters arising from the death effectively addressed and settled, the main issues dominating the bereaved's prospective memory—such as what to do about the children—are now transcended. And the resolution of these outstanding concerns leads, ultimately, to a lasting, holistic relief in the bereaved's memory.

Implications for Modern Psychological Practice

This discussion demonstrates that mourning and grief work in Africa, like that in the worldwide Muslim community (Mehraby, 2005), reflect an elaborate community perspective that goes beyond the promotion of the bereaved's emotional or psychological adjustment as emphasized in the

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psychoanalytic tradition. The interventions highlighted in my five-stage theory challenge us with the idea that a proper grieving process entails some mourning protocol compliance and ritual observance. The discussion in particular shows that effective grief resolution is a bio-psychosocio-cultural-spiritual process (Nwoye, 2015; Stroebe & Stroebe, 1987; Stroebe, Stroebe, & Hansson, 1993) that can only come about if certain concrete issues and particular aspects of the bereaved's memory have been adequately addressed through the support of the community (Hagman, 1996c), not through the bereaved doing his or her mourning work and healing on his or her own (Hagman, 2001). This discussion also underscores how important it is to be culturally competent and to understand the spiritual view of any ethnic group if the aim is to promote healing in the bereaved. The theory presented in this chapter will add a certain cross-cultural perspective to the extant literature on bereavement, suggesting that prescriptions through customs may be more effective than prescriptions for individual cases who happen to encounter professional advice (Rosenblatt, 1975/1989, p. 45).

Similarly, this discussion demonstrates the cultural roots of the positive role that support groups play in our Westernized and postcolonial contexts in helping traumatized populations and families regain control of their lives. The effort that the members of Anayo's community made to ensure that his remains were successfully brought home from the city where he died for purposes of having his corpse being properly buried in his home village where he was born and raised draws attention to the healing value of enabling traumatized communities to search for and conduct a formal and symbolic reburial of their relatives who died in ethnic clashes and who were originally buried in mass graves in the aftermath of war (Jahn & Wilhelm-Solomon, 2015). Aid workers and other local and international caregivers who intervene in the event of national disasters such as plane crashes might find that some of the ideas and even portions of the rituals highlighted in this article are valuable for their practice.

Conclusion

From these implications the following conclusions can thus be made:

1. Mourning, in the African context, consists of an identifiable psychocultural process, describable in terms of the passing by the

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bereaved of a number of identifiable stages (five) established by the community and culture to which he or she belongs.

2. The function of mourning in the Africentric perspective is not only conservative or restorative but also transformative in the sense that it leads to the emergence of the condition of *detached attachment* (clarified in Chapter 5 of this book) in the relationship that exists between the bereaved and the deceased, a condition that enables the bereaved to learn the art of giving up his or her pre-bereavement invested attachment in the deceased following the deceased's transition and his or her successful mourning of the loss, without at the same time reaching after the goal of achieving a complete erasure of his or her memory of the deceased. Through the process of detached attachment the bereaved learns to relate with the deceased later on in life as one possible ancestor to be depended on for supportive benevolence as need arises.
3. Mourning, in the African context, much unlike in the Western perspective, is not a private, individuocentric/intrapsychic process, but rather entails the performance of culturally determined bio-psycho-social-cultural-spiritual protocols that are both communal and relational in nature (Hagman, 2001).
4. The affect of grief and mourning in the African context arises spontaneously from within the members of the community, who cry with the bereaved in solidarity of protest for the loss (Bowlby, 1980; Nwoye, 2005; Sisodia, 1997).
5. In the African perspective, the central task of mourning is the promotion of the emergence of the condition of continuing *detached attachment* between the bereaved and the deceased after the mourning period is over.
6. The enduring presence of strong human association bonded by kinship, ethnicity, faith, and culture in the African mourning tradition helps the bereaved to recognize and accept that the process of bereavement and mourning has a definite beginning and ending.
7. The phenomenon of pathological mourning is rare in Africa because of the presence of coherent and transformative rituals of mourning made available by the culture and the community for the benefit of the bereaved (Nwoye, 2005).
8. Grief and mourning rituals and processes indigenous to rural African communities are directed at healing four memory components of the bereaved. These memory components are fact, behavioral, event, and

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prospective memories. (For details of the meaning of these memories, see Nwoye, 2005; Williams, 1996.)

