

ETHICS, MORALS AND RELIGIONS THAT ARE
INDIGENOUS TO AFRICA: THEIR NATURES AND
HOW TO TRANSFORM THEM IF NEEDS BE

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In the Catholic religious institutions in Africa, the ones where the religion had sunk root early on, there was an early start with the minor seminary which later became a major seminary from which priests, bishops and cardinals were trained. Somehow or other, the religions of the other lands were made to look on as a subjects of study, to look like they were the subjects of the native religion, rather than to look like the foreign religions in Africa. And that confusion does not seem to have been clarified. And is now being made like what has fitted well and therefore needs to be left as it were, to sheep. In other words, aspects of African native religions are made to look like Christianity. There was an early book which I hunted for which was reputed to be an early book to solve these problems.

With a lot of energy, I hunted for the book for prostelisation and author who had been working in Eastern Congo, (which I landed one in Zaire).

The gist of the praise was that this was the long-awaited book which would solve the problem of conversion that had eluded everybody was now solvable by this book. The genius administrator thought had been found. The high administrator of King Leopold; Conge recommended that book highly. In my hurry I could not remember the tittle. But one thing stuck in my head. The author made it look like he seems to have many similarities between African religions and Christianity. Contrary to what the white man had thought that they were a different species of the human beings who desired a different value from the whites. As you will read in the document, the governor had discovered, he said, the same thing: the same God, the same power that the black man wanted. In other words, the African was a Christian before he became a Christian. If it is so then perhaps in the Congo there was King Leopold for a Christian role model for Mobutu and Bongo.

If you found that statement a needless repetition, then that is it. You may have to go back to the book. Lately I had drafted my own critique that pamphlet of 198). If there was a research student of African philosophy to be educated it was the disputant urged the converters to proceed ahead and say: God be praised. What we Europeans sought for, force, for power in our religion could be praised those are the things African religions have also been seeking. Seek no further. Preach both as equal. The only book that searches for the real religions of African peoples believe in is the disputation between Ogotemme and a Catholic researcher in West Africa. That book should be recommended to any searcher of African religions and morals and ethics. If those themes need changing let them be started from there. Equally, since we were not there when St Paul created his Christianity let them also do an

archaeology of European paganism and find out if they were as easily shoved into African minds.

Whatever the Pere said, I maintain that with or without similarity amongst human beings they may have discovered that man is the same, made by the same God/god I furthermore hold that when it comes to having morals or ethics, you will find that as if they were created by the people you are talking to now and minted by the same person or power who speaks that man's tongue.

Furthermore, the God/god who is said to have sanctioned one this deed on this side of valley may not sanction it the next valley or next ridge. There are very many do's in the next valley as well as don'ts in the next.

My Aunt Eriyani's sociological dictum: jurön ka'de (in Kuku) cultures differ.

So it is through man's differences than man's differentiate's than through his similarity.

If man is more different than similar, then let us separate the differences further, perhaps we shall reach somewhere. For too long have we tried to push for the seemingness and it has never fitted, especially in the area of socialization.

There was a boy in our class two called Olyech. When the teacher rebuked him for being "foolish" he said that let him blame God for making him foolish and others clever. Why didn't God make him as clever as the clever ones. So African Gods are used to being taunted.

Or if a mythical creature called Kain was greedier than any other creature and in his greed he kills another one called Abel, judged by human characters of judgment, isn't Abel answerable for his misgiving? Or isn't the beautiful girl not responsible for her death? Or doesn't God know how to judge?

For in the above scenario you find the trial of God the creator.

And anybody that you find in Wer Pa Lawino chapter nine.

It is just that we are playing some intellectual games.

So when we tire of playing it can we say that the Greeks of old, the Jews of old, the Romans of old, who tried hard lifting some games of old to a higher field, but however high they tried to lift it they could never reach anywhere, the toy game could not pass for some seriousness.

Perhaps what we are playing with is the Christian Paulinity that he concocted out of the Judaism of the Jesus. He Paul broke away from Christianity. He Jesus had said: I did not come to change but to fulfil. The natures of African religions should be researched and judged. The faiths of Ajuwagi: those who cure like psychologist, those who do so as faith healers, the morals of Africans: all should be combed through and through.

Let us then tell these Jews, Romans, Greeks, Chibus Hottentots, or pygmies, tried to recruit some world Olympians so that we can learn to play that game. Otherwise I cannot know why I could take myself to be judged by those murderous brothers of Abel, fathers of Abel and Kain where are my own judgement stick.

