SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION IN AFRICA

UGANDAN PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES, II

Edited by
E. WAMALA
A.R. BYARUHANGA
A.T. DALFOVO
J.K. KIGONGO
S.A. MWANAHEWA
G. TUSABE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE
George F. McLean

Social reconstruction is perhaps the most typical challenge of the present age. It has been noted rightly that the degree of possibility for human creativity at any point in history corresponds to the level of change that is taking place. At this turn of the millennia the change is truly epochal. It is not merely one of dates or even of administrations, but rather of systems and even of the very conception of the nature of social organization. The present situation is therefor one in which the peoples of the world can and must take up creative responsibility for their lives, present and future.

The present volume is the second in the series of Ugandan philosophical studies in which therofessors of the Philosophy Department of Makerere University have worked as a team to study the issues of the social life of their peoples and to explore pathways for the future. The present volume studies this issue of social reconstruction at the deep level of the exercise of creative freedom by the people as a whole.

Part I begins with the chapter A.T. Dalfovo which shifts the focus from the government to the people as responsible for their life and capable of assessing and responding to their needs. This situates the issue as one of the creative and responsible freedom of the people. It reflects as well the contemporary world wide shift of paradigms of power from that descending from the state above to that ascending from the smaller local groups, often termed civil society.

But can the people bear this responsibility? G. Tusabe expresses concern that the disaggregative forces of small group identities might deconstruct, rather than reconstruct, society. In view of this he cites the need for the regulative role of the state.

Part II identifies the issue of the direction of social life, whether by smaller or larger societies, as a matter of ethics. This, however, must be more than a matter of utility or pragmatic manipulation of social life. It is rather the proper exercise of the freedom of a people as they take responsibility for directing their lives. This must not be left to chaotic and arbitrary choice, but must reflect the way a people over centuries has shaped their values and developed the corresponding virtues to constitute a manner of life. This constitutes its culture as its way of cultivating its life. This is studied progressively in the Chapters of Professor J.K. Kigongo, A.R. Byaruhanga and E. Wamala.

Part III brings the volume to the present crucial issue on which the reconstruction or deconstruction of Central Africa may depend, namely, that of the relation between the cultures as they shape the identities of peoples. Are these essentially conflictual, or can they be understood as positively related? The most recent history of central Africa has found this to be a threatening — even deadly — issue. The Chapters of S.A. Mwanahewa, B.R. Archangel and G.F. McLean move progressively from despair to hope in this regard.

The first identifies the contours of the problem; the second sees identities as conflictual but still in need of each other; the third proceeds rather from the view of the whole as the context for the understanding of each so that other peoples and cultures are not alien, but needed partners whose welfare is a matters of shared concern. Social reconstruction in the region will depend upon the achievement of such a vision.

INTRODUCTION
THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD SITUATION
E. WAMALA

The closing years of the 20th century have been a mixture of positive developments and opportunities, on the one hand, and of challenges and new threats, on the other.

On the positive side are: the affirmation of the importance of participation by the students in Tiananmen Square; the opening of the Berlin Wall and of the values which this act reflected; and the success of the struggle by the peoples of Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, etc., in Eastern Europe, all of whom for a half century had struggled under dictatorships. All sought the opportunity to determine courses of action consonant with their socio-cultural values and aspirations.

To a lesser degree what took place in Europe has been replicated in Africa, where long-time dictators have been overwhelmed by organized peasants and middle class elites calling for more democratic governance. Single party dictatorships continue, slowly but surely, to be dismantled and replaced by more acceptable and responsive forms of governance and the rule of law.

Hand in hand with these political developments has come economic liberalism. Once protected and inefficiently managed economies (characterized by and large by scarcity) have been liberalized, allowing for greater participation by the masses and for more commensurate rewards for personal initiative and entrepreneurship.

Changes that began as a result of revolts against dictatorships and tyranny not only have revolutionalized the political and economic aspects of life, but also are transforming the cultural aspects as witnesses the coincidental development of information technology. This time of epochal changes is increasingly making the world a homogeneous cultural entity, connecting all peoples of the world via satellites, the web, etc., gravitating towards the constitution of a global village.

But those unprecedented positive developments have at the same time posed new challenges, fears and anxieties on an interna-tional scale.

In Africa, at the turn of this century African tribesmen found themselves ensconced in arbitrarily concocted new states, whose borders divide what had formerly been integral communities. These new borders were lumped together under the same nation states which for all practical purposes formerly had been different nationalities. At the close of this century, they remain in an arbitrarily declared new world order whose economic philosophy they have yet fully to digest and internalize, and whose cultural homogeneity threatens to wipe out their distinct cultures and identities.

The fears and anxieties are not only confined to Africa. Several European countries at the initiation of the European monetary union are apprehensive about the entire program, unsure not only of how it will affect their individual economies and programs, but whether it will radically affect their cultural identities.

These epochal changes that continue to take place challenge intellectuals to think more reflectively about the direction of contemporary change. It seems certain, however, that these changes and challenges will not require a reversion to the old ways of thinking, nor invoque the old arguments that characterized discourse during the Cold War years.

All this has motivated professors from the Department of Philosophy of Makerere University to take up the challenge of social reconstruction in the face of contemporary change.

To do so they organized a continuing seminar in which each presented serially a paper for general discussion. Those papers constitute most of the present volume.

The theme and tone of these papers continues the work done by the Department of Philosophy on *The Foundations of Social Life*. It is part also of a world wide effort of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) which has encourage teams of academicians from different areas of the world to discuss contemporary changes, focussing upon the basic current issues of their own people. Although the views expressed in these papers are those of professors from Uganda, nevertheless, much of what they have to say should be very relevant for most of the sub-Saharan region of Africa.

Chapter I by A.T. Dalfovo, "Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: The State and the People," critically analyzes the role of the state in development, given contemporary changes and challenges.

He introduces his paper by pointing out that current challenges in sub-Saharan Africa reflect a failure of theories of development to have "sufficiently queried the wider political context of development." Development theories have collapsed one after the other, because theorists erroneously assumed that the matrix of the developing state itself was sound. But the crisis of development in sub-Saharan Africa ultimately is a crisis of the state. In support of this Dalfovo points out that whereas development is an endogenous process that should be carried out by individuals themselves, the state has usurped that role, which it is not qualified to carry through. In turn, the state has become an obstacle to, rather than a facilitator of, development.

The contemporary state, challenged by new forces both from without (forces of globalization) and from within (forces, for example, of ethnicity), needs to de-modernize and post-modernize, by reconsidering the role of civil society. Only such a state will be able to meet the challenge of contemporary society. Dalfovo concludes by observing that there will be no short cuts to growth; it cannot be forced. Spontaneous development and operation of civil society remains the key by which contemporary society will be able to meet the challenges of the time.

Chapter II by G. Tusabe, "Ethics and Social Reconstruction in Africa," begins by highlighting the problematic relationship between the African state and the development effort. Like Dalfovo earlier, Tusabe points out that the African state has taken on the task of developing society, creating for the purpose a bloated bureaucracy and strongly centralized leadership. With that kind of structure three decades of independence leave Africa by and large still underdeveloped.

Although Tusabe, sees the potential of civil society for a positive role in directing African development, he remains cautious, and in fact emphasizes that ethnicity and religious bigotry in pluralistic societies could turn "civil society" into a problem rather than a solution to Africa's problems. Tusabe's concern gains force when we recall what has taken place in the 1990s in Somalia, Rwanda and Burundi. The various negative elements could use civil society as a cover not only for self-aggrandizement and enrichment, but also and more dangerously for sowing civil discord.

Tusabe argues that the state in Africa needs to continue to play an important role in the regulation and co-ordination of civil society, ensuring basic justice for all and facilitating the operation of a morally motivated and guided civil society.

More fundamentally he carries out a most insightful analysis of the importance of ethics and of its metaphysical foundations for the dignity of the free human person. Upon this he builds the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity by which the various levels of society can cooperate in the achievement of human fulfillment.

Chapter III by J.K.Kigongo, "Moral Consciousness and Self-identity in Contemporary African Change," takes the moral issue as the point of departure, arguing for a consciously executed moral education as a necessary prerequisite for humanity in the process of contemporary change.

Kigongo's particular moral issue is the relationship between individual rights and social cohesion, Kigongo laments that this seems to have become conflictual in the wake of Africa's contact with external influences.

Inasmuch as contemporary society has become global, Kigongo argues that there is a special need for moral education. This must be geared towards an appreciation of individual freedom and rights in a social context that is no longer merely tribal or national, but well nigh universal. Only such an education will enable the contemporary person to make informed decisions in an otherwise increasingly complex world, and enable individuals to strike an acceptable balance between self and community. Any theory that emphasizes the worth of one individual above others is a real hindrance to the harmony of interests required for a society that is clearly global.

Chapter IV by A.R. Byaruhanga, "Ethnicity, Culture and Social Reconstruction," attempts to elucidate the concepts of culture and ethnicity and how these relate to the issue of social reconstruction. Byaruhanga stresses the need to examine the nature of social reality before thinking of its reconstruction.

In his elucidation of the key concept, "ethnicity", Byaruhanga makes a distinction between "*ethnos*" referring to the broad racial groupings of man, and "ethnic" referring to the smaller cultural groups into which one is born, and which shape one's consciousness and value system. It is this latter sense of ethnicity that he treats in his paper.

Elucidating the concept of culture, Byaruhanga first provides the etymological meaning of the term highlighting both its explicit and implicit aspects. The former is exhibited in physical artifacts while the latter is exhibited in the *ethos* of the people. For Byaruhanga, culture is related to ethnicity which is its identifying factor.

Byaruhanga's central idea in this paper is that although the existence of ethnicity presupposes the existence of other ethnic entities, nevertheless, ethnic entities tend to exult their individual cultures over those of their neighbors. This sows the seeds of civil discord and leads to outright confrontation. For an increasingly globalized society, Byaruhanga underscores the need for genuine recognition of ethnic and cultural differences as the viable starting point of mutual recognition and consequent acceptance of one and all.

Chapter V by E. Wamala, "Cultural Elements in Social Reconstruction in Africa," argues that rather than trying to explain development issues in the tradition of grand theories after the manner of Weber or Fukuyama, we should look for particular elements within cultures that either foster or hinder, encourage or discourage, development.

To make good his point, Wamala cites Max Weber's theory concerning the Protestant ethic and the development of capitalism, and Fukuyama's social trust theory. He shows that in all these theories there are generalizations which cannot withstand scrupulous empirical examination.

Wamala proposes that theorists interested in culture and development would do well to look for the particular positive and negative elements within all cultures, and see how the positive elements within those cultures could be enhanced, even as the negative ones are rejected or discouraged.

Social reconstruction, according to Wamala, will be possible only after identifying the particular negative elements within cultures, and then reconstructing those elements. Only thus

will it be possible to reconfigure the social, cultural and political structures which those presently subconscious negative elements support. For Wamala, this social reconstruction is first and foremost to be carried out at an intellectual level, before being extended to the empirical realm.

Chapter VI by S.A. Mwanahewa, "Modernization and Social Reconstruction: Africa at the Crossroads," is rather less hopeful than the previous studies about the possibility for effecting social reconstruction in Africa.

First, Mwanahewa sees Africa at the crossroads between the Occident and the Orient, on the one hand, and between the Africa's traditional past (which remains latent) and its future, on the other. Given that crossroads situation, modernization, the aspect of social reconstruction upon which Mwanahewa dwells at great length, may not easily be realized in Africa.

To make good his point, Mwanahewa examines the political and economic situation in Africa and shows that a careful reading of the situation reveals some very fundamental problems which could mar any modernization effort. Particularly, he points out the wholesale transplantation of development theories and paradigms to Africa. Such wholesale implanting of development theories, according to Mwanahewa, could deter modernization by denying Africa the opportunity to develop her own indigenous capacities, thereby making her forever dependent.

Implicit in Mwanahewa's paper is the view that Africa will be able to effect social reconstruction only if she can develop her own categorical framework for social and economic development.

But Chapter VII by Byaruhanga Rukooko Archangel, "Social Identity and Conflict: A Positive Approach," brings the investigation to the issue of unity and diversity among people, namely, the classical issue of the one and the many as found among personal and social identities. He suggests that we need to begin with the notion of identity as implying conflict and then build toward reconciliation, especially on the basis of Paul Ricoeur's view of "self" and "other" as appealing mutually to each other. The chapter is rich in examples of recent frightening Central African conflict between peoples bound in a spiral of mutual fear.

Chapter VIII by George F. McLean, "Globalization as Diversity in Unity," suggests a further possibility opened by new possibilities of seeing oneself and one's people in terms of a larger whole as suggested originally by Nicholas of Cusa. In this horizon the other is not contrary or conflictual, but a fellow participant in a larger reality and hence complementary to oneself. This vision becomes increasingly vivid as globalization proceeds, but at the same time reflects the basic sense of African cultures whose creation stories were always cosmogonic in character.

Through the process of mutual critique described above these studies have come to constitute the considered view of a team of scholars. They constitute a platform for further research, reflection and writing as a contribution to the people of Uganda in their effort to construct an effective path to a future worthy of both ancestors and posterity.

DEVELOPMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: THE STATE AND THE PEOPLE
A. T. DALFOVO

This analysis relates the crisis of development to the state, which virtually has taken over the management of development in line with its monolithic function in society. The people need to reappropriate the responsibility for their development. At the same time, the state needs to revise its function to help development as a mediator between the local and global communities.

THE PREDICAMENT OF DEVELOPMENT

Development has been an ubiquitous issue in international relations, in national planning and in the activity and thinking of many communities and individuals for half a century. Vast physical and human resources have been invested. At the same time, one notes the wide gap between such enormous efforts and their limited results and is left wondering whether development is solving a problem or it is itself a problem.

On 20th January 1949 Harry S. Truman (1884-1972), in his inaugural address to Congress, described the greater part of the world as underdeveloped and declared that "a greater production was the key to welfare and peace".1 From that day, development became a supreme objective motivating the policies of individuals and nations; production, which meant industrialization and later modernization, became the means to development. The assumption of a world divided between the developed and the not developed set off on a race with a few nations at immediate advantage in the lead and the rest of the world behind.