9. While Western researchers (Bowlby, 1980; Kubler-Ross, 1969; Parkes, 1998) have largely been concerned with the individual's reaction to loss, the African perspective focuses on the biological, social, cultural, communal, spiritual, systemic, and interactional nature of healing in grieving and the resources which the community makes available to bereaved persons.

In sum then, the take-home message of the five-stage theory of grief work in Africa highlighted in this chapter is the view that most of the things that rural African people do to address the needs of those in grief and suffering loss are intended to help the bereaved to achieve appropriate grief and mourning. Consequently, it is argued that these community processes operate as aspects of indigenous positive psychology endowed with enormous therapeutic potency which, when effectively executed, prevents the bereaved from developing serious psychological complications requiring the attention of psychiatrists.

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19

Rituals of Cleansing and Repossession

An Africentric Approach to Treatment of Moral Injury

Two important influences inspired the need for the study that gave rise to this chapter. The first is the recent acknowledgment in Western literature that moral injury is closely related to a greater risk of suicide among veterans and active duty military (V/ADM) in Europe and the United States (Bryan, Bryan, Morrow, Etienne, & Ray-Sannerud, 2014; Bryan, Morrow, Etienne, & Ray-Sannerud, 2013; Levi-Belz & Zerach, 2018; Miller, 2012).

The second is the emerging realization from studies on moral injury in Africa that although atrocities that inflict moral injury on child soldiers in contemporary Africa are truly unspeakable and traumatic, the phenomenon of moral injury in African victims is never allowed to degenerate to the stage where the affected victims must contemplate or resort to suicide (Bracken, Giller, & Summerfied, 1995; Green & Honwana, 1999; Granjo, 2006; Honwana, 1999; Igreja, 2003; Igreja, Dias-Lambranca, & Richters, 2008; Lundin, 1998).

The apparent discrepancy in these two literatures calls for some explanation. However from the perspective of the Africentric paradigm (Bracken et al., 1995; Green & Honwana, 1999; Granjo, 2006; Honwana, 1999; Igreja, 2003; Igreja et al., 2008; Lundin, 1998) it can safely be hypothesized that pathological and irreversible damage from moral injury is rare in Africa because of the presence of coherent and transformative rituals of cleansing and repossession which the indigenous African community makes available to the morally injured person(s). As I hope to demonstrate, such rituals and performative experiences heal by addressing some principal aspects of the cultural memory of the victims.

The aim of this chapter is to elaborate on the content, process, symbolic meanings, and clinical potency of these rituals. To achieve this objective, the following themes are discussed:

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1. The notion of moral injury as understood in the literature.
2. Western approaches to management of moral injury and their limitations.
3. Sources of moral injury among child soldiers in contemporary Africa.
4. Case examples of rituals of cleansing and repossession in the treatment of moral injury of child soldiers in Africa.
5. The problem of moral injury in the civilian/refugee population in Africa.
6. Rituals of cleansing and repossession in the treatment of moral injury: a civilian couple example.

The Notion of Moral Injury in the Extant Literature

Apart from initial attempts to define it, some more recent definitions of the term "moral injury" exist in Western literatures that provide lucid images of how moral injury can be characterized and the precipitating conditions for its emergence. One such definition was contributed by Litz et al. (2009), and a revised version was offered by Maguen and Litz (2012).

The 2009 definition proposes that moral injury is brought about by the experience of "bearing witness to, or failing to prevent, or perpetrating acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations." The revised definition, on the other hand, introduced the idea that the transgressions that act as precipitants to moral injury "can arise from individual acts of commission or omission, the behavior of others, or by bearing witness to intense human suffering or the grotesque aftermath of battle." Both definitions offer important insight into the conceptual descriptions of the categories of experiences that can give rise to the problem of moral injury in the African sample.