If you want to laugh yourself to shreds as I said get to Chapter Nine of Songs of Lawino/Wer Pa Lawino. In that chapter Okot tried to be as serious as possible. But the laughter could not stop coming.

If we want to create new ethical games, we can announce it as we announce a new game to start it for the ethically serious people of the world.

My involvements with Greek studies including philosophy, literature, sculpture, painting, epic, ethics, goes back to 1950 when my headmaster had just returned from Gulu to Bobi and had brought with him a Tiku pen which I found fallen down, looked lost and I gave it to him and he appreciated it very much. Me a son of a policeman in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan was used to recognise a valuable thing when lost, and cried out to be presented back to the owner. Incidentally, it was on a punishment that Monday morning that I found the pen. And unlike any punishment, mine was to clean the Head Master's (HM's) library that was full of bookshelves that were rare and in available in any other Acholi teacher's library. I was punished because I had not gone to church that Sunday. Other students were busy slashing the path to the HM's home or sweeping various paths and cleaning toilet rooms.

The HM knew that I valued books, pens, papers and could be entrusted with the care of books. As soon as I had cleaned the books, I was free to go through books of classical sculpture – the best of Greek works, depicting beautiful Greek sculptures of women with broken arms, men who were naked but looked murderous with slings aimed at some absent enemies, some old men who were leaning on their left elbow, and weak as he looked, was exerting his last ounce of energy breathing life into him. Michelangelo was either the tired one or had drained the Christian or Adamic God of all his energy out of the old man. My aesthetics has a firm foundation. I wish the girls do not have hair so long that they used them

for hiding their pubic hair. But there was a man and his wife who had infuriated their first creatures that the maker might have regretted why he ever made them and their curative powers. Eriyani would say Jurön ka'de then go to get on with her house work.

Short-tempered Jehova created Adam the day before, then felt pity of his loneliness, and put him to sleep during the night which period he removed one of his ribs and used it for creating Eve. The next day she had had commerce with Adam, divulged to him what the Serpent had told her behind her back about the power of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This going on in the Garden, amongst Gods clever pupils: Adam, Serpent, Eve, made them driven out of the Garden of Eden. Did we need to be told this story of Jewish folktales as a religion?

The year is now 2023. But evolution of life on earth has been going on since 400,000,000 years. Man, son of Adam and Eve have been making more mankind behind Adam's back. Will it be "the Fire Next Time"? as James Baldwin had prophesized? Will it be angels or I.C. who will set God's experiment on fire?

Since today 16/06/2023 some living creature, similar to those on earth were detected in those satellites rotating round the Moon, let us wait till we have been driven away to the Moon and A.C. era has started here on earth.

Jewish mythology blamed the garden and Eve for the fall, and the goings on in it for the ills that face mankind. I am not sure whether we are here on the right side of the Christian God, or on the wrong one? Now most of the existential questions need to be asked, and answered. We can no longer act as if we are blind. No longer. It is 2023.

I apologised to our Gods for having deserted them without a discussion, or protest. And now we are discussing questionable 'gifts' from Europe without a fight. When the whiteman came with gun and bullet, we say amen; when he comes with a bag of dollars we say Yes Sir! Then our children along after us. We do go after the bribers. We leave them to go back with much loot. Amongst ourselves we do have better morals and ethics. When we swear, we swear truthfully. When swear in their court we swear with our teeth. My brother Okot was right: Every University in Africa should be for the study of everything African including ethics, morals, religion.

AFRICANS STUDY YOURSELVES. YOUR STAPLE MILLET IS DYING OUT. ASIANS FEED ON RICE; EUROPEANS FEED ON THEIR WHEAT; RED INDIANS

FEED ON MAIZE. AFRICANS WANT WHITE WASHED FOODS TO WHITE WASH THEIR STOMACHS AND INTESTINES.

TO THOSE WHO KNOW MY ENGLISH, THIS IS SUBSTANDARD. I WAS IN USUAL LITERARY TERRAIN. HERE I AM IN MY YOUTHFUL DAYS DISCUSSING WHAT WE USED TO DISCUSS FROM GULU HIGH SCHOOL THROUGH SIR SAMUEL BAKER SCHOOL AND KYAMBOGO TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGE IN THE 1950S WITH OKENY ALIPAYO.

I AM GLAD THE YOUTH HAVE AWAKENED THAT PART OF ME. PERHAPS THE YOUTH WILL STUDY THAT CLOSED PART OF AFRICA: THE SPIRITUAL ONE!