As the liability and insolvency of development emerged, it was felt that a wider approach had to be devised by improving the old models of development. Initially, the prevailing development model was that of growth through the three evolutionary phases of agriculture, industry and technology. Then it was found that growth had to be combined with a just distribution of wealth. Subsequently it was agreed that the basic needs for survival such as food, health and housing, had to be guaranteed before any other developmental project could be considered. A further emphasis was that the technology necessary for development had to be local and that the people needed to be involved in their own development. Of late, such fundamental values as justice, cooperation and ecology have received greater emphasis as essential parts of development.

Development has to be endogenous and in line with the choices, authentic values, aspirations and motives of the people involved.2 The above search for a better approach to development moved from a predominantly economic and material understanding towards a more integral and human consideration, including both material and spiritual values, and tried to recognize the person as both its principal subject and its supreme objective.

However, the various definitions and models of development devised to improve its understanding and efficacy, though positive in themselves, did not help it out of its predicament. One of the main reasons for the failure was that such attempts did not sufficiently consider the wider political context of development. The past attempts at improving the models of development generally have been based on the assumption that the matrix of development, the

state, was sound. Hence it was believed that any model of development could and had to remain within that given socio-political paradigm.

The contention of this analysis is that the question of development needs to be formulated within the more ample context of the condition of the state and of its capacity to fulfil its present functions. The developmental crisis is indicative of a wider crisis involving the state itself whose crisis generates that of development.3

THE MODERN STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

The Evolution of the State

The state is taken to mean the entire setup of authoritative and legitimately powerful roles and institutions by which people finally are controlled, ordered and organized. More specifically, the state is the body politic as organized for supreme civil rule and government; this is the basis of civil government; therefore government is invested with supreme and coercive civil power by a specific country or nation at a particular time of its history. This meaning may be extended to the body of people occupying a defined territory and organized under a sovereign government, and also to the territory occupied by such a body.4 This extended meaning however is not the one used in this analysis.

There are several bodies and sets of activities in society interacting among themselves, like kinship, religion, trade and politics. In the course of history, the political component gradually evolved a more ample set of relations, activities and controls, acquiring a considerable amount of power over the other bodies. Such political power developed to its present paramount importance, differentiating itself from the other set of activities to become a holistic system standing in the place of society itself and giving rise to the modern state. The modern political system has attained its paramount position by managing the historical challenges faced by society in a more effective manner than the other social units. In this way it established its effectiveness fostered legitimacy which, in turn, helped effectiveness.5

This evolution that has created the modern state, which is pivoted around the political system, is now entering into another challenging historical phase, namely that of globalization. The state gradually is being absorbed into a globalizing trend involving every aspect of state activity like finance, commerce, information and communications. No public or private enterprize in any country can now segregate its objectives and strategies from the international context.

Globalization challenges the state as it highlights, among other things, the latter's rigidity vis-a-vis the flexibility and mobility required by international markets and opportunities. The modern state appears to be so overloaded internally that it finds it difficult to meet and facilitate international competitiveness. The state needs to be more present, agile and effective on the international scene.

The modern state generally has been modelled on the welfare pattern, thus expressing its legitimacy in a concrete manner. Now globalization is curtailing the capacity of the state to attend to the welfare of its citizens, since attending to national welfare and investing in global competitiveness and are tasks that cannot easily be catered to simultaneously and harmoniously. Faced with the choice, the state feels compelled to opt for the global scene, relinquishing several aspects of its welfare program to the private sector.

The globalizing trend does not imply that the state is going to become redundant or disappear. The state will continue to be at the crossroads of social activities, but it needs to recast its functions within the framework of global competitiveness. If the state were not to change, it would continue to experience a chronically critical disability to attend to its genuine function and objective. In contrast, the state of duly revised to meet the present challenge could actually compete on the global scene with higher capital and better offers than, for instance, those from the private sector.

The Idea of Civil Society

The development of the political system that has shaped the modern state and that has given rise to its related challenges emphasizes, among other things, that such development is not the only one possible, or the ideal. Another social order could be hypothesized resulting from the development of other bodies in society such as trade or religion and their gaining the supremacy now held by the political body, or a social order where the various parts in society establish a balance of power among themselves.

Such a theoretical possibility leads to a distinction between the idea of state and that of civil society.6 In the present condition the political system dominates such other social institutions as trade, religion, education and kinship. Civil society considers these institutions all as essential parts of society, none necessarily superior to the other. The idea of civil society envisages a situation without the paramount position held by the political system in the present state; instead the social institutions relate among themselves in a different way.7 Civil society would then be the substratum of the forms of state organization.

The distinction between state and civil society helps to establish the limits of the political system vis-a-vis the importance of the other social systems, and to balance the relations among them such that the political system may not acquire undue preeminence at the expense of the others. The distinction highlights also the essential pluralism of society which any social action, whether political, economic, educational or otherwise, must take into consideration.

The rethinking of the state within the more ample framework of civil society helps to meet the above-mentioned challenge of globalization, which finds the welfare state unable to fulfil its role and retain legitimacy. Without attaining the welfare objective and as a result its legitimacy being unattained, the modern state needs to find new foundations for its legitimacy. This may require a de-modernizing and post-modernizing of the state by reconsidering it in the perspective of civil society; this, in turn, may require retrenching the political power of the present state. If, on the other hand, the state were to entrench itself in its present pattern and consequently fail in finding acceptable reasons for its legitimacy, it would be compelled to devise other alternatives, which, in such desperate cases, tend to be overt or covert force exercised against the people. The use of force and the resulting lack of freedom would create a situation in which development can only be affected, not effected — which is equivalent to saying that the denial of freedom leads to the denial of development.

THE AFRICAN STATE

Succession and Consolidation

Although the colonial scramble for Africa had economic exploitation as its aim, the African reaction was levelled at the state which solidified political domination. However, this reaction was not against the state as such, but at its occupants. In other words, the struggle for independence was aimed at replacing the state colonialists, rather than at demolishing the colonial state. Hence, the colonial state with its structures, functions and ideology passed into the newly independent nations:

> In Africa, even during the struggles for national independence, politics, with maybe a few exceptions, has been essentially referred to the state principle, i.e. that politics is the state and the state is politics. It referred not to a position of antagonism with the colonial state order — an organized form of consciousness — but to the replacement of colonialists inside the colonial state, i.e. to the occupation of the state posts.8

After independence, the state in Africa was strengthened in its centralized and overall power, consolidating its paramount importance. Such development was seen as a necessary measure to build the newly independent nation which generally was very diversified. That diversity had to be moulded into a unity. This was effected both ideologically and structurally through the oneness of leadership, government and organization, in other words, through the paramount oneness of the state. The natural diversity and pluralism of society were cast into the one mold of the state. That merger directly concerned the people, but they had no direct say or active role in it. They were the objects rather than the subjects of unity, and the power of their numbers was dwarfed by the power of the system.

African society became statized: society was forced to serve the state. Governments, whether Marxist or capitalist, civilian or military, tended to become increasingly authoritarian, creating a sense of helplessness in the people. Some reactions were attempted against such monolithism, but generally they failed. Those that initially seemed to succeed, when faced with the reality of the social pluralism they had liberated, lost courage. The lure of uniformity was simpler to follow than the complex pluralism of assemblies and opinions, of diversity and opposition.

The struggle for independence, begun on the political front, had to be extended to the economic front in order to strike at the heart of colonialism. This economic struggle was compounded by the economic crisis at the world level, but it would have been, as it actually was, a necessary issue of African emancipation were colonialism to be dismantled entirely. But this economic problem also was managed by the state within its unitary vision and action. The people were not involved; the handling of the economic crisis was referred to the logic of state imposition, outside of mass participation. Economic rights and social welfare were frozen as conditions for the so-called 'economic recovery'.9

Globalization has posed a challenge to the African state as well, but a challenge compounded by an additional meaning of globalization that has become essential to its understanding when considered from an African perspective. That new insight in the concept of globalization derived from the recent expansion and consolidation of a world order that has had Western political and economic powers as its driving force. Sub-Saharan Africa experienced the impact of that drive as a new form of colonial aggression, with the added danger of its apparent innocence vested in such words and ideas as "global responsibility", "global family", "one humanity", "new world order" and "globalization".10 These words supposed a world equality that allowed a just interaction among peoples. But centuries of sour relations and exploitation

among the rich and the poor have made such relations idealistic. In the eyes of the poor, globalization has been the continuation of a colonial expansion which independence did not seem to have stopped, but merely rerouted.

This perception of globalization by sub-Saharan countries should have challenged not only these countries, but other countries as well. All countries should have become aware that globalization was not simply the long awaited target of a beneficial world unity or a smooth and balsamic wave melding humanity into a family. Globalization may be inevitable, but it is not entirely positive. Consequently, all countries must contain its negative implications, which otherwise will backlash against them.

The negative repercussions of globalization indicate that the problematic approaches to development could be reimported into a country that rid itself of them. This possibility implies that globalization does not necessarily lead to genuine development. A better guarantee for development derives, as already said, from the reformation of the modern state through a reappraisal of civil society so that the people may acquire a more meaningful exercise of public power. Such reformation is inevitable in the context of globalization which poses both positive and negative challenges to the state and also to the people.

Developmental Characteristic

In Africa, the economic issue became a developmental issue and vice versa. As the state in general was characterized and legitimized by its welfare, the state in Africa fulfilled this characteristic and legitimacy in the task of development, becoming by definition a developmental state. Development was its supreme objective to which everything had to be referred.

The terms "development" and "independence" were born twins; they have been so closely associated as to have become almost synonymous. But it was an ambiguous relationship and it soon emerged that development had a stronger affinity with colonialism than with independence, as indicated by the second "scramble" for Africa. According to this persuasion, development did not terminate dependency, but actually continued it. The word "development" concealed elements of coercion impinging on freedom, justice and autonomy, and prejudicing the understanding and implementation of development itself. Hence, the very developmental measures intended to bring about economic independence thwarted it.

The three major obstacles to development were spelled out as poverty, ignorance and disease. The state was considered to be the most effective agent with the capacity to alleviate poverty, to sustain educational measures and to improve health conditions. The people themselves had that idea, not realizing that such expectation encouraged the state in its tendency to centralization leading to their own marginalization. In fact, the state tended to regard the people as uneducated and resistant to change. As a result of that opinion, the state felt it necessary to overcome the resistance of the people by exercising its power against them.11

That created a double paradox. First, the people could not attain development. Like growth, development is not vicarious, it cannot be delegated; thus it is only the people who can develop themselves. Second, the state was actually fostering underdevelopment. By usurping the development that belonged to the people, the state deprived them of their freedom and choices, thus becoming an obstacle to development. "The demobilizing of civil societies in Africa and the strengthening of the state apparatuses created a crisis by which the state itself constitutes the major obstacle to development."12

This paradoxical situation has been fairly well observed, understood and highlighted; yet the conventional and problematic approach to development continues unabated. Most people seem to be bent on it as if hypnotized by the mystique of development that continues to cast its spell on numberless activities in society. Development may have become a myth; nevertheless it continues to captivate reason. As a result of this, even when the state has proved unable to provide for basic needs and survival, it still can use the lure of development to request the sacrifice of anything — which request may turn out to be the people having to sacrifice their opinion and their freedom. Thus, for the sake of development, workers and farmers are not to ask for better wages and prices, activists are not to press for full rights, and people are not to call for every democratic freedom.

The voice of the people has been muffled by the omnipotent state system, and their development stifled. People must regain their voices and their freedom to effect their own development and destiny. "In Africa, we must move away from a process of `nation-building-from-above' insisting on political unanimity (`national unity'). This process has blocked people's creativity and mass enthusiasm; it has complicated the treatment of differences among the people by the people themselves."13

The paradoxical conclusion is that both the state and the people appear to be simultaneously "for" and "against" development. This has caused, overtly or covertly, an impasse between the two, with the state fearing the people and the people fearing the state.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE THIRD POWER

A solution to the confrontation between the state and the people could be found in the above mentioned reappraisal of civil society, which could lead to discovering some new way of managing public power or, as some analysts specify, to elaborate a third dimension of power.14 The concept of civil society would create awareness about the various institutions existing in society through which people act and interact, encouraging them to locate other nuclei or sites, apart from those of the state already in place, where the people could express themselves politically. Examples of such sites from the past are the assembly of the ancient Greek democracy, the convention of the French Revolution and, more recently, the factory. In Africa, such instances are the palaver15 and the recent national conferences when gathered by public request and acting independently of the state.16

The universities in Africa could also offer such favorable sites for democratic and political expression. The African universities are meeting points of culture which is so much at the center of their interests that one could see the ancient European "University of Studies" (*Universitas Studiorum*), emerging as the new African "University of Cultures" (*Universitas Culturarum*). A university where international cultures and national ideas converge is particularly suitable to become a political site of free and democratic expressions. But this does not seem generally to have happened due, among the rest, to the elitism in some universities which prevents attention to the public interest and due also to the stifling of the political creativity of some universities by the state.

A question may arise here as to whether the state itself could successfully attempt a reappraisal of civil society which would then be effected from above. In principle such an attempt cannot be ruled out, particularly when it is motivated by a genuine desire of self-reformation and the people are allowed to regain the necessary power to stand effectively vis-a-vis the state.17A significant manifestation of this effectiveness could be had in a permanent

process by which the state accounts to the people and the people can eventually recall and replace their state representatives.18

The appreciation of civil society could be brought to bear on the search for a third way to manage society or a third system of power, as some expressly called it.19 Within this perspective, the first system of power is the political one within nations and in international alliances; it is the power of the prince. The second system of power is the economic one within such financial structures as markets, banks and multinationals; it is the power of the merchant. These two powers may be allied or opposed among themselves. In both cases they tend to be felt by the people as restrictive and also oppressive.