However, as I had noted elsewhere (Nwoye, 2021), judged from the African perspective, which was conspicuously omitted in the studies by both Litz et al. (2009) and Maguen and Litz (2012), one of the limitations in the Western conceptualization of moral injury is the failure to sufficiently emphasize that in many contexts, like we have in Africa, people—particularly child soldiers—can suffer from moral injury not because of the transgressions they deliberately and voluntarily took upon themselves, but from *being forced to commit some harrowing, unspeakable, and horrific acts against their parents, relatives, or friends that violate their deepest sense of moral decency and ancestral and cultural code of conduct.*

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Western Approaches to Management of Moral Injury and Their Limitations

A number of Western models for treatment of moral injury have been proposed, including the more popular ones like *adaptive disclosure* (Litz, Lebowitz, Gray, & Nash, 2016), the *cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)-derived models* (Litz et al., 2009), and *acceptance and commitment therapy* (Blinka & Harris, 2016). One major limitation with each of these Eurocentric-based models is their emphasis on the individuocentric/intrapsychic perspective and the implied notion that the process of repairing a moral injury is a psychological, clinic-based affair.

Even when reference is made to the social and spiritual aspects of the intervention (Blinka & Harris, 2016), the focus is largely on how such processes could be exploited by the individual client for his or her own psychological betterment. Little or no attention is given to the notion of moral injury as entailing the *social wounds of war* and on *how to redress the cultural disequilibrium engendered by the experiences of war* through the horrendous acts of omission or forced commission by returning soldiers. In particular, most of the discussions and models of treatment of moral injury in Western literature have focused on the problem of veterans, not the civilian victims, of such injuries. Yet in the African context moral injury of the civilian population is never an exception to the rule.

Part of the aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how these gaps can be closed through drawing from the Africentric perspective. However, before engaging in this we first explore the major sources of moral injury in contemporary Africa.

Sources of Moral Injury Among Child Soldiers in Contemporary Africa

The desk research approach was used to generate data for highlighting the sources of moral injury among child soldiers in contemporary Africa and the indigenous healing rituals that are applied in treating them.

In this regard, data on sources of moral injury among child soldiers in contemporary Africa was garnered from a purposive review of a very important article on moral injury among child soldiers in Africa published by Daniela Baro in 2006. The article, "Children Witnessing Atrocities Against

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Parents or Caregivers: A Human Rights Perspective," detailed the kind of atrocities experienced by child soldiers in Africa that served as precipitants to their crises of moral injury. This is followed by a review of the Africentric approach to treatment of moral injury of African child soldiers from Angola and Mozambique as reported by Green and Honwana (1999), along with indirect reference to this issue in the works of Igreja (2003) and Igreja, Dias-Lambranca, and Richte (2008).

Atrocities That Precipitate Moral Injury in the African Sample

From the Baro's study report some of the atrocities that precipitate moral injury in African child soldiers include the following:

1. *Forcing children to commit crimes against their parents*. In Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Liberia, and Northern Uganda, as reported by Baro (2006, p. 192), "the [war] recruitment process, which in most cases is done through abduction, manipulation or force, at times also includes forcing children to commit horrific acts, such as killing of family members. This is done with the idea that such acts will break their spirit, turn them into ruthless soldiers, cause them to be ostracized by their community and prevent them from returning home."

   Specific instances of this heartless practice were outlined in the report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) cited by Baro which showed that "child combatants in Liberia and Sierra Leone were forced to kill companions as an initiation process to enter the group. . . . [B]oys from both factions have told us that there were initiation procedures when they joined [where] they were actually forced to witness the execution of family members or their friends. If they screamed or cried, they were killed. Boys have told us of being lined up to watch executions and being forced to applaud" (cited in Baro, 2006, p. 193; see also Singer, 2006).

   Daniela Baro, in the same (2006) article, indicated that Sierra Leonean children have reported to the Sierra Leonean Truth and Reconciliation Commission of having been forced to kill family members, for example, "One boy who was abducted at the age of eight was forced to watch his parents mutilated and killed. Then he was

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drugged until he didn't know what he was doing and ordered to 'watch,' or kill, his remaining family members. He was taken as fighter in the Revolutionary United Front until he was later captured by the Sierra Leonean army and again recruited by force into its ranks" (cited in Baro, 2006, p. 193).