I would like to take us all to the worlds of the pioneer Priests on the ships that took the English settlers that first went to America. For here were devout Christians would-be converters of the “Indians”. Some of them, perhaps had already made up their minds whether those were human beings or not. I understand that some people from England were of the opinion that “native Americans are only 2/5 human beings” what the other things were the other 3/5 were” I have no idea. I do not know if anatomically the Red Indians had some deficiencies anatomically as some excuses. As for the Africans of south Africa in 1939 when the Paris International Exhibition took place, a Bantu woman was taken to Paris and displayed on the strength of the fact that she had Bantu “apron”. So artificially they needed no artificial apron! Whether she had come with it from birth or it was cultivated, or lengthened, her 2 exhibition did not tell us: since they needed money, they beat the bell and shorted to attract the Europeans, including priests and anthropologists, and curious hunters.

I suppose that query of 2/5 / or 3/5 human beings and somethings else applied to us Africans as well.

Now, was it ethical to lope off the apron? If excess and deficiency applies in ethics, I am going to speak for myself. From my mother, she told me that she had had difficulties conceiving her three children. Her first daughter called ‘Gune’, follow the second of twins. In Acholi she would be called Achen. To the Kuku she is supposed to bring along somethings the twins had left behind. To the Acholi she was somehow to have come along as daughter number three. Who told the Acholi that there were three children that time, but the third missed the boat?

My father's first daughter was the first girl out. The second child out was another daughter. Then the next conception brought out the second girl who, according to the Acholi is called Akello, if a girl; but an Okello if a boy. 'Okello' means 'the bringer of the after effects of the twins.' They do not bring it by themselves. So the next birth brings it along. And she – Gune is she in another generation brought out another pair of twins. Then, naturally any boy who comes after the pair of twins who never survived, being born a boy, was called Okello. He survived. That name was preserved for him. Now having been born in Acholi land we honoured the Acholi midwives with the naming the Acholi way.

My second sister had a series of deaths after the deaths. And, each time those children were Otto first when a boy and Atto even after if a girl. As it is since death insisted on taking away my sister's child, we also insisted on renaming it Otto or Atto, till we had a birth that survived. Perhaps after that rebuke – the renaming with the word 'death', he relented. And that Otto name then stuck. It is now the name of Kenya's chief professor of plant physiologist. With apology to him, my nephew Pro. Otto Dangasuk. He made death leave coming to our home by using calling it name. His family name is Dangasuk. And the Maasai academics in that University as well as Maasai Mara University have been wooing him –the Kuku related to the Baris of Juba are related to the Aleker group who is related to the Maasai from South Sudan to come and serve his fellow relatives in that University too.

Since when HIV AIDS first arrived, some youth, sons of bishops self-diagnosed themselves, we now insist that when suspicious, better be tested. For one of the bishops, suffering from acute malaria went and hanged himself. We now insist that test for malaria first when one has been hit by any suspicious ailments. University students in east Africa also now go for tests of HIV for AIDS and Sickle-cell Anaemia. Little by little changes are taking place.

Now a Zambian pregnant woman had gone to the garden to get some vegetables for lunch. And then rain came and she had to climb up a many branched tree. And then the baby decided she/he would come out, at all cost and did. And the child helped her mother deliver her. She made the coming so easy many Europeans were wondering how easy did that woman deliver her child? Besides, it was up a tree. Such a child had even chosen her or his name: Oyat or Ayat. And this girl Ayat should by now be about 30 years old. But, it does not look as if this was her mother's first birth. For she seems to have had a kitchen knife ready for any adversities.

A proud tailor from the South, whose first wife's first child came out in a bus thought people would laugh at him as the man whose wife gives births in the street came home from his tailoring shop to divorce her. Instead of congratulating her for having done it so easily, he thought she brought shame on him. I do not know how she is doing now. I hope he did not divorce her and then, the child being a girl ran after her for the sake of the cows she would have brought. And her spiritual guardian would have made the child so clever and done so well in medicine that many a child would have been delivered by her. But the name the mother would have given her – something like Rubbish-heap would have made people give her a very good second husband. To spite the tailor, he would have regretted his pride. For there are births which take place when the mother is on the way. And the child born on the path side would be called Oyoo. The one on the field would be Otim. Some would be called Olum – on the grass path.'

Perhaps the men in Makerere, Kyambogo, Gulu feared to demand a conference that crosses oceans, and her supporters do not want to put their complaints in focus?