The third system of power emerges as a reaction on the part of the citizens to the restrictive powers of the prince and of the merchant. The citizens, weary of a political and economic situation that is unable to provide a rewarding welfare and development, seek an effective way to achieve those targets exercising their freedom and rights.20 The citizens gather their new power as they act more and more through institutionalized and voluntary associations outside the state system. Such power is derived from of the need for such organized action, of the role of civil society, and of their growing ability to find new ways or sites for their action. These include Non Governmental Organizations, Amnesty International, International Alert, Human Rights Associations, Minority Rights Groups, Green Peace and other independent bodies that have as their background civil society, not the state.

GLOBALIZATION AND LOCALIZATION

The third system of power goes beyond national boundaries and into the global arena. This new power develops from global solidarity and support, from global sharing of objectives and values, and from global awareness and belonging. Here the issue of globalization, which above was considered in its challenge to the state, is now found to be challenging also the people who are devising alternatives to the modern state power, whether prince or merchant. Globalization seems to be both a force from within one's ability to widen the horizon of one's existence and a force impinging from outside bent on narrowing down one's freedom. This is the ambiguity of meaning challenging the modern state, and in particular the African state.

Hence, as citizens search for a third system of power, globalization releases them from local bonds and boundaries, ushering them into wider areas of action, interests and opportunities, and increasing their freedom and creativity. At the same time, their global belonging weakens their individual identity, culture, tradition and social ties, resulting in a degree of anonymity.

A person thus is caught between globalization and diversity, homogeneity and heterogeneity, a drive to more ample horizons and a pull to one's roots.21 In becoming global, one's existence appears precarious, weak and uncertain, and consequently the need to assert one's identity becomes a condition for personal survival. To avoid fading into generality, one takes deeper roots within one's particular community, for personal identity derives not only from the self but also from one's social belonging: "I know who I am if I know to whom I belong."

Today, one of the strongest components of social belonging to a community is derived from ethnicity. Ethnicity refers to a combination of cultural and historical characteristics in which one roots one's social identity.22 At one time, ethnicities were thought to hinder the achievement of development and to slow the pace of modernity. Consequently, it was thought that they had to be overcome, a task considered relatively easy as they were held to be transitional phenomena, destined to disappear. What has been happening in many parts of the world, particularly during

the last 30 years, has contradicted such assumptions and expectations, prompting a reconsideration of ethnicities.23

In the nations formed by immigration like the U.S.A., Brazil and Australia, ethnic characteristics were at first seen as survivals from preceding generations, mere sentimental remnants. The ideology of the 'melting pot' in the U.S.A. was a reassurance that ethnic particularities would have been integrated into the general culture of the nation. It did not happen. The Americans were actually reminded by Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919) that they could identify themselves with reference both to their past origin and to their present condition by recognizing themselves as "hyphenated Americans"; hence, not simply Americans but, for instance, Anglo-Americans, Afro-Americans (with the hyphen joining the two identities).24

Europe has also been awakened to the ethnic issue by events in the former Soviet Union, in former Yugoslavia, in the Basque region and elsewhere. In Africa, the presence of ethnicities is felt particularly in those areas where geographical definitions have not emerged from demographic or historical developments, but as a result of external intrusions.25

Walter Connor estimates that nearly half of the countries of the world in recent years have experienced some degree of 'ethnically inspired dissonance'.26 Hence ethnicity needs to be recognized and accepted as a fact; it cannot be denied or ignored for it constitutes the basis of one's personality and of a community's heritage. The problem is not about the existence of ethnicities, which is a positive fact; but rather about the way in which they are handled, which may be positive or negative.

The dual tension of globalization and localization, vision and identity, poses the temptation of coercive short cuts. But there are no such short cuts in growth; there is no forcing development. The actors of development are the people, and the stage on which to enact it is civil society. The state needs to accept its new function of mediator between globalization and localization and facilitate the sites of political expression, the creativity of the people and the presence of other social systems. The mediatory role of the state is also needed with regard to the very ethnicities of which it is constituted, in the sense that it should provide the legal instruments and the necessary coordination to guarantee respect, cooperation and development among them.27

* * *

In spite of the developmental predicament, there are reasons to bypass despair and to move into a vision of hope.28 B. M. Gourley envisages the dual perspective of our "tomorrow": "the winter of despair" if we look at the disconcerting challenges, but "the spring of hope" if we consider the promises of science and, we would add, a commitment to ethics.29

This ethical reference wants to be the conclusive thought of this analysis that has discussed the conditions for development. It pointed out that development pertains to the people. The people need to decide what ought to be done and which specific choices ought to be taken. Hence, the ultimate condition for development refers to choices and freedom; these are the ethical facets of development.

NOTES

1. W. Sachs, "Per un'archeologia dell'idea di sviluppo" in *Volontari e Terzo Mondo*, XVIII (N. 7, Luglio, 1990), 13-42.

2. P. Harrison, *The Third World Tomorrow* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983 [2nd Ed.]), pp. 23-42.

3. B. Hettne, "La crisi dei tre mondi e lo stato nazionale" in *Dimensioni dello sviluppo*, VIII (n. 1/2, 1991), 252-282. Beyond the popular understanding of crisis that equates it to a serious problem, one may consider it in its etymological derivation conveying the meaning of a pivotal condition in the course of an irreversible process. Such process implies an inevitable transition leading to a profound transformation. Generally, the ensuing radical change is not entirely predetermined; hence the persons concerned in the crisis can effect that such situation have a positive outcome. Concerning the scope of the crisis, this analysis focusses specifically on that of the state, leaving aside its other ramifications.

4. D. Robertson, *Dictionary of Politics* (London: Penguin Books, 1985), pp. 307, 308. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "State".

5. I. Colozzi, "La crisi dello stato-nazione fra localismo e internazionalismo", in *Dimensioni dello sviluppo*, Anno (n. 2, 1993), 15-31.

6. Civil society is considered here at the conceptual level, not empirically.

7. "Civil society is a concept in political theory which, though useful, is very seldom employed today, though it was familiar to most important political thinkers from the seventeenth century onwards. Among others, Hobbes, Locke and even Hegel distinguished between the state and civil society." D. Robertson, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.

8. E. Wamba-dia-Wamba, "Africa in Search of a New Mode of Politics" in U. Himmelstrand, K. Kabiru and E. Mburugu, *African Perspectives on Development* (London: James Currey, 1994), pp. 250-251.

9. E. Wamba-dia-Wamba, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

10. W. Sachs, "One World", in W. Sachs, *The Development Dictionary* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1993), pp. 102-115.

11. C.S.L. Chachage, "Discourse on Development among African Philosophers", in U. Himmelstrand, K. Kinyanjui and E. Mburugu, *African Perspectives on Development* (London, James Currey, 1994), p. 55.

12. Nzongola-Ntalaja, "The African crisis: the way out", in *African Studies Review*, 32 (No. 1, 1989), p. 118.

13. E. Wamba-dia-Wamba, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

14. The *World Development Report 1991* gives suggestions and state priorities to recover an efficient pattern of development. These proposals are addressed to developed and developing countries, and specifically to their respective governments. The implied invitation to "rethink the state" takes the validity of the present "state" for granted. This presupposition should be noted when considering the present crisis of the state vis-a-vis development. *World Development Report 1991*, *The Challenge of Development* (published by The World Bank; London: Oxford University Press, 1991). See "Rethinking the State", p. 9 and pp. 128-147; "Priorities for Action", p. 10 and pp. 148-157.

15. E. Wamba-dia-Wamba, "La Palabre comme pratique de la critique et de l'autocritique sur le plan de toute la communauté", in *Journal of African Marxists*, 7 (March 1985), 35-50.

16. E. Wamba-dia-Wamba, *op. cit.*, 1994, p. 258. According to the same author, parties are not the genuine answer to present political needs. "Multi-partyism would not enhance the emergence of political consciousness; that is why even imperialism is agitating for the exportation of multi-partyism making it an extra condition for aid". However, parties can serve as a transitional measure. "If multi-partyism can achieve the eradication of those regulations

(silencing people's political viewpoints) then, as a transition to a new mode of politics, struggles for multi-partyism may be tactically supported." E. Wamba-dia-Wamba, *op. cit.* (1994), p. 259.

17. In Uganda, Resistance Councils were established at various levels, from the village (Village Resistance Councils) to the Nation (National Resistance Council). The word "Resistance" has now been substituted by "Local" and the "National Resistance Council" by "Parliament". These Councils have been organized from above and they are essentially within the established state structure.

18. E. Wamba-dia-Wamba, *op. cit.* (1994), pp. 256-257.

19. B. Hettne, *op, cit.*, pp. 252-282.

20. The move to privatization is not necessarily a transition from political and economic elitism to popular comprehensiveness. It could simply be, for instance, a strategic sharing of power between the prince and the merchant, further compounding the freedom of the citizens.

21. G. Scidà, *Globalizzazione e culture. Lo sviluppo sociale fra omogeneità e diversità* (Milano: Jaca Book, 1990). In*Dimensioni dello sviluppo*, VIII (n. 3, 1991), 171-177.

22. The word "ethnicity" first appeared in the 1972 *Supplement* of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Whether the concept of ethnicity is new or simply rediscovered, it gathers a set of ideas that are proving increasingly crucial in social dynamics and personal identity.

23. R. Rizman, "Il ritorno dell'etnicità", in *Dimensioni dello sviluppo*, X (n. 2, 1993), 33-36.

24. F. Bellino, *Giusti e Solidali* (Roma: Dehoniane, 1994), p. 193.

25. D. Robertson, *op. cit.*, pp. 111, 112.

26. A. Bullock, O. Stallybrass and S. Trombley, *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* (London, Fontana Press, 1988), pp. 285, 286.

27. With regard to this, Basil Davidson perceives two positive tendencies in Africa today, namely a decentralization of power and a renaissance of African unity. "African Nationalism and the Problems of Nation-Building: Reflections on the Past 25 Years", Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, December, 1986.

28. T. R. Odhiambo et al. (eds.), *Hope Born out of Despair* (Nairobi, Heinemann Kenya, 1988).

29. B. M. Gourley, *Universities and Ethics*, Address at Installation as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Natal, University of Natal, April 12, 1994.

<div align="center">

CHAPTER II
ETHICS AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION IN AFRICA
G. TUSABE

</div>

INTRODUCTION

In the 1990s, two ideas have gained prominence in the thinking of most African intellectuals with regard to issues of development: social reconstruction and civil society as the major route along which social reconstruction should be carried out. However, while almost everyone may be in favor of social reconstruction, not many would readily specify what this commits them to. And, while most seem in favor of civil society as the most effective approach to social reconstruction, not many have reflected on the type of principles which ought to guide the functioning of civil society if it is to promote the good of the people of Africa.

The major purpose of this chapter is to suggest what the author believes are some of the essential ethical principles to which the social reconstructionist ought to be committed and which ought to motivate the viable functioning of civil society in Africa.1 The paper specifically points out the normative ethical concept of the human person as being essential to motivating the functioning of any civil society. It also points to the ethical principle of subsidiarity as the one which ought to guide the functioning of the state as it fosters and coordinates the activities of the various voluntary groupings of civil society.

THE REASON FOR SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION IN AFRICA

At independence, most of the newly independent national governments of Africa were rightly convinced that they held a responsibility to promote the social, political and economic welfare of their people. To fulfil their obligation, the governments chose to take over to a considerable degree the socio-economic planning of their countries and to supervise this through at the national level. It was thought that only in a society where the principal means of production were controlled by the state could socio-economic progress be viable. Hence, during those years, justice and social progress meant socialism. Most African countries tried to set in place strong centralized states with elaborate bureaucratic structures extending from top to bottom, with one political party influencing every sphere of society's life, etc. These were seen as the requisites for harnessing all energies and resources in order speedily to end Africa's economic backwardness and solve its formidable ethnic problems.

But after three or more decades of independence, the continent of Africa has remained largely underdeveloped socially, economically and politically. The only form of development that can be asserted undeniably is the development of underdevelopment itself. For the majority of the people of Africa, besides living under dictatorships, lives under poverty in the form of poor health, unemployment, sustained hunger and malnutrition, and today environmental decay. Ethnic violence is a living experience in most parts of Africa; military coups have become a traditional phenomena of changing political power; foreign aid projects have collapsed; and there is widespread evidence of large scale corruption in most of Africa's social, political and economic institutions.

It is necessary to ask the cause of this. An increasingly common answer to the inquiry is that Africa's effort at development was built on wrong foundations. The strongly centralized

structures adopted at independence, with their elaborate bureaucratic structures extending from top to bottom together with centralized economic direction, were doomed to reach an impasse. This was so because any strong regimentation of society's activities from the top carries the danger of treating human dignity with disrespect and under estimates the power of democracy, because it reduces individuality to a common standard and suffocates the power of human ingenuity.

Through rigid laws, the state hampered the development of voluntary social groups and associations which would have contributed to the development of their communities. In the long-run, such restrictive policy has proven detrimental to the entire socio-economic fabric in Africa. It is argued that, since Africa's pursuit of progress was built on the wrong foundations, there is a need to rebuild Africa on a new foundation, and hence a need for social reconstruction. This reconstruction must aim at decentralizing socio-economic planning and management and effectively integrating the people into developmental activities through civil society. But what is civil society?

CIVIL SOCIETY

Definition

As Jürgen Habermas observes, "Civil society is the nexus of non-governmental or secondary associations ranging from churches, cultural associations, academies, independent media, sports and leisure clubs, occupational associations, political parties, labor unions and alternative institutions."2 The special features of these associations is that their social engagement exists just above the individual person, yet below the state, and is based on friendship, the market and voluntary affiliation. They are development-oriented and diverse in quality. They are not abstract relationships of persons with persons as elements of a great society, but associations of whole, concrete, living, breathing persons. And for reasons of efficiency in achieving their goals, such groups are limited to a rather small number of persons. In such groups, the members are related more or less as they exercise their interdependence, cooperation and collaboration for purposes of realizing common goals. Each group member steps forth in his individuality and joins the other individuals in giving what he can and receiving what the others can give. Members of such groups, as Melvin Rader asserts, "are able to bridge their differences in virtue of the things they have in common, and are able to enrich one another by the rich ferment of their contrasting individualities."3

An Assessment

Scholars such as Alex Tocqueville strongly believe that civil society "is good in and of itself because it is in civil society that democratic norms are lodged."4 They consider civil society to be good in itself because civil society helps to mobilize resources in ways that the state left alone is unable to do. Civil society also socializes individuals in a democratic direction since its associations look at the power structure from the bottom up, thereby instilling a participatory philosophy in which checks on abuses of power feature prominently.5 And if civil society is good in and of itself, then, Africa should adopt civil society in the work of reconstruction.