2. *Forcing children to engage in horrendous acts against their consciences and cultural mores*. Similar acts like the one just mentioned have also been reported as practised by Uganda's Lord Resistance Army (LRA) and the UNITA in Angola. According to Baro (2006, p. 193; see also Singer, 2006) "children abducted by the LRA were made to carry out raids, loot and burn houses and kill civilians and other child soldiers."

   In one instance, "One boy tried to escape but he was caught. His hands were tied and then they made us, the other new captives, to kill him with a stick. I felt sick. I knew this boy before; we were from the same village. I refused to do it and they told me they would shoot me. They pointed a gun at me, so I had to do it. . . . I see him in my dreams and he is saying I killed him for nothing, and I am crying."

   According to the same report in Baro's article, African children have even been forced to watch or commit cannibalism, to undo family ties and bond with the armed group. "Examples from the DRC include a child associated to an ethnic based armed group being forced to mutilate his mother's breast for a ritual ceremony where body organs were eaten by the group." In Sierra Leone, ". . . B saw his father and brother beaten to death and their internal organs removed and given to his mother to prepare as a meal. The mother obeyed or else she would also have been killed. When the meal was ready, the rebels asked B and his mother to join them in eating the meal" (cited by Baro, 2006, p. 194; similar stories are found in Singer, 2006).

3. *Forcing children to break taboos and cultural norms into which they have been socialized*. Baro's report also showed that forcing children to break cultural norms was among the regular atrocities of the war years in some African countries. These came in such forms as forcing child soldiers not only to watch but to actually rape their mothers or to hold them while they are being raped. According to Baro (2006, p. 196; see also Singer, 2006), "in Sierra Leone, men have been forced to rape members of their own family under threat of being mutilated

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> by having their hands or arms cut off." Also in Sierra Leone rebels also forced children into incestuous practices, one of the biggest taboos in any society: "They witnessed sons forced at gun point to rape their own mothers" (p. 196).

Atrocities similar to these were reported to have taken place not only in Sierra Leone, but also in Liberia, Northern Uganda, Angola, and Mozambique (Honwana, 2006; Singer, 2006).

Africentric Perspective to Treatment of Moral Injury: Important Assumptions

In this chapter I contend, as I did elsewhere (Nwoye, 2021), that because the atrocities inflicted on the victims, such as those cited above, include not only the *moral* but also the *social wounds of war*, and implicate the violation of the cultural memory and conscience of the victims, the processes of cure must include efforts at getting the community involved in this venture. This means that, at least in the African context where these atrocities are taking place, full psychological integration cannot take place unless endogenously generated rituals (Granjo, 2007) of integration available in the community of which the returnee solider is a part are drawn upon to effect this healing. Through such generic rituals, opportunity for connecting the returnees to their communities is promoted and serve as avenues for redressing the cultural damages brought about by their war experiences.

Concurring, Green and Honwana (1999) argued that anthropological research done in Mozambique and Angola shows that war-related psychological trauma such as moral injury, particularly of the type experienced by African child soldiers, is directly linked to the power and anger of the spirits of the dead. The problem of performing proper burials in times of war does not allow for these spirits to be placed in their proper positions in the world of the ancestors, so they are considered to be bitter and potentially harmful to their killers and to passersby (Granjo, 2007; Igreja, 2003; Igreja et al., 2008; Jahn & Wilhelm-Solomon, 2015). Given this local exegesis, Granjo (2007) and Honwana (2006) suggest that healing and reintegration efforts need to be drawn from local views and systems.