Or, perhaps Africans have genuine complaints against the gender division of labour in Africa in various communities for the male gender, the female gender, and both genders in youth?

Perhaps we have become accustomed to discover loopholes in the divisions as they are and therefore we do not mind putting up with the inequality?

As such, we should go back to the forge and build or construct the social fabric of our society again? Maybe this is a task that is too difficult since it will call into question Gods and gods and spirits? Or is it a difference in names only? Chiefs and chiefdoms, Kingdoms and queendoms? Princes and Princesses? Or the imposed orders that the white genders had brought are too complicated we do not know how to unravel them? But once again we are confronted with impositions of projects brought against us and with terminologies that do not return Jok to Godhead, but accept the confusion of lajok, which means a witch, so that the word for God in Acholi which is Jok is banished in our tongue for ever and the Devil or word for lajok: a word legitimately meaning "the evil spirit" should hold its eternal place in the place of demons – or daemons?

My mother had realised, after the birth of two daughters that a child was hiding in her womb. She then demanded that she and her husband should go to all the renowned spiritual

experts who would look out for the reasons why he would not flash me out of my hiding niche? After many a trial, they found the one to flash me out.

And so and after nine months I popped out.

When I was taken for presentation to the spiritual powers that had put me together, I was given an iron bangle to wear on my left wrist. Now in 1945 when I went to Bobi Anglican Missionary primary secondary school, on the second day of reporting, the Head Master summoned me to his office. The reason: Here is not where you wear those things. Never return with it tomorrow. Tell my friend your father to get it off your hand and put it into safe custody.

Now being a Buddhist, I have two bangles, red and copper yellow. In a dream, maybe my father will present me with another iron bangle. A silver one, And perhaps a golden one. And finally a diamond.

In Eastern Equatoria of Equatoria State, there is an enclave in Nagichot where a group of people still maintains an ancient get together which seems to have lasted from biblical time. The elders assemble and review the state of the world to their satisfaction. The resolutions passed are put to use till the next group of elders that are retiring review the success of the last resolutions and where they have failed. Then they pass new resolutions. That place is good for safe-guarding the fate of the world. In the last World War, it is reputed that the English had their royal family i.e. King George IV and his darling Queen there whilst Prime Minister Winston Churchill was terrorising the Germans with his war-winning voice from under the base of BBC.

If the western world now is seeking for ways to renew the life of the world, why don't we go to Nagichot then a highbred religion to save the world could, with humility go to Nagichot select the best and humble heart do it from there using ingredients from all nations of the world?

Tribe by tribe or language by language the searcher of African philosophies, and cultures can satisfy himself/herself.

In the 1930s and 1940s debates between Europeans who took the view that Africans had no philosophy generally and those who thought they had took place.

At the end side that we had philosophy came out victorious. Two philosophers: Father Placide Temples, and Martell Griaule was the other. Temples, working amongst the Bantus, generalised to call us Bantus. Placide said that the Bantus have their language, Metaphysics, and cultures. Like all church leaders they believed in knowing the languages of the people amongst them. And I wish all self-respecting researchers mastered the languages, the terminologies, and the tried to learn word for word the most words that watered in such an argument.

The other philosopher, Martell Griaule, worked amongst the Dogon. He had a conversation with a Dogon Philosopher. They had, I think an expert translator to produce the alternative word in French or Dogon. From it emerged the Introduction to Dogon Religion (1948). This was done to conversations with a Dagon philosopher; between philosopher who respected themselves.

Unfortunately, I did not hear them or other philosophers/priests who converted to African religions. Perhaps the absence of organised African religions, and religions that sought conversions made it difficult to converts to arise. And also the fact that generally it is clan religions under tribal religions that we have. And the fact that Christianity is a jealous religion made it difficult for our religion to flower.

Perhaps it is time for Africans to organise their religions to rescue them from disappearance. If there are enthusiasts, I am there to be consulted.

In conclusion,

For a theme like this which covers almost all areas of life, the KeyNote Speaker's role is to my opinion, to welcome the participants, give give out the main areas, touch on some outline of the main points and let the experts delve into their areas of expertise then let them get on with it. If he can let experts on both sides get on a healthy discussion so much the better.

Perhaps the world is holding on to me since I was difficult to get? I do not mind staying here for some twenty years more. Only let them be action years, mentally active years.

Serving Humanity!

It is not his/her task to exhaust the topic. Another one is for him to let them know that I know a bit of the width of the topics as he should at 90.

Thank you very much.