It is true that civil society can be instrumental in promoting both humanistic and democratic values in society, but it is also true that civil society may be instrumental in generating some

social ills. It is the contention of this paper that civil society is not necessarily good in itself as the Tocquevillians strongly believe. Indeed, as Goran Hyden points out: "Civil society is not automatically democratic. Many groups may use the relative freedom of civil society only to pursue anti-democratic objectives."6

If one considers the problems of national, religious and ethnic conflicts which have persisted and still pose a serious threat to Africa's social cohesion, there is a likelihood that with the adoption of civil society people may form groups following national, religious, and ethnic lines. People may develop a tendency to exalt their own groups, while dismissing other groups not only as different but as also inferior. They may carry with them an irrational sense of the superiority of one's group and an unreasoning contempt for other social groups. Such groups may find themselves pitted against one another and divided by barriers of nationality, religion and language. Struggle between them may turn out to be very bloody and the defense of each may contribute to the insecurity of all. As a consequence, the resulting conflicts between such groups may be so destructive that the survival of a civilization not only human but humane will itself be seriously threatened.

We also need to observe that, at this particular moment of history, most of the people in Africa who seem to have the capacity for organizing civil society are themselves dominated by a gross materialism with its inevitable tendency to individualism and consumerism. Such a people would form voluntary association in order to pursue selfish ends. They would look at other people as existing for their use, regarding others as mere objects to be manipulated and exploited. Such an attitude leads to domination; it is a serious betrayal of everything human and humane, and an obliteration of democracy.

With the above observations, therefore, there is a need for us to bear in mind that while civil society may make possible many of our dreams of development, it may also be instrumental in transforming those dreams into deadly nightmares since some groups and associations in civil society may be places for egotistical pursuits. Thus, if civil society is to function viably and helpfully it is imperative that its groups and associations be motivated by some distinct normative ethical qualities. It is the contention of this paper that the most essential normative factor for civil society ought to be the ethical concept of the human person.

THE ETHICAL CONCEPT OF THE HUMAN PERSON

There is a general agreement among people that the promotion of the welfare of human persons is the purpose of civil society, that the welfare of human persons stands as the final cause of civil society. In effecting the realization of this final cause, human persons are themselves the efficient causes since it is they who utilize their brains and hands to realize the common goal (human welfare). At the same time, persons in leadership positions in the civil society groups act as the formal causes, since it is they who direct and coordinate the various activities of members in realizing the general welfare.

Now, if the welfare of human persons is the final cause of civil society, and if it is human persons who are both the efficient and formal causes of this welfare, then it is imperative to bear in mind the ethical nature and characteristics of the human person if we are to develop the normative ethical criteria by which to judge and guide the civility of the various groups and associations.

Who is a Human Person?

To use the concept of the human person as a basis for renewal, it must be employed in a broad and fundamental sense. In this paper, we shall take the term "human person" as a rational individual, who is a unity of mind and body, co-existing with others, and endowed with the ability of self-transcendence.

But it would be vain to formulate such a definition and end there. Its explanation is necessary if it is to act both as a principle broad enough to pervade human culture and as a normative criterion to motivate social reconstruction.

The Human Person as a Rational Individual. By one's very nature a person is rational or capable of reasoning. Reason is the power to calculate, reflect and know, to understand relations and universal qualities, to live by rule instead of being swayed by appetite. Reason is an essential human attribute which differentiates a person from other beings.

As a person an individual is not just an idea, but a concrete existing being, clearly observable, undivided in oneself, separated from others and unrepeatable. Based on His rationality and individuality, persons bear an autonomy which demands that they be free from any form of manipulation if they are to actualize the best of their inherent potentialities.

Thus, if social groups and associations in civil society are to work viably, they need to acknowledge the uniqueness and unrepeatability of the human persons they serve and work with for rationality and individuality point to the dignity of human persons, as possessors of rights, who must always be respected as beings of infinite value in themselves. Social groups and associations will be better the more they are guided by the principle of respect for human dignity for by this they will guarantee the opportunity of each human person to develop to the best of their capacity.

The Human Person as a Unity of Body and Spirit. The human person is a unity of body and spirit. Ontologically the person is one, a whole constituted of not just a single, but dual principles. The body is essentially determined by the spirit and vice versa, but of the two primacy belongs to the spirit and not to the body. This is because the spirit is the formal cause of the body; it is the giver of meaning to the whole person.

Although primacy belongs to spirit, meaningful development of each aspect calls for a serious interpenetration of both. Hence, only a philosophy or development policy which does justice to these two ontological aspects of the human person is sufficiently complete and complex to act as a basis for promoting authentic human welfare. To justify the interrelation of body and spirit with regard to development, A.R. Byaruhanga wrote:

> With regard to the bodily aspect, the human person's basic needs have to be satisfied. These include food, shelter, health and protection. In the absence of any of these, social development is clearly unaffirmable. Regarding the spiritual aspect, the human person needs ideals of freedom, justice, honor, truth. . . . Lack of any of these values implies lack of development.[7]

This implies then that civil society must acknowledge the human person's unity of body and spirit if it is to function viably.

Unfortunately, the general tendency of some pioneers of voluntary associations in Africa today is to pay more attention to generating material values to satisfy the person's bodily nature

at the cost of neglecting the spiritual dimension. The basic spiritual values of honesty, truthfulness, trust, restraint and obligation are seen largely as having no significant pay-off. If Africa, in its social reconstruction through civil society, simply promotes material values at the cost of starving spiritual values, it will be promoting a lopsided kind of development. This is lopsided because no human endeavor which ignores the ontological unity of the human person can claim viably to promote the welfare of humanity since any viable progress of the human person essentially implies fulfillment of the whole person.

The Human Person as Co-existing with Others. Martin Heiddeger rightly observes that the human person is essentially a being-with-others-in-the-world.8 The human person is a relational being; the human reality is that of a person-in-relation with other persons. Only by this interpersonal context can the human person express and fulfill one's peculiar individuality and manifest oneself as a social being. This essential fact of being with others in the world prompts and justifies our being in community and also gives human persons the ability to organize themselves in social groups and associations which render concrete their co-existence.

With regard to the co-existent character of human persons, Martin Buber noted two fundamental attitudes found in all human experience. One is the world of "I-thou" relations, which ought always to be lived; and the other is the world of "I-it" relations, which persons ought always to avoid.

The "I-thou" form of co-existence is for cooperation. Persons meet in cooperation in order to transform the world, to improve their welfare, for it is in this form of co-existence that the truth and value of democratic ideals is lodged. "I-thou" co-existence is characterized by mutuality and dialogue. These neither impose nor manipulate, but generate a commitment to freedom and guide dialogical persons to focus their attention on the reality which challenges them.9 In the "I-thou" relation "I not only give but receive; I not only speak but listen; I not only respond but invite response."10 Such "I-thou" co-existence ought to be one of the essential aspects of the normative ethical motivation and criterion of social groups in civil society.

The opposite of the "I-thou" relation is the "I-it" form of co-existence which uses the other person as an object. This relation regards others as means to an end; it is anti-dialogical, dominating and exploitative. People in civil society may form social groups and associations, but if motivated by gross materialism they operate in terms of the "I-it" relation. Such persons refers only to themselves; other people are things.11 To them what is worthwhile is to have more — always more — even at the unjust cost of others having less or nothing.12

Such an "I-it" tendency toward co-existence dehumanizes; it is an obstacle to, and an enemy of, democracy; and it is a serious threat to the very existence of civilization. Such co-existence is a very likely possibility for civil society, but ought to be guarded against as long as our aim is to reform our society towards higher levels of development.

The Human Person as Endowed with the Ability for Self-Transcendence. Inherent in the human person is the urge to go beyond all previous achievements; one is always unsatisfied with results already acquired. Life is characterized by an essential 'going beyond' the factual situation; one can never say that 'this much and no more is enough of what is required of the person'. In this sense, personhood is self-transcendent. The person has an inward-outward tendency to free oneself from the slavery of ignorance, fear, error and poverty. In one's search to excel one sometimes errs to a point of crushing oneself, but the general tendency is to transcend toward what one conceives as the good. One struggles not to terminate one's life, but for a better

quality of life; not to avoid work, but to obtain a more meaningful job; not to avoid living a culture, but for a better and more liberating culture.

But in order for the person to realize meaningful progress, this urge to progress must be tempered by an ethical attitude which itself is a form of self-transcendence. In activity towards progress the human person must detach and discern a definite other from oneself; one must be able to understand and sympathize with other selves. Such "self-transcendence has an appreciative awareness of other things and especially other people,"13 without which a practical presence of culture among us in the form of civilized persons, societies and spirituality is not possible.14

Where the person chooses to shatter morality and pursue one's own egotistic ends in order to become a "superman" unrestrained by sympathy, the inevitable consequence is abuse of humanity through rudeness, cruelty and disrespect for human dignity.

It is imperative, therefore, that all voluntary social groups and associations in civil society (if they are viably to promote human welfare and development) choose, and prepare themselves, to have a sympathetic attitude towards others, not only to individual human persons, but also to other similar social groups and associations. Renewal in contemporary Africa calls for such ethical motivation because thereby the efforts of civil society will call forth the highest instincts of altruism, rather than of greed and envy.

This is the ethical concept of the human person as a comprehensive being of various dimensions in an essential existential harmony. Wounding any of these essential aspects of the human person — rational individuality, unity of body and spirit, personal coexistence, and self-transcendence — is to wound the entire human being and even the society in which one lives. The duty to promote human welfare and development requires then that all aspects of the human person be seen in the light of a whole, because the meaning, significance, and value of culture and civilization depend on the ability to nurture and safeguard the integrity of the human person.15

The normative concept of the human person is the best for guiding civil society to a desirable social order. It brings order to any developmental process or change and qualitatively enriches human motivations. It creates the awareness of a wider and deeper content of life, and, with this standard, human activity and achievement are evaluated.16

It is necessary to stress, therefore, that the activities, artifacts and organized establishments of all voluntary social groups and associations must "incarnate" the normative ethical concept of the human person if social renewal is ever to respond to authentic human needs and desires.

CIVIL SOCIETY, THE STATE AND THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY

There is debate among Africa's intellectuals as to whether civil society should be essentially autonomous of the state or whether the two should be organically linked. The contention of this paper is that civil society and the state are intimately linked. The remedy for the defects of strongly centralized states with their archaic bureaucratic structures is not to resort to formulating voluntary social groups and associations entirely independent of state interference. Without state supervision of civil society, the bullies may be left free to tyrannize the weak. Hence, there is a need for the state actively to devote itself, not only to the protection of the weak, but also to developing a conducive social and legal atmosphere by which civil society can effectively function. As John Dewey declared, the principle of the free civilized community "does not deter political activity from engaging in constructive measures."17 If human welfare and development

are to be realized, however, any action by the state in civil society must be guided and regulated by the socio-ethical principle of subsidiarity.

Description. The principle of subsidiarity is essential to governing the duties of the state in society. A contemporary scholar of this principle, C.E. Curran, sees the principle of subsidiarity as spelling out the limited but positive role of the state in society.18 This principle states that the larger group or the individual vested with authority has only an auxiliary function concerning the tasks and the needs of the lesser groups or lower individuals. This principle carries with it two major and valid implications. One implication is that the greater group or individual must leave the lesser groups or individuals to do what they are able to do competently. The other implication is that the greater group or individual must help the lesser groups or individuals where they are unable to accomplish certain vital tasks.

The principle of subsidiarity is one of the best ethical principles for guiding the role of the state in society and effectively describes the role of the state in civil society. Curran aptly shows that, guided by the principle of subsidiarity in civil society. "The state should offer help to individuals and intermediate associations. It should not take over what individuals and smaller groups can do, but rather should provide those functions which it alone can do - directing, watching, urging, and restraining."19

Significance. The significance of the principle of subsidiarity for civil society can be identified through the duties it imposes on both the state and the intermediate social groups.

Guided by the principle of subsidiarity, the task of the state demands first of all the creation and maintenance of favorable conditions in civil society in order for the voluntary groups and associations to be able to attend to what they can do by themselves. This must be done through special legislation defining the rights and duties of both the individual and intermediate organizations so as to have a clear and peaceful fulfillment of their pursuits. The most important point to note here is that, in legislating for civil society, the principle of subsidiarity demands that the state be guided by the ethical concept of the human person. This guidance enables the state to protect and promote the personal and group rights of its citizens in civil society.

The duty of the state to civil society with regard to subsidiarity is also to set in place some form of monitoring agencies at every level to ensure that abuses are minimized. The principle of subsidiarity is ethically justifiable on the grounds that it calls upon government intervention when small or intermediate groups in society are unable or unwilling to take the steps needed to promote basic justice.

Although the principle of subsidiarity binds the state, it also has obligations on civil society. While it protects personal and group rights, it also calls upon all members of civil society to use their rights and competencies with vigor and responsibility to fulfill their duties. Sound responsibility is an indication of the individual person's ethical quality; it is inseparable from the acknowledgement of what ought to be done, of what we are bound to do as ethical human persons. Hence, it must be emphasized here that sound responsibility in civil society must necessarily be motivated by the commitment of individual persons and voluntary associations to the normative ethical concept of the human person.