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Contributing further to this debate, Green and Honwana (1999) point out that many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) including UNICEF and USAID have developed various types of psychosocial programs to assist war-affected children. Yet the therapeutic techniques for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from which these efforts were drawn were originally developed to treat American veterans of the Vietnam War and are not appropriate and effective for children in Africa. In their view, one of the concerns with the PTSD-targeted intervention "lies in its therapeutic techniques which are centred on healing the mental distress of the individual patient; ignoring attention to local beliefs in the role that ancestral and malevolent spiritual forces play in the causation and healing of the affliction that go with moral injury. It also undermines family and community involvement and active participation in the healing process" (pp. 1–2).

The above indications suggest that, as indicated elsewhere (Nwoye, 2021), although there might be instances of special needs when the application of individuocentric/biopsychosoical approaches to treatment of moral injury may apply in the African context, treatment of moral injury in continental Africa tends to rely more on the summoning and administration of indigenous rituals of cleansing and repossession to those affected.

Such rituals for war veterans do vary from place to place in Africa (see Granjo, 2007), but Honwana's (2002, 2006) research shows that there are different but regular types of cleansing rituals for war veterans in Southern Africa; with some addressed to those who have participated in the war but did not kill, while others are specifically directed to those who killed other people. The latter is said to be more complex and requires the expertise of a traditional healer (Granjo, 2007). It is believed that if appropriate healing procedures are not followed the spirits of the dead can drive the killer insane (Igreja, 2003).

Consistent with this understanding, cleansing and purification rituals in Africa are essential for the community reintegration of people who present with the problem of moral injury. While such a process may vary from place to place, there are elements that are common to most of the cleansing rituals, as noted by Green and Honwana (1999).

For the purposes of this chapter, some illustrative case examples of rituals of cleansing in the treatment of moral injury for African child soldiers along the lines highlighted here are provided in what follows.

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Case Examples of Rituals of Cleansing and Repossession in the Treatment of Moral Injury of African Child Soldiers

According to Green and Honwana (1999; see also Nwoye, 2021), traditional healing for war-affected children in Angola and Mozambique seems to consist principally of purification or cleansing rituals, attended by family members and the broader community, during which a child is purged and purified of the "contamination" of war and death, as well as sin, guilt, and avenging spirits of those killed by a child soldier. Supporting this observation, Granjo (2007) powerfully remarks that:

> Unlike in most wars involving Western countries, when veterans from Mozambican civil war began to return home, the first concern of communities was to make them confront their traumatic experiences and guilt. This was done through cleansing rituals, which were and are based on the local exegesis about misfortune. They allow, simultaneously, the confinement of past war actions as an exceptional situation and expurgate the individual veteran from being in danger and being considered a danger to the community. It allows him to be proclaimed a new man, entitled to a fresh start inside the community. In addition, to its importance for the individual reintegration of veterans, the generalized performance of such rituals also played and plays an important role in allowing the community members to accept previous enemies/veterans as "people like the others." (p. 382)

Given below are samples of field reports that present the different ways in which such ritual cleansing ceremonies can be conducted in a typical African community for a returnee child soldier (see Nwoye, 2021).

Case A: The Rituals of Cleansing for Returnee Child Soldier X

According to Green and Honwana (1999): "[O]n the day of his arrival his relatives took him to the *nchumba* (the house of the spirits). There he was presented to the ancestral spirits of the family. The boy's grandfather addressed the spirits informing them that his grandchild had returned and thanked the spirits for their protection as his grandson was able to return alive. . . .

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"A few days later a spirit medium was invited by the family to help them perform the cleansing rituals for the boy. The practitioner took the boy to the bush, and there a small hut covered with dry grass was build [sic]. The boy, dressed with the dirty clothes he brought from the RENAMO camp, entered the hut and undressed himself. Then fire was set to the hut, and an adult relative helped out the boy. The hut, the clothes and everything else that the boy brought from the camp had to be burned. A chicken was sacrificed for the spirits of the dead and the blood spread around the ritual place. After that the boy had to inhale the smoke of some herbal remedies, and bath [*sic*] himself with water treated with medicine." (p. 94)

Explicating the meaning of this ritual, Green and Honwana remarked that "this healing ritual brings together a series of symbolic meanings aimed at cutting the child's link with the past [the war]." In their view, while modern psychotherapeutic practices emphasize verbal exteriorization of the affliction, here, through symbolic meanings, the past is locked away. This is seen in the burning of the hut and the clothes and the cleansing of the body. To talk and recall the past is not necessarily seen as prelude to healing or diminishing pain.

Indeed, it is often believed to open space for malevolent forces to intervene. This is also apparent in the following case from Uige, Angola, which the two authors also presented.

Case B: The Rituals of Cleansing for Returnee Child Soldier Y

As reported by Green and Honwana (1999) under this theme: "When the child or young man returns home [from the war], he is made to wait on the outskirts of the village. The oldest woman from the village throws maize flour at the boy and anoints his entire body with a chicken. He is only able to enter the village after this ritual is complete. After the ritual, he is allowed to greet his family in the village.

"Once the greeting is over, he must kill a chicken, which is subsequently cooked and served to the family. For the first eight days after the homecoming, he is not allowed to sleep in his own bed, only on a rush mat on the floor. During this time, he is taken to the river and water is poured on his head and he is given manioc to eat. As he leaves the site of the ritual, he must not look behind him." (p. 95)

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According to Green and Honwana (1999), this case emphasizes and symbolizes the factor of the candidate for ritual cleansing having no interaction with family and friends before ritual cleansing. The child is kept out of the village until the ritual is performed, and he cannot greet people or sleep in his bed until the ritual proceedings are over.

As mentioned earlier, although children may be asked about war experiences as part of treatment, this is not a fundamental condition for healing arising from ritual cleansing in Africa. In the African context, the ceremony aims at symbolically cleansing the polluted child and putting the war experience behind him, to "forget" (note the symbolism of being forbidden to look back, in the example from *Uige*). Food taboos and other kinds of ritual restrictions are applied. In the *Uige*, for example, fish and fowl must be avoided by the cleansed person for 1–2 months, after which the person must be reintroduced to the food by the traditional healer who officiated at the ceremony.

The same Green and Honwana (1999, p. 3) reported on the *Okupiolissa* ritual from Huila in Angola, which clearly shows the active participation of the community in some cleansing rituals for treatment of moral injury in Africa. The case also stresses the idea of cleansing from "impurities."

Case C: The Rituals of Cleansing of Returnee Soldier Z

Under this category C ritual, Green and Honwana (1999, p. 96) reported of the *Okupiolissa* ritual from Huila in Angola, Southern Africa, which clearly shows the active participation of the community in some cleansing rituals in Africa. This case also stresses the idea of cleansing from "impurities," as given below: "The community and family members are usually excited and pleased at the homecoming. Women prepare themselves for a greeting ceremony. . . . Some of the flour used to paint the women's foreheads is thrown at the child and a respected older woman of the village throws a gourd filled with ashes at the child's feet. At the same time, clean water is thrown over him as a means of purification. . . . [T]he women of the village dance around the child, gesturing with hands and arms to ward away undesirable spirits or influences. . . . [T]hey each touch him with both hands from head to foot to cleanse him of impurities.

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"The dance is known as: Ululando-w-w-w. When the ritual is complete, the child is taken to his village and the villagers celebrate his return. A party is held in his home where only traditional beverages are used. . . . The child must be formally presented to the chiefs by his parents. . . . [T]he child sits beside the chiefs, drinking and talking to them, and this act marks his change of status in the village." (p. 96)

Again, for Green and Honwana (1999) "these cleansing and purification rituals involving child soldiers have the appearance of what anthropologists call *rites of transition*. That is, the child undergoes a symbolic change of status from someone who has existed in a realm of sanctioned norm-violation or norm-suspension (i.e., killing, war) to someone who must now live in a realm of peaceful behaviour and social norms, and conform to these." (p. 96)

The two authors further remarked that "manifest symptoms associated with PTSD and related stress disorders reportedly disappear shortly after these ceremonies, after which the family, indigenous healers and local chiefs direct attention toward helping to establish an enduring, trusting relationship between the traumatized child and family members and with adults of good character. These ritual interventions are also intended to re-establish spiritual harmony, notably that between the child and its ancestor spirits" (Green & Honwana, 1999, p. 96).