In view of the above, it can be perceived clearly that the principle of subsidiarity stands as one of the most needed ethical elements in Africa's social reconstruction. It is important because it is essential to limiting the role of the state in society, and thereby protecting society from authoritarian regimes. It is also significant in that it lays the ground for developing a healthy

pluralism and harmony in society. It is one of the best ethical guides for a society working on democratization since it fosters a healthy degree of autonomy at various levels of society.

CONCLUSION

Most of Africa's intellectuals have warned often that African societies will hardly realize human well-being and development unless these societies choose to end authoritarian approaches and choose civil societies. Such goals as democratization, elimination of poverty and hunger, and conservation of the natural environment must be given utmost priority in the adopted civil societies. But, this paper observes that the mere setting in place of civil society actually fails to generate the desired goals. For civil society to have meaning, it must be tempered essentially by some fundamental ethical principles which ought to guide the activities of both the state and individuals, together with the intermediate social groups. The paper argues in favor of the normative ethical concept of the human person and the principle of subsidiarity as the core ideas for guiding social reform in Africa. When these ethical principles are violated or neglected the results are morally and socially disastrous; if they are acknowledged and fulfilled, however, they enable the best possible and most desirable human fulfillment.

NOTES

1. In this paper, ethics is taken to mean a set of value principles for guiding both human and institutional conduct towards a desirable individual and social well-being.
2. Jürgen Habermas, "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere", in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Graig Calhoun, ed. (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1992), p. 453.
3. Melvin Rader, *Ethics and the Human Community* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 391.
4. Goran Hyden, "The Challenges of Analyzing and Building Civil Society", *Africa Insight*, 26 (No. 2, 1996), p. 94.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
7. A.R. Byaruhanga, "The University and Development", in *Dialogue: A Journal of Makerere University Convocation*.
8. Martin J. Walsh, *A History of Philosophy* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985), p. 536.
9. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Harmondsworth: Penguine Books Ltd., 1980), p. 136.
10. Melvin Rader, *op. cit.*, p. 425.
11. Paulo Freire, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
13. Melvin Rader, *op. cit.*, p. 300.
14. Kiril Neshev, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
15. E.A. Ruch and K.C. Anyanwu, *African Philosophy: An Introduction to the Main Philosophical Trends in Contemporary Africa* (Rome: Catholic Book Agency, 1984), p. 371.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 372.
17. Melvin Rader, *op. cit.*, p. 404.
18. John Macquarrie and James Childress (eds.), *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (London: The Westminster Press, 1992), p. 608.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 431.

CHAPTER III
MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND SELF-IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN CHANGE
J.K. KIGONGO

A FUNDAMENTAL CONTEMPORARY MORAL PROBLEM

African traditional society was, and continues to be, characterized by an ethos of social cohesion.1 This social culture was built upon respect for individual human freedom,2 though in the ensuing conflict the social was considered more primary to the well-being and sustenance of society.

The contact of African culture with external cultures, especially European, has led to a process of social transformation. Two crucial elements have emerged, i.e. diversity in the conception of the new cultural milieu, and a new dimension of conflict between social cohesion and individual human freedom resulting from the formation of the nation-state as a new socio-political entity.

The conceptual diversity involves three main metaphysical stances. First, some people conceive experience strong attachment to African cultural values and urge for their relevance as underlying change, but most importantly as ensuring the continuity of African identity. The Afrocentric argument in support of the African heritage, which has characterized post-colonial Africa, is an important instance of this tendency. Second, some incline towards alien values as logically more relevant to the modernization entailed in the change. This thinking is manifested in the reverence for European civilization and for modernization, viewed as synonymous with European civilization. The third position envisions a synthesis of the African and the alien cultures as both are crucial contemporary realities. Such a synthesis would draw what is fundamental and positive from each, and enable each to enrich the other. This conception can be said to have motivated, either consciously or unconsciously, the scholars who have attended to the subject of social cohesion in African traditional society. In view of the Euro-African cultural interaction which made manifest that the element of individual autonomy as the fundamental constituent of the European mind, there arose need to elaborate on social cohesion, the fundamental constituent of the African mind.

There exists a situation of tension between loyalty to a person's specific social entity where the ethnic group seems to be the most significant, and the larger social unit or the colonial nation-state composed of a complex web of ethnic diversity and other social entities. The ethnic group is perceived as the primary source for one's social identity and self-preservation, in contrast to the nation-state which is a colonial artifact established through coercive means. At the same time there is a conflict between one's personal freedom independent of the ethnic community, and the common good demanded by the nation-state. This is especially so, given that in contemporary times individuals are becoming increasingly more conscious of their autonomy. This awareness is partly founded in one's being and identity, but it is also a result of increasing social interaction motivated both from within and from outside societies. There is some resentment against tradition, socio-political authority, the family (on the part of young people) and the educational system, which in Africa has tended to be coercive, suppressive and

manipulative. Moreover, each of the three metaphysical stances entails a value for society and social cohesion, which in turn induces a new consciousness of oneself.

Given the three dichotomous situations the life of the person in contemporary society is a pendulum between opposites, but the self seems to be gaining more momentum. Awareness of one's own self places more stress upon the individual's being or individuality, thus straining social relations. How to wed the two realities or opposites is a major contemporary moral challenge in the African socio-cultural milieu. It is a problem of the perception of one's identity in one's culture, and particularly in cultural change and social relations. For, as one searches for order or harmony between the conflicting realities, one's moral consciousness endeavors to grasp what would ensure one's ethical existence in the midst of contemporary change.

All three problematic elements pertaining to the pendulum situation may not exist in the perception of each individual person in the African society, and in some people one may not be quite conscious of any of them. But they seem to have considerable influence on the thinking and conduct of people, especially those who have had much exposure to external influences and numerous social encounters.

The problem of the self-identity of the individual within the context of social transformation in Africa is motivated largely by coercive tendencies generated by the socio-cultural confrontation between Africa and the outside world, as well as by the coercive impact of indigenous social authorities. Thus its expression in one's consciousness tends to be resentment, or a generalized largely negative stance. However, the problem itself is positive. It focuses on an instance of human nature which it urges us to try to understand. More significantly it points our attention to understanding the underlying moral constitution of the individual person which is essentially positive, but has been corrupted by society which causes the individuality of the person to degenerate into individualism. Therefore, moral education must be so structured as to build up one's intellectual capacity to balance individual interests with the social good, especially when the two conflict fundamentally. This paper emphasizes moral education because African nations have not given attention to integrating it into the conception, policies and programs of development.

THE CONSTITUTION OF MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Three levels of the human mind can be distinguished, a combination of which constitutes moral consciousness. These are: perception of one's own self-identity, perception of the identity of other persons, and moral knowledge.

Perception of Personal and Self-identity

C.O. Evans distinguishes between the personal identity of others and self-identity which, he says, commonly have been used interchangeably by philosophers. Personal identity concerns our knowledge of the identity of persons other than ourselves, whereas self-identity concerns our self-awareness.3 As persons we are aware of ourselves,4 from which consciousness I am myself. He calls this perception by the person of oneself self-identity.5

By this perception of oneself as an individual being one's conscious of one's individuality as an entity separate, in an abstract form, from other persons. Here perception and consciousness are used synonymously. Thus, to have perception of the self is to be self-conscious.

Certainly not every person who has self-consciousness is aware of and/or understands its contents, which Sperry calls self-determinants. These include the stored memories of a lifetime, value systems both innate and acquired, and the various mental processes of cognition, reasoning and intuition, etc.6 A combination of these and others make up the self, so that a person can be identified with them. Though they would not be unique to one individual, it is their combination and also their degrees which vary with different individuals and make an individual unique in relation to others.

As persons we are aware of each other7 as individuals, even though we live in a community; I am aware of the identity of other persons.

The Primacy of This Knowledge

The perception of my own self-identity and the personal identity of others is a matter of knowledge. It consists in having a conception of the reality of my individuality and of that of others. This is a capacity of every person's cognitive faculty and is basis of moral consciousness, and subsequently of moral behavior. There cannot be morality without consciousness of the self and of others.

Normally people endeavor to do what they think is good or is bound to be good for themselves, while at the same time they think it is or can be good for others as individuals and as a community. This is because one is conscious of oneself and of others, both as individual beings and as constituents of a community. This awareness is natural and had by those who biologically are still at a minimal age.

Moral Knowledge

When I consciously do what is beneficial for myself and others, I have knowledge of our co-existence and of the need for co-operation or mutuality. I am conscious of the interests of others, as well as of the likely effects of my actions upon them. My self-awareness and awareness of others goes beyond the primary epistemological level of simple awareness of their existence at a moral level.

At the moral level consciousness unfolds or develops in a social context as a result especially of one's social experience of the world. This is a moral sense which, according to Hume, each one feels within oneself.8 It is prior to reason and one with the capacity to perceive what ultimately is good for the self and for others. Reason helps us resolve in our conceptual framework what to do or how to act appropriately when, as normally happens, we are faced with a conflict in values. This same moral sense, backed by reason, guides one's moral choices, decisions and actions and constitutes moral knowledge. This involves perception of one's own moral worth and of that of other persons. By the former means I perceive myself not only as existing but also as having inherent dignity or moral worth; by the latter I perceive not only the identity of others, but also their inherent dignity.

One whose consciousness manifests these two aspects, namely, existence and dignity, reflects on what he wants to do and what he wants to be, or what he does and what he is, so as to establish its value to himself and to others. He sees not only himself as an integral part of his group or society, but that this relationship ought to benefit him and others at the same time. He is conscious of the fact that, to use O'Hear's phrase, many people's desires have an essentially social dimension.9Although a person may have in mind his own good and therefor desire

happiness as the ultimate goal of his action, a rational human being knows that such an end cannot be achieved without the co-operation of others. This pertains more to moral sentiment, i.e moral sense, than to reason.

Perception of the moral worth of others sometimes motivates us to do what is good or is bound to promote the good of others, even if it may not promote our own. Some people want to advance the welfare of others or of humankind generally and to prevent others' suffering. They are guided by the principle of beneficence. Frankena calls this the law of maximizing the balance of good over evil, based on the obligation to do good and prevent harm.10 When a person subordinates his own good to that of others or of humankind generally he exhibits the highest level of moral consciousness. In human history such persons include among others Socrates, Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Mother Teresa. Their moral inclination seems to have been shaped more by moral sense than by reason, though the latter would be significant in determining a particular course of action in their historical experience. Reason is aimed at constructing theoretical knowledge, out of which appropriate moral judgement and behavior flow. By reason we define and determine our moral positions and actions and by reason we are guided, but such theoretical knowledge does not constitute ethical theory.

MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND EDUCATION

The moral consciousness central to the moral orientation of persons is capable not only of developing but sometimes of degenerating. This suggests the need for moral education. Education plays an important role in the development of moral consciousness and as a result in contributing to the moral development or enhancement of a person. In the philosophical thinking of the early Western philosophers one notices the concern that morality can, and should, be taught. They considered that moral education provided the ability for a better assessment and evaluation of moral situations and for facilitating moral judgement and action.

Socrates held that virtue can be taught. His famous dictum "Know thyself", implies that people could attain such knowledge through reason and self-examination, and need to train the mind for this. To him reasoning is central in making decisions in the realm of morality for, as he says, we must not let our decisions be determined by our emotions, nor appeal to what people generally think; we must think for ourselves.11 Plato and Aristotle also held a relationship between education and morality. Frankena reflected their position that an ability for clear thinking is necessary for moral life.12 Similarly, Kant says that virtue is not innate, but must be acquired; it can and must be taught.13

Some scholars in the African socio-cultural milieu, such as Njoroge and Bennaars, have studied moral education and come to a similar position. In Europe and the USA it is also a major issue today, invoking a call for educational reforms which will provide for moral education.

This justification of education for developing moral consciousness does not suggest that a person who would not have access to education could not develop moral consciousness. Such a person's moral choices and decisions would depend mostly on the prevailing morality in his society, on his sense of values, and to some extent on his perceptions — all of which may not provide sufficient guidance. Given such complex situations as that of contemporary Africa, involving numerous and at times fundamental conflicts of interests and values, without education one would be bound to fail in making the necessary evaluation and hence fail to make the reasonable decisions or choices which respond to the interests of the persons involved. Such a

person's decision or choice could be reasonable or desirable only as far as the attainment of one's own goals is concerned, especially were one to take into consideration only one's own often prejudiced, point of view.

In contrast, education normally opens the mind to diverse points of view. It enriches one intellectually, enabling one to broaden one's moral perspective in order to accommodate the divergent, and sometimes fundamentally conflicting views characteristic of today's diversified society. This enables one to make an intelligible analysis and evaluation and even to explain established views or opinions.

An educated person should be able, as Hampshire would say, to strike the right balance between conflicting interests and moral requirements, both as an individual and as a member of society, at the moment of decision.14

THE CENTRAL EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM

The central problem to be addressed by education with respect to developing moral consciousness is the conflict between individual and collective goods. To state the two suggests a dichotomy between them; they are perceived as opposites and in real life situations they may contradict one another. Despite the apparent contradiction, however, it is possible to build a theoretical basis for harmony between them from which appropriate human behavior could flow.

The individual and collective goods are two realities essential to human existence in society. Individuality can be equated with the pursuit of self-oriented goals, but these can, and sometimes do, have moral worth or value. If my own interests are pursued and realized, they may entail goods not only for me or for a small fraction of the society, but for a larger universe. But when we infer a unity, harmony or commonality of interests it should not be expected that every person will be conscious of them.

My self-interests can be said to be in harmony with those of other persons if their attainment does not harm other persons or hinder the present and subsequent realization of their goods, and may even contribute positively thereto. Where fostering my self-interests is negative in that it harms the good of others or obstructs its realization, my individuality becomes individualism in that it cannot harmonize individual and common goods.

Each person has a natural desire or sentiment to be in unity with others. At the height of one's moral consciousness this desire for harmony manifests itself in contemplating what is rewarding in itself and subsequently yields for others good that can be universalized and bring pleasure rather than pain to all. If what is good for others in one's action is appreciated by them, it brings happiness to them as well as to the doer of the action since it has brought about pleasure. Quinton says, even if not clearly identical with the greatest happiness of each individual, the general happiness is to some extent a constituent and to some extent a causally necessary condition of individual happiness.15 This relationship between the individual and collective goods shows that individuals have a natural harmony of interests, which education ought to enable us appreciate. Even where an individual sacrifices one's own interests these would be provisional interests, for the ultimate good of an individual is to live in harmony with others.

Rousseau seems to affirm the possibility of individuality being a source of what is universally good. He says that the source of our passions is love of self, which is the origin of other human passions. It is innate and the most fundamental of all others, which in turn are its modifications.16

But for him to say that love of self is always right, always beneficial,17 sounds rather idealistic. This passionate love of self is often perverted so that a person seeks goals which contradict the love of self. In real practice love of self is not always right or beneficial. The love of self can contradict what it ought to be and take on the character of individualism, which is a distortion of the original moral nature of a person. This leads to the pursuit of interests or goals which do not contribute to the collective good of the greatest majority of the society to whom the individual is related. This hinders the realization of a harmony of interests and justifies the intervention of education as a means to prevent such distortion.

THE CENTRALITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN MORAL EDUCATION

Sperry says that each inner mental state tends to have a value framework of its own.18 This is the essence of the uniqueness of each person, so that each individual constitutes his or her own self or identity distinct from others. Thus, everyone has their own longings, wishes and interests, but nevertheless remains conscious that this must live in relation with other persons. One's longings, wishes and interests must be perceived in the light of this relation.

The two dimensions of personal identity as both self and social are crucial in an individual's mental state, the perception of one's self-preservation is founded thereupon. Further, one perceives clearly and experiences practically the mutuality between oneself and others. However, the common tendency among humans, in the case of a conflict of interests between the two identities, is to pursue one's own interests. Self-identity is the primary dimension in one's perception of self-preservation; even among those who commit themselves to the common good, the individual cannot forfeit oneself or one's individuality, which are primary constitution of the person. This is not a mere abstract statement; as metaphysical it concerns one's very existence. This individuality is the very foundation of moral perception: one cannot appreciate the moral worth of others when one's individuality and thus one's moral worth are constrained.

A morality essentially motivated from within the individual will equips one with the capacity or competence to develop one's own thinking, to initiate one's own decisions and actions, and thus to develop an ability to manoeuvre one's own way through the complex and constantly encountered conflicts and crises of values and interest. In the contemporary African socio-cultural milieu this complexity becomes more problematic with the increase of social and perceptual diversity and the subsequent of diversity in interests and values. In one's moral conception one evaluates one's own conflicting values and interests not only in relation to oneself, but also as they relate to those of others and to one's society generally in order to justify one's decision both to oneself and to others.

In such an evaluation the moral agent transcends the individualism of one's own interests, but without forfeiting one's individuality. One tries to balance individual interests and social obligation. Such a person is well disposed to develop moral commitment and moral reliability; one is inclined to do the right thing because one derives satisfaction therefrom inasmuch as one's freedom is respected. Such a person would tend not to behave or act "morally" only to satisfy the requirement of the moment, but rather to develop the character of "being" good. Thus, he or she remains likely to "do" good, notwithstanding the complexity of the relationships involved; as Frankena says, "being" involves at last trying to "do".19

Moreover, one would be able, where necessary, to make assess and evaluate one's own system of values and principles, and if necessary to modify one's moral beliefs as may be demanded by one's life experience and expectations. One is able to develop cognitive and moral

flexibility as different situations may demand, yet at the same time to develop and sustain consistency.

Inasmuch as moral evaluation is a natural tendency of human beings, education which fosters personal initiative is bound to enhance it.

NOTES

1. A number of scholars of African society have explained this phenomenon of "social cohesion". They include: Kwasi Wiredu, Kwame Gyekye, D.N. Kaphagawani and John S. Mbiti. It is a major theme in Gyekye's recently published book,*African Cultural Values* (Accra: Sankofa Publishing Company, 1996).

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-50.

3. C.O. Evans, *The Subject of Consciousness* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1970), p. 19.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

6. Roger Sperry, *Science and Moral Priority* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p. 90.

7. Evans, p. 23.

8. David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (New York: The Bobbs - Merrill Company, Inc., 1957), p. 5.

9. Anthony O'Hear, *What Philosophy Is* (London: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 282.

10. William K. Frankena, *Ethics* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 45.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

13. Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue*. Part II of *The Metaphysics of Morals* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1964), p. 145.

14. Stuart Hampshire, *Morality and Conflict* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p. 140.

15. W.D. Hudson (Ed.) *New Studies in Ethics*. Vol. 2 (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1974), p. 12.

16. Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* (New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1964), pp. 180-181.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

18. Sperry, p. 125.

19. Frankena, pp. 65-66.

<center>CHAPTER IV</center>

ETHNICITY, CULTURE AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

<center>A.R. BYARUHANGA</center>

The challenge which Africa faces is how to ensure that identities of religion, ethnicity and tribe are accommodated without allowing the forces of bigotry and all forms of intolerance to exploit that accommodation. . . . The challenge we face is to build a culture of tolerance and to use our diversity creatively as a source of strength rather then of division.1

INTRODUCTION

These are the words of the Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity. I would repeat them, but add that, actually, the problem of identities has now engulfed the whole world: racism in America, the recently publicized separation of Aborigine children in Australia, the IRA in Britain, racism in Germany, the tragic events in the former Yugoslavia, minority and immigrant problems in France, and many others. Nonetheless, in Africa it is alarming: the Zulu problem is a thorn in the flesh of the body politic of South Africa; the ugly wars affecting the Great Lakes region have been explained in terms of ethnic identity; closely related, but being sensitively whispered, is a supposed Hamite plot to rule Central and North Africa.2 In Uganda, the accusation that the Banyankole are nepotistic, and many other similar cases underscore the pervasiveness of the problem of ethnicity. This is, of course, a shame to so-called world civilisation and calls for a re-examination of our assumptions about the social reality, especially in Africa, before we can talk about its reconstruction.

After a thorough examination of the problem of social identity, Martin reaches a conclusion that we are all cultural hybrids.3This is a pertinent observation because it underlines the significance of culture in social interaction with specific reference to ethnicity. Drawing from this, we assume that culture plays a large role in ethnic conflict. On this basis, we shall try to clarify the meanings of ethnicity and culture, consider the relationship between the two, suggest a reconstructive approach to the problem of the two phenomena. We hope, by this endeavour, to contribute to meaningful social reconstruction because culture and ethnicity are a fundamental aspect of our social reality.

THE NOTION OF ETHNICITY

"Ethnicity" is a derivative noun from the Greek term "*ethnos*" which means race. Hence, etymologically ethnicity means a large group of people of common ancestry distinguished from others by such physical characteristics as stature, skin colour, hair type, eye colour, etc. The known principal races are the Mongoloid, Negroid and Caucasoid. Hence, the term "ethnicity" as used to describe our current particular conflictual situations is misleading for a racial conflict would be very wide, cutting across continents. It would be equivalent to the conflict existing between the whites and blacks or between orientals and whites.

Instead, ethnicity as used tody is based on the terms "*ethnie*" and "ethnic" which refer to the small group which we enter at birth. Hence, ethnicity is described in primordial terms, namely, as the initial psycho-social network we enter and acquire at birth. This is so fundamental that it

later determines our values and goal priorities, our beliefs, perceptions, conduct and consciousness.

This primordiality is mentioned by the American anthropologist, Clifford, Geertz. He contrasts social relations that arise from kinship, neighbourhood, commonality of language, religion, beliefs and customs, with those based upon personal attraction, tactical necessity, common interest or incurred moral obligation.4 Geertz describes the former as "given", "unaccountable," and as having an overpowering force "in and of themselves." As all of us enter these social relations, some scholars argue that they do not necessarily constitute the grounds for violent conflicts,5 but instead provide us with an epistemological, cultural and emotional base.

Moreover, it often happens that people retain and emphasize their primordial, youthful world in pursuing specific projects in the larger adult world characterized by multiple cultures. This phenomenon is known as ethnogenesis and its product is an *ethnie*. Thus, an *ethnie* is a group in which membership has some of the qualities of the simplest type of infantile group with the same kind of emotional warmth and sacredness.6 When the term ethnicity is employed, one ought to have the *ethnies* in mind.

FEATURES OF ETHNICITY

Social Identity

One most important connotation implied by the use of the term ethnicity is social identity. It is presumed that an *ethnie* is an identical group. However, "identity" is not only a metaphysical term whose concrete applications are vague, it is also abstractive and most general. It refers to the state of the being of a thing or things; as such, it is neutral since it excludes moral precepts. Identity exists in the absolute and therefore its usage in concrete situations is only partially reflected. One cannot point at it and say, it is this or that. Instead, it can be described as a state of homogeneity and permanence, which on close examination implies difference and change. For example, if one identifies the colour of the car which killed the cyclist, it means that one inextricably rules out those which are not the identified color. Another example is an identity card, which indicates that a person is this one and no other, much as it indicates that this same person belongs to this group or to that.

Thus, identity implies sameness and uniqueness, much as at the same time it implies inclusion and exclusion. Identity, therefore, cannot be discerned independently; it has to be discerned vis-a-vis other identities. Applied to society, this means that a group of people are generally similar in many ways, but not that they are the same in height, age, colour, behaviour and other characteristics. It simply means that some people display certain generalities which can be divided into two categories. Outward identity includes religion, language, history or culture, physical characteristics and many others. For instance, the physical presentation of the Somalis is quite different from the physical presentation of the Bakiga in Western Uganda. Inward identity is expressed through beliefs, values, emotion and, most importantly, consciousness or the implicit philosophy or "spirit" of the community. This inward identity informs the outward expression of social identity. For example, the inward identity of the Tutsi in the current hostility in Rwanda and Burundi clearly is different from the inward identity of the Hutu because they are antagonistic.

Power. Tonnies describes *ethnies* as not purposive and existing for their own sake.7 However, such more recent writers as Geertz, Barth, Roosens, Nnoli, Rex and others see *ethnies* as organised depending on the project at hand. For Nnoli, *ethnies* are organised along a number of social processes including labour, religion, politics, juridical and other social axes.8 Weber contends that *ethnies* often produce leaders that use symbols. He defined an *ethnie* as a primary political community, with an inspiration and belief in a common identity, supportive of an ideological framework towards a specific purpose.9 The leaders draw upon the ethnic unity to mobilise it for political purposes. Martin too, treats ethnicity as a narrative of power.10

However, we find contestable the view that the ethnic purpose is political, because, the Gypsies have maintained their ethnic distinction by way of keeping a primitive, nomadic economy; Sokols seem to be organised on the axis of gymnastics and singing; others are based on oral and written traditions. Here in Uganda, the Karimajong conflict with the Iteso over cattle rustling, but there are internal conflicts among the Karimajong — the Bokora versus the Matheniko. In this regard, Barth's position seems more amenable to the description of the purpose of the *ethnies* whose ultimate goal seems to be the security of the group. This refers more profoundly to the above terms of identity. Otherwise, it would be reasonable to talk of political *ethnies*, economic *ethnies*, religious *ethnies* etc.

Ethnocentricism. Ethnicity presupposes the existence of more than one *ethnie*. However, it is to be noted that these *ethnies* have a belief in the intrinsic superiority of their own *ethnie* over others. It is assumed by the members that their values, achievements, goals or even their physical features are better, while at the same time holding others' ethnic qualities including their beliefs, values and organisation to be inferior and not to be preferred. This involves dislike and contempt for other groups. Hence, being centred on one's *ethnie* implies the choice of this one and ruling out others. This characteristic of inclusiveness and exclusiveness is a strong basis for conflict and ethnic hostilities.

Emotionality. Ethnicity seems to be based on emotionality organised along three main poles — the relationship to the past, the relationship to space and the relationship to culture.11 However, Rex adds that the emotional feelings are based on the warmth drawn from the members' experience of belonging together, the unique history of the group, and the mysterious sacredness attached to the relations among its members.12 In either case, fear and trust, love and hatred, persecution and glory are invoked. These emotions are so sensitive that any provocation is conducive to severe conflict.

Consciousness. Closely related to emotionality is the phenomenon of consciousness or awareness immanent in the cognitional acts of the members of the *ethnie*. Members become aware of their similarity as a group in values, goals and mode of life generally. According to Nnoli this is one important characteristic that defines ethnicity.13 This consciousness keeps the members together, much as it is also a tool for exclusion. Moreover, the consciousness members share may conflict with the consciousness had by non-members. This phenomenon, too, is a fertile ground for conflict.

Competition. In the world of scarcity and survival, there are struggles for power, scarce resources, survival and many others. Whatever be the object of struggle, power is needed to win

and therefore all possible resources are mobilised, including the unity of the people. As time and circumstances vary, those who struggle will mobilise any available tool to achieve their ends. Consequently, *ethnies* choose one of the many channels like religion, *ethnies*, history, place, stature and make it relevant in the struggle. In actuality, there are many channels for ethnic mobilization, but competition is one of the means most suited.

CULTURE: ITS NOTION AND ELEMENTS

The term "culture" is metaphorical; it is a derivation of the Latin word *cultura*, meaning cultivation of the soil to which, in classical times was compared cultivation of the mind. This was very close to civilisation. Two points can be raised before we go further: first, even at that stage, culture was seen as a conscious and teleological process, rather than a condition or an achieved state; second, culture was perceived as a personal, rather than a social project.

In modern times, based on that meaning, culture is understood in a number of ways. Firstly, it refers to a general state or habit of mind or of human perfection, close to the original meaning — civilisation. Secondly, it refers to the general state of intellectual and moral development in society as a whole. Thirdly, it may refer to the general body of the arts and intellectual work. Fourthly, more comprehensive and popular, it denotes the whole way of life of a specific society, whether material, intellectual, spiritual or moral. This is the meaning that interests us and upon which we shall focus here.