These rituals take a generic format since all are oriented "to work to promote healing and reconciliation between the soldier and his village, between the Homecomer and the home" (Granjo, 2007, p. 383).

This indication and preceding case samples only apply to treatment of moral injury when former soldiers are involved. The question as to what happens in the context of treatment of moral injury of war-affected civilians is now considered.

Problem of Moral Injury in Civilian Clients in Africa: An Illustrative Case Example

One typical case under this theme concerns the peculiar problems of a husband and wife from the formerly war-torn Liberia who, although they had survived the Liberian war, reported being overwhelmed with symptoms of moral injury arising from their personal memories of the atrocities they faced

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in the course of that war. In this particular case, the critical problem arose from the condition of their inability to blend together after they returned home at the end of the war to discover each other alive.

Case D: Sample Clinical Description of Negative Experiences of Civilian Victims of War

This case involved a husband whose wife was mercilessly raped in front of his own eyes by rebel soldiers after he was first roughly manhandled and his hands and legs chained to the spare tire of the vehicle they came in. The most painful aspect of their ordeal came from the fact that, following the rape, the wife became pregnant. Her every effort to abort the pregnancy was unsuccessful. The result was a son who, by the time of the repatriation and consultation, was 4 years of age.

The major psychological complaints of the husband included persistent flashbacks, emotional agitation, insomnia, and impotence. According to him, he experienced these symptoms whenever he recollected the wife's rape ordeal with the soldiers, the memory of which was still very fresh in his mind and now worsened by the presence of the "child of the rape" who returned home with his wife.

They reported that what worsened the problem was that, immediately after the rape incident, the two spouses were taken to different destinations, with both of them ending up in different refugee countries, unable to trace the whereabouts of each other until the end of the war, when they returned to find each other home and alive.

The wife complained of severe emotional guilt (because she had thought of giving away the child for adoption but never did). According to her, she rejected the adoption option owing to fear of what the husband might say should he get to know of it in the end. She also complained of continuing chronic confusion, flashbacks, insomnia, and depression. The affected child, in his own case, was aware of being not yet fully "received" or "accepted" by his "father." The couple sought therapy to find out what they could do to come to terms with these issues.

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Rituals of Cleansing and Repossession of a Marital Couple with Moral Injury

In responding to this particular case which was brought to my attention, I drew inspiration from the Africentric paradigm of healing that recommends the use of rituals of cleansing and repossession and other performative experiences when the problem of moral injury arises from the negative experiences of war.

Healing in this particular case involved the prescription of rituals of leave-taking/repossession and other performative experiences available in traditional Africa for effecting the formal breaking of bonds in special circumstances and for the mending of bodies (Alden, 2002; Douglas, 1970; Nwoye, 2005) contaminated by unplanned pollutional contact.

In concrete terms, the rituals I recommended for them included those of cleansing the raped woman through organizing a ritual bath to be undertaken by her very early in the morning (i.e., at break of dawn) in a flowing public stream near the community to which she belonged. During the ritual bath she was to be accompanied by one respected elder woman of her husband's lineage who would serve as observer-witness) and who would re-clothe her with *a ritual dress of emergence* from the previous status of contamination arising from the war rape experience (Alden, 2002; Nwoye, 2005).

To thicken this transformation, part of the ritual required the woman client to be instructed by the accompanying elder woman to make a verbal declaration to the effect that her "link with the rebel soldiers of her past is hereby broken; and that they should depart from her forever."

In a culture like we have in Africa, which believes that *nommo* or words have a way of effecting what they declare, there is enormous trust that this sort of declaration will have the desired effect.

The entire performative processes (ritual bathing and re-clothing) and the declaration of leave-taking and the breaking of bonds with her previous consorts (the rebel soldiers who raped her) add up to a kind of full repossession ritual that helps to reshape the psychology of the couple in relation to themselves.

Ritual of Renaming the Child

For "the child of the rape" to become transformed and integrated into the family fold, a ritual of *renaming* him (the process to be presided over by

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his "father" in the presence of the community) was recommended and undertaken.