Conceived as a complex or whole way of life of a people, culture has two fundamental levels of expression, each reflecting on the other by which it is informed. One form of expression is the implicit core or philosophy(ies), of which the other is the explicit material expression: the explicit reflects and vindicates the implicit. Let us look at the second expression first.

The material expression of culture can be approached from two levels, the material proper and the behavioural. The material proper involves the unique physical heritage of a people; it is perceptible by the senses and includes the structure of houses, cloths, works of art, tools and instruments, roads, modes of production and their products, etc. The behavioral expression, on the other hand, involves institutions, modes of organisation, government, rituals, traditions, customs, language and practices developed over a long time either consciously or unconsciously. This behavioural heritage is transmitted from generation to generation through participation by members of the cultural continuum. In modern times, there is a conscious effort to transmit cultural knowledge by both formal and informal means through cultural departments in the foreign countries in addition to the intra-cultural educational institutions which act as transmission agents and channels.

The implicit core, the spirit of a people sometimes is referred to as the *ethos*. This is the distinctive internal character, philosophy, or mind set of a people. This collective mentality is both spiritual and moral. Like explicit culture, this is inherited and embodies the beliefs, values, goals, ideas, and attitudes of a people. It is variously referred to as the "soul" or "inner aspect",14 the implicit core15 or theoretical culture.16 This informs and directs the material and behavioural cultures. For example, in most traditional Ugandan societies, women kneel before men because of the assumptions or beliefs the society has about the relationship between men and women.

In general, therefore, culture is an embodiment of the material, psychological, intellectual, and moral expressions of a people. It identifies and provides them with the basis for stability and progress. Much as it is a social production, it exercises great influence on the choices and actions

of a people. In fact, to a great extent, it defines those who live that culture — in this case, the *ethnie*. Or should we say that culture and ethnicity are one and the same as, Martin claims?17

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHNICITY AND CULTURE

We said earlier that ethnicity involves identical representations, but what makes a people identical? The fundamental explanation of ethnic identity is culture. Not only is the implicit expression of culture the identifying factor, but also the explicit expression of culture acts as a form of its vindication. The Indian female dress, for example announces clearly to whom the dress belongs, e.g., a sari to an Indian; in Uganda, the Kinyankole dress will tell that this person is most likely a Munyankole, the Kiganda is Kanzu, etc. If one is familiar with a specific language and the conduct of a people in particular situations, like kneeling while greeting, it will be much easier to identify the person.

Regarding the implicit culture, we noted that ethnicity is most quintessentially represented by consciousness of what Outlaw called "implicit philosophy"18 or Masolo called the "theoretical culture".19 Culture binds the mind of the *ethnie* together; it gives them a logical unity and a practical basis for pursuing any perceived project. Is it not often heard among the Hutu that they are many and will therefore overpower the Tutsi? And conversely, is it not always said by the Tutsi that the Hutu have never ruled, and therefore they will never rule? Culture, however, is both permanent and changeable: it is unified but diversified, and even though identical it is different. This is the relativity of culture which in turn affects ethnicity.

Whereas it is true that culture is a social relation, and therefore that a group of people is bound by it, it is also true that society is made up of individuals who can transcend a culture not only rationally but in other ways as well. Not only are persons born different, they are not entirely bound by birth. They meet new conditions and interact with individuals from other groups on a different basis which, in turn, influences them to think anew of their cultural assumptions and develop independent vistas and personalities. In this way the ethnic identity may be shattered; the new vista that emerges may even put the individual in conflict with his culture: hence, the problem of the individual and the society. For example, in traditional Ankole, there is a claim that the men exerted social, psychological, political influence over the women because the former, so it was presumed, paid bride price and took care of the family including the wife. However, this influence is waning because, in the recent past, women have been empowered to play new non-traditional social roles. This reality not only shows the possible tension between individuals and societies, but also emphasises the "unidentity" of identity or "impermanence" of permanence.

This cultural relativity is not only intrinsic, but can also be extrinsic. That is to say, a culture can interact and influence other cultures or be influenced not only spatially, but temporally by other cultures. This phenomenon has been highlighted in the criticism of Europeans as guilty of unconscious prejudice or ethnocentricism by their interpretation of all cultures in terms applicable only to European cultural phenomena. This erroneously denied cultural dynamism in time and space; it seemed also to fix a universal value system in conformity with Platonic forms — an already discredited view.

The implications of this cultural relativism for ethnicity can easily be understood. In the first instance, if there can be intra-cultural relativity, and culture is a fundamental identifying factor of ethnicity, then, an *ethnie* is bound to defy identification. This is to allow for difference which shatters the basis of ethnic definition and characterisation. For example, in spite of the hateful

hunt for the Tutsi in Rwanda in the 1994 genocide, some Hutu condemned such a project. In fact, some Hutu were killed by their fellows for not supporting them or for condemning them in their awful project — hence the terms "extremist" and "moderate" as applied to the Hutu. Another example is from the Ankole in Western Uganda. With the coming of the colonials, almost all Bahima converted to Anglicanism while the Bairu divided into almost equal halves: one half became Catholic while the other became Anglican; negligible numbers remained traditionalist, while others became Moslems. When party politics was organised on the religious axes, Catholics joined the Democratic Party while Protestants joined the Uganda Peoples Congress. But most Bahima joined the Democratic Party, a party mainly for Catholics. Hence there are intra and extra contradictions or relativity within and between *ethnies*. This undermines organising people along *ethnies* to achieve certain objectives, for such objectives are not universal for every member of the society. This re-emphasizes the basic importance of the freedom of the individual and the role such an individual can and ought to play in a social project.

It was pointed out earlier, that *ethnies* are built and supported by emotion, which in turn is built on the axes of space, history and culture. Let us begin with cultural emotion.

Culture entails a system of meaning and understanding, implicit and explicit, which underlies the logical unity of human groups, *ethnies* included. Different situations and events are understood from a cultural context. As such, events are recreated in the present milieu drawing upon the experience of where one grew up, acted and communicated, all of which now have become part of oneself. This involves strong feelings, trust and security in knowledge and existence; the negation of this experience would probably mean the annihilation of the individual concerned. For examplem, it may be difficult to appreciate new foods or fashions like mini-skirts in a traditional Ganda society, conduct of rituals, etc. This cultural experience is closely related to past history where the roots of the group are claimed to be located. Whether the group believes it has a glorious or even a traumatic history, past experiences are recreated to explain the current situations and used to legitimise contemporary attitudes and behaviours.20 Common historical experiences give groups strong common feelings

Space, too, generates strong emotion. *Ethnies* appear as a field where the necessities of life are situated, where the community originates, where it is sustained and where its destiny lies. Great events, rituals, foods and music are related to a specific space. Owing to this factor the majority of Ugandans want to be buried at home, they do not want to sell their burial grounds, and will celebrate important events at their homes. Most groups resent others in a struggle for power. This is demonstrated clearly by the case of the Banyarwanda in Uganda and Zaire-Congo. And both president Chiluba and former president Kaunda in the Zambian election process manifested the relevance of emotion in ethnic mobilisation. Where strong negative emotion is involved, conflict and violence are likely consequences because emotion shuts out other avenues. In short, emotions are presented as truths of the past and present; they are used to organize and create groups as well to select and skew meaning and logic to suit the projects at hand.

It can be conceded then, that since emotion is an important aspect of mankind, its role should be appreciated. However, emotion is a subjective phenomenon that should be directed and controlled by reason and objectivity. The absence of this effort undermines rationality, freedom and choice. In this context, it is imperative that cultural emotion, which is the same as the ethnic emotion, should not be over-emphasized to build conflict and violence, but rather

critically appreciated. Emotion should not be projected as an absolute truth on which a conflict can be created as were the 18th and 19th centuries' subjective and prejudicial views towards other cultures.

In general, the philosophical issues involved in the phenomena of culture and ethnicity are epistemological relativism and objectivism, identity and difference, one and many, and permanence and change — all expressed socially as the problem of the individual and society. Therefore, if headway is to be made in solving the ethnic problem, recourse to the above problems has to be made. This is an arduous project!

SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

The term "social reconstruction" is adequate because societies have been "constructed" a million times, even though they continue to break up. To be able to come to terms with this problem, many suggestions have been made. The problem goes as far back as the days of Heraclitus and Parmenides — the problem of "unity in diversity" or "identity in difference" or "universality and relativism". This is a metaphysical problem, but can be also an issue of epistemology. When it is translated into social terms, it becomes the problem of the society and the individual, which also is expressed differently as multiculturalism, democracy, federalism versus centralism, etc.

Drawing from this duality in the reality of the universe, some philosophers have constructed either unifying or diversifying doctrines. The foundation of socialist systems is built upon a unifying doctrine, whereas the liberal ones are based on diversifying ones. To a great extent both extremes seem untenable, and so reconcialiatory doctrines have been suggested on which the welfare state and democratic socialism can be constructed. Here, the hermeneutic approach seems especially attractive.

Both Agazzi and Outlaw point to a positive reconciliation of the contradictions within and between cultures. Agazzi, for example, points out that since culture is a relative phenomenon we should not conceive our own culture as an absolute, while others are conceived as wrong or inferior. Instead, we ought to see cultures or other people as merely different. Another people's culture serves as a pivotal base for the meaning of life by orienting their choices. Outlaw contends that there should be an effort of sympathetic comprehension of values, parameters of judgement and ways of approaching existential problems which are fundamental to the other. To this approach, Outlaw adds a hermeneutic understanding by which is meant an experiential encounter that involves the merging of the subject's horizons of her/his own historical and meaningful being with the horizon of the one to be understood.21 This, of course, requires agreement and appreciation on both sides.

In ethnic terms, this approach means mutual appreciation and tolerance of cultural diversity, coupled with equality of opportunity and minimum social rights for all.22 This can entail some elements of a welfare state such as catering for "*Nkuba Kyeeyos*"23 (economic refugees) by European states.

Multi-culturalism recognises the right of minorities to their own culture for three reasons. First, separate cultures may have values which are important in their own right and actually enrich the entire society. For example, the communalist tenet practised in traditional Africa, if appreciated at a wider community level, would go a long way to alleviate some of the social problems not only in Africa, but also the world over. Second, the cultural structures of the minorities accord them protection and emotional support vis-a-vis the larger state, although this

also could be a source of the problem of the individual and the state. Third, cultural or ethnic belonging empowers people to fight more effectively for their rights.24This, however, opens a Pandoras' box.

Are we not then at the point from which we began: how is the relativity to be solved; what is to be done to resolve the conflict between *ethnies* and the higher national society or the state?

Note that this is a very old problem. However, as we have said, the ideal of multi-culturalism has been achieved in varying degrees by European states, and it may be relevant for Africa to borrow from that experience. Their strong ideal would seem to be respect for individual freedom, which implies ethnic pluralism. Left at this point it would be inconsequential, but supported with Outlaw's and Agazzi's hermeneutic approach this could constitute a step ahead.

Finally, the views of Mannoni and Recoeur provide a philosophical theory that tries logically to reconcile the Self and the Other. Ricoeur contends that the idea of the Self implies the Other.25 This is similar to Jesus's "Do unto others what you would want them to do unto you." This rules out ethnocentricism or ethnic (or cultural) conflict. Mannoni on his part, points out that the Self needs the Other to exist, not only physically, but also logically; otherwise, how does the Self become aware of its existence26 In addition, the Other reveals the Self as psychoanalysts indicated. Even the term "we" implies the Other, and the Rastafarian (Jamaican) use of "I" is constitutive of the Other.27 In short, we have to reach out for the other in the very constitution of our difference. Hence, our differences should unite us.

CONCLUSION

In our present world ethnic and cultural problems seem to have become more difficult than ever before. However, they have always been present in time and space. Ethnicity can be defined mainly in terms of culture, which is its identifying characteristic. The underlying philosophical problem is one of permanence and change, of identity in difference, or even of determinism and freedom. Socially, it is expressed as the problem of the individual and society. The individuals who constitute the society should be paramount. It is hoped that there will be a hermeneutic understanding of the logical and ontological necessity of the other for the Self and of the Self for the Other, and in addition protection of individual freedoms.

NOTES

1. The Honourable Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity, Address to the Conference on Africa, Washington, DC. 26th June, 1994.
2. There is a rumour in East Africa that the Hima in Uganda and the Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi, together with the Banyamulenge in Congo (former Zaire), are conspiring to combine with the Himites in Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya to control state power in the region of East and Central Africa.
3. D. Martin, "The Choices of Identity", in A. Zegeye and D.T. Goldberg (eds.), *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture* (Carfax: International Periodical Publishers, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1995), p. 16.
4. C. Geertz, *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa* (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1963).
5. J. Rex, "Ethnic Identity and the Nation State: the Political Sociology of Multi - cultural Societies" in A. Zegeye, and D. T. Goldberg (eds), p. 25.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

7. Tonnies, F, *Community and Association*, translated by C. Loomis (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955), in A. Zegeye and D. T. Goldberg, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

8. O. Nnoli, "Ethnic Conflict in Africa", working paper 1/89, CODESRIA, Dakar/Senegal, p. 3.

9. F. Mwesigye, "The Quest for Ethnic Identity: New Challenges for Uganda," paper presented at the fith American Studies Association - East Africa conference, July 17 - 20, 1995, p.2.

10. D. C. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-13.

12. J. Rex, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

13. O. Nnoli, "Ethnic Conflict in Africa", *op.cit.*, p. 2.

14. A. T. Dalfovo, "Readings in African Philosophy" (manuscript), Kampala, pp. 52 - 62.

15. E. Agazzi, "Philosophies as Self-consciousness of Cultures" in H. Odera Oruka and D. A. Masolo, *Philosophy and Cultures* (Nairobi: Bookwise, 1983), pp. 1-5.

16. D. A. Masolo, in H. Odera Oruka and D. A. Masolo, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-51.

17. D. C. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

18. L. Outlaw, in H. Odera Oruka and D.A. Masolo, *op. cit.*, "Philosophy and Culture: Critical Hermeneutics and Social Transformation," pp. 24-29.