This ceremony of renaming the child included the father throwing a ritual feast for the community who, in *witnessing* the renaming ceremony and in partaking in the ritual feast, would come to believe in the ritual transformation of the child, too, seeing him with new eyes: that is to say, as changed from his initial status of liminality and nonrecognition to a state of reintegration into membership in the family and community (Alden, 2002; Nwoye, 2021).

These observations draw strength from the view emphasized in indigenous Africa that there is a connection between ritual and health, matter and spirit (Douglas, 1970), and existence and consciousness (Nyamnjoh, 2015). The performative experiences highlighted reflect the opportunity created by the culture to enable the community to witness, nourish, and celebrate the liminal changes and transitional moments that often become necessary in the lives and tragedies of people challenged by some limit situations (Nwoye, 2021; Williamson, Stevelink, & Greenberg, 2018).

Theoretical Interpretation

Indeed, it seems necessary to mention that the notion of the mystical power of language in human life that is made reference to in this ritual finds some echo and anchor in the view by J. L. Austin, drawing on Wittgenstein, that language does more than just help to describe the social world: it also helps to constitute it, to produce it (Alden, 2002). In this regard, according to Austin, and in line with the African perspective, one of the significant aspects of language games was their "performative" (or illocutionary) function: language is used for promising, expressing affection and loyalty, coordinating action, causing offence, smoothing ruffled feathers, and, in our own context, for "breaking of bonds" (Alden, 2002).

These indications mean that through these performative experiences valorized in the culture, the raped spouse was able to transition from contamination to healing, with all, including the husband, believing in the concrete transformation of her old self into a new self. The couple thereby *re-established* and *repossessed* their initial unity and bonding in the presence of a witnessing community that recognized that they were able to transcend the old disruptions of their wartime period through the rituals performed.

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For the child of the rape, the rituals and performative experiences that were made available for him acted as a mark of his transformation in the eyes of the community from a bastard status—or from "a child of the fields"—to a child of incorporation, a true "family's child." In this way, the rituals highlighted here do not just point to or reflect new realities, they help to create them. And with the performance of such rituals, the old meanings of the couple clients' situation lose their hold and are replaced by new meanings of who they are to one another, thus promoting their permanent repossession of one another. These changes, it must be remembered, are assumed to have taken place just because the culture has prescribed that once such rituals and performative experiences are undertaken, their effect follows forthwith (Nwoye, 2021).

This means that the experiences of ritual and therapy, at least in Africa, are cathartic—not in the old sense of emotional release, but in the sense of moving people to a place where they had not been before (e.g., the child of rape regaining integration) or where they had been but were accidentally dislocated from it by the actions and assaults of others (as in the case of the raped wife). Thus leave-taking, cleansing, and repossession rituals in Africa provide opportunity through which some kinds of words and prescribed ritual actions make identity reconstruction and renegotiation possible, and this, once enacted, becomes authenticated and validated (Granjo, 2007; Green & Honwana, 1999; Honwana, 2002; Maslen, 1997; Nwoye, 2005), and people with dispossessed identities due to war or other violations regain their integration (Nwoye, 2021).

Conclusion

What this chapter has helped to make clear is that the use of rituals in mental health promotion is one aspect of psychological practice in Africa that with some exceptions (Prince, 2015; Ramay, 2018) appears to uniquely distinguish it from mainstream Western approaches to mental health practice. The chapter challenges practitioners of the highly medicalized Eurocentric model of psychological intervention with insight into and the need to adopt alternative perspectives for delivering psychological care that could culturally speak to the basic worldviews of victims of moral injury from non-Western cultures. It is quite encouraging, however, to note that in the West, presently, judging from Ramay's (2018) report, there appears to be a gradual

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move toward affirming the important roles of rituals and the community in the treatment of moral injury.

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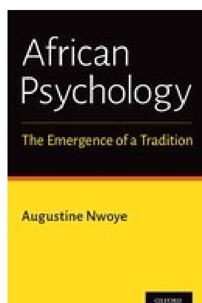

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END MATTER

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