19. D. A. Masolo, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-51.

20. D. C. Martin, pp. 12-13.

21. L. Outlaw, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

22. J. Rex, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

23. The phase "Nkuba Kyeeyo" is translated as "I sweep", but it is a ridiculing description of the lowly paid menial jobs that economic refugees from Uganda and elsewhere do in Europe.

24. Both Rex, *op. cit*., 1995, p. 31 and Nnoli, *op. cit*., p. 8, share the same view.

25. Ricoeur, "*Soi-meme comme un autre*" (Paris: Le Seuil, 1990), in A. Zegeye and D.T. Goldberg, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

26. Mannoni, "Clefs pour l'imaginaire ou l'autre scene" (Paris: le Seuil, 1969), in Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

27. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION IN AFRICA
E. WAMALA

Since the time of Max Weber, culture and how it affects social economic life has been spiritedly debated. Cultural determinists, among whom Max Weber himself is a leading figure, have tried to advance different cultural determinist theories, purportedly to explain socio-economic realities. For them a given set of cultural factors will give rise to a given pattern of socio-economic life.

Rejecting cultural determinism, we want to advance a cultural possibilist thesis in this paper. We argue that:

i) Individuals and human groups can identify elements within their cultures, reconstitute them and eventually change the superstructures supported by the reconstituted cultural elements.

ii) Social reconstruction in Africa will ultimately have to require and build upon cultural reconstruction.

Before we can argue this case, we must sketch the traditional cultural determinist theories we reject, highlighting their major tenets and their short comings; after this we shall proceed to making the case for our thesis.

CULTURAL DETERMINISM I

Max Weber and Religious Determinism

In order to attempt to advance a cultural theory to account for socio-economic life Max Weber in his various works, but especially in his *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and then *The Social Psychology of World Religions*, has attempted to show how cultural elements in religious beliefs influence socio-economic life.

Weber alludes to several religious practices to make good his point: the worship of cows in Hinduism prevented the development of a rational animal husbandry, as cows were fed well past their prime of economic usefulness; the worship of tools as quasi fetishes which strongly handicapped the development of technology; the prevalence of the caste system, again in Hinduism, impeded the development of industrial capitalism.1

But perhaps much more known in his views on religious determinism were his theories concerning Protestantism and the development of capitalism. Citing the Methodists and the Calvinists, Weber hypothesizes that discipline, ascetism, frugality and individualism — all traits of those protestant sects — were key ingredients in the development of capitalism. Buttressing his point he argued that areas of German and Switzerland which were Protestant were on the whole more economically developed than were those which were catholic.

The religious determinism of Weber was in a many ways reminiscent of the environmental determinism of Hippocrates and Aristotle, both of whom had in their various works invariably argued that the natural environment determined not only the physical appearances of human groups, but also their social consciousness and psychological predispositions.2 Hence according

to Hippocrates, Asians generally were "easy going" because they lived in very favorable regions. They stood in stark contrast to the "penurious Europeans", who, living in a harsh environment, had to work harder to ameliorate their suffering.3 Aristotle held more or less the same views on environment and social life.

Environmental determinists have received sharp criticisms from the possibilists, who rejected determinism and saw humanity as everywhere surrounded by possibilities. Weber's thesis drew a plethora of criticisms, not only questioning his assertions, but casting doubt on the methodology he employed.

For our purpose we will inquire whether Weber's views concerning Protestants in those areas he studied were universalizable to Protestants elsewhere in the world, and if that were so, whether Weber would go forward to definitely state that Protestant countries were bound to be capitalistic while Catholic countries were bound to be different.

The more serious criticism to be leveled against Weber is reductionism, the view that we can explain a complex social reality like capitalism in terms of religion or any single reality. In this sense the cultural reductionism of Weber is intellectually inimical to our intellectual quest to understand the phenomena of capitalism because it mobilizes bias, leading us to focus attention on some set of factors while leaving a host of others unattended and even uncontemplated. Hence, this paper rejects the religious and cultural determinism of Weber. But this is not all. We reject as well another cultural determinist theory, namely, the social trust theory of Fukuyama to which we now turn.

Francis Fukuyama and the Social Trust Theory

In contemporary times, Francis Fukuyama has advanced another cultural determinist theory when he argues that societies with higher levels of trust are inclined to be more developed when compared to societies in which there were lower levels of trust. He writes:

> A nation's well being as well as its ability to compete is conditioned by a single pervasive cultural characteristic: the level of trust inherent in society.4

To make good this point Fukuyama argues that 'low trust' societies such as China, France and Italy, where close relations between people do not extend much beyond the family, are poor at generating large social institutions like multinational corporations. So, Fukuyama observes, they are at comparative disadvantage. In contrast, 'high trust' countries like Japan, Germany, and the USA are bound to do much better at generating multinational corporations which, in turn, will lead to improved conditions of life and economically vibrant economies.5

Fukuyama's position has been criticized by scholars who have tried to show that, contrary to his central thesis, some societies which Fukuyama would categorize as "low trust", actually have been able to facilitate the development of large scale corporations. Then, too, China, which according to Fukuyama is "a low trust society", has not only actually been able to create large corporations but also is developing very rapidly.

Further, in advancing his theory of social trust as an all pervasive factor, Fukuyama ignored the role of governmental control and direction. In the case of both South Korea and China, the role of government is an important factor in evolving socio-economic policies. In such a situation development may take a given direction whether the society in question is "low trust" or "high trust".

Another criticism levelled against Fukuyama has been the lack of a global outlook in his analysis. He has for example concentrated on the Euro-Asia cum American social economic experiences and completely ignored the African realities. In Africa, as several scholars have attempted to show, there is a higher degree of social cohesion and trust than perhaps in any other part of the world. Surely, if "social closeness" and "social trust" were the key for corporate development, then Africa could be a cradle of multinational corporations.

But as Mazrui has argued in his article "Social Distance and the Trans-class Man in Africa", because of the closely knit social unit to which members belong, any upward economic mobility of a few is likely to be tempered in order to satisfy the social demands of the community. Should that happen, social closeness, rather then being an asset, actually turns out to be a liability.6 Max Weber seems to subscribe to the same view; hence his belief that individualism as found in Protestantism was a key positive element in the development of early capitalism.

But even where social demands did not deter individuals from accumulating wealth, social trust presupposes social homogeneity. In view of this individual achievement and hence distinctiveness is considered ostentatious behavior and creates what Mazrui has called the "Aristocratic effect". Although Mazrui would not subscribe to Fukuyama's cultural determinist theory, he proceeds to advance his own, to which we now turn.

A.A. *Mazrui and Scientific Languages*

A.A. Mazrui, in his discussion of "Development in a Multi-cultural Context: Trends and Tensions" proposes as a " cultural foundation" for all "other development" the fostering of a common language.7 Mazrui worries that Africa could be missing out on development, particularly scientific development, because of not having adapted her indigenous languages for scientific work. His hope for Africa lies in Africa adapting her indigenous languages so that "scientific concepts can become the necessary economic tools for economic development". Mazrui is a cultural determinist in so far as he subscribes to the view that a scientificed language *ipso facto* leads to development.

But to what extent is "the scientific adaption" of a language a *sine qua non* for scientific and technological development? An examination of a few selected languages will highlight the problematic character in Mazrui's thesis. Starting with Arabic, we note that since time immemorial this language has had scholars like Avicenna (Ibn Sina 980-1037) teaching medicine and philosophy. Averroes (Ibn Rushd, 1126-1198), a medical scholar, mathematician and philosopher, also used Arabic in his studies. Bertrand Russell, commenting on science in the Arabic language observes, "Writers in Arabic showed some originality in mathematics and in chemistry — in the latter case as an incidental result of alchemical researches. Mohammedan civilization in its great days was admirable in the arts and in many technical ways."8

To go by Mazrui's thesis that adapting a language for science leads to (technical) development, what is one to say about Arabic on the one hand, in which language at a very early historical period there was a rich scientific and mathematical heritage. On the other hand, today the majority of the Arab speaking world is still regarded as a developing world. Arabic then is not only an old language with a rich scientific heritage, but is now also spoken in many less technically advanced areas?

Mazrui seems to subscribe to the view that Japan and Korea have been successful because they have adapted their languages for science. A careful examination of the facts, however, reveals that such adaptation of the Japanese language was not a cause, but an effect. Although

the Japanese language had for millennia been influenced by the Chinese language (which was itself scientific to some extent) transcultural exchange remained largely barren. Only during Meiji times (also known as the period of enlightened rule, 1867-1912) did Emperor Mutsihito issue the imperial charter (April 1869), in which he announced the government's intention to modernize Japan and to turn to Western countries for new ideas.

In these circumstances, the adaptation of the Japanese language must have been but one of the many programs arranged to carry out an already conceived plan or policy in which the predominant or primordial element was the intent to modernize by obtaining outside (Western) technology. If the scientific adaptation of language *per se* were enough to engender development, the Chinese language with the largest number of speakers, its imperialistic past and, of course, its scientific heritage, would have led to development much earlier that the Meiji period.

The Korean language manifests even more relevant interrelationships. To start with, as *Chamber's Encyclopedia* states concerning the Korean language:

> Its history is unknown before the 15th century of our era and its grammatical structure has not been the object of many investigations. Its place, therefore, among the languages of the world is indefinable.9

The Korean language underwent scientific adaptation when the Japanese introduced industry to the country after its conquest in 1910. Again here, the scientific adaptation of the language was subsequent to a decision already made.

But the Korean experience raises an interesting point in that Korea was able to develop scientifically precisely at the moment it was colonized. Why was that so and why have African countries continued to use the "colonial excuse" to explain away the failure of development efforts? Did Korea develop in spite of colonialism because of the benevolence of Japanese imperialism, or are we to look for the reasons for Korean development in some internal strengths of the Korean people?

An inquiry into the language factor vis a vis colonialism is especially pertinent to our discussion because the colonial powers in Africa spoke either French or English — two languages rich in scientific terminology. If scientific language was an aid in scientific and technical development, then Francophone and Anglophone sub-Saharan Africa received a rich scientific language transfer. Why then did Africa not take advantage of that rich heritage?

Mazrui could argue that although used by colonial rule, these languages remained largely elitist and were not sufficiently diffused to the grass roots; consequently the relevant technical terminology was not sufficiently diffused in society. But that argument would be spurious at least. There are such countries as India and Malaysia, both colonized by the British, both using English as the official language in schools government and business, and both with a large grassroots populace who have never really came to speak English. Moreover, their mother tongues, namely, Hindustan and Malaya, are not scientific languages in the strict sense of the term. Why is it that those countries have been able to develop?

If hypothetically, Zaire and Uganda were to become 100 percent French and English-speaking in the next years, would they be on the threshold of an industrial revolution.

The Inadequacy of Determinist Cultural Theories

The few determinist theories dealt with above highlight some of the problematic encountered in attempts to explain social phenomena by relying on broad cultural theories. The first is that these explanations are too general to be considered overall explanations, for they lack the precision needed in order to be taken seriously. What is worse, implicitly they hide the real problematic areas that require identification and analysis and otherwise would be dealt with. By giving surface or superficial explanation, they prevent further scrutiny into the problematic areas. That is tantamount to mobilizing a bias whereby a whole range of possible reasons to account for a given set of phenomena are not looked at because attention is already drawn to some other theory or explanation. There is here the danger of *a priori* exclusion of possible areas which, if looked at analytically, could yield possibly results.

But such theories also unnecessarily isolate certain specific aspects of life which they then over emphasize as if they operated *in vitro*. The Protestant ethic, even if true, when over-emphasized ignores the role of other contemporaneous cultural elements. It is quite possible that, alongside the Protestant ethic, there were other social factors not so obvious, but in need of identification. Seen in this way, these theories are isolationist and reductionist.

CULTURAL AND CONCEPTUAL RECONSTRUCTION

Having rejected broad theories which attempt to explain socio-economic realities in terms of religion, environment, race, etc., we move on to the more modest task of examining how certain elements within culture(s) can effect social life. If we are to reconstruct social life, we need first to reconstruct those cultural/conceptual elements that support a given social phenomenon in question. As our interest is social reconstruction, in this second part of this chapter we shall argue that there is need to deal with specific elements within cultures (reconstructing them if need be) with a view finally to reconstructing the entire social spectrum. Implicitly, more than seeing a given culture as a determinant of a given social economic life, we see human persons as able to change certain elements within cultures and thereby to reconstruct social life.

What is being suggested here is not a novelty; some philosophers already have attempted efforts in that direction though not yet with sufficient force. What we have in mind specifically is the kind of effort attempted by Wiredu, who in his work *Philosophy and an African Culture* has tried to identify certain specific negative elements within culture - what he has called "complaints that can afflict society" — that can derail the positive development of society.

Wiredu identifies as problems: supernaturalism, authoritarianism and anachronism.10 What is refreshing and interesting about Wiredu as a good starting point for research is that he is looking at those negative elements of culture as they are in themselves, and which would be negative in whatever cultural paradigm they are found.

He is not attempting a grand theory by seeing anachronism, supernaturalism or authoritarianism as characteristics of a given society; rather he is looking at them as negative elements in themselves and for any society.

Coming specifically to social reconstruction in Africa in relation to culture, we note that what needs to be done is first of all to identify the negative aspects of the cultural and conceptual frameworks that for millennia have supported structures which now need to be reconstructed, and begin by reconstructing them first. This means that social reconstruction at the empirical level can be begun only by cultural and conceptual reconstruction at the intellectual level.

Note that here the starting point of reconstruction is seen as deeply embedded in the sub-consciousness of the psyche of the individual and the body politic. It follows that the

reconstructive process cannot be an easy task, accomplished in a short time. Rather, reconstruction requires patient and sustained effort, along with a willingness to wait a long time for any visible benefits to emerge. This is necessary so that people can internalize slowly — and presumably firmly — more acceptable and desirable values and cultural traits, as well as their corresponding intellectual and conceptual frameworks.

Emphasis on the intellectual and conceptual framework here should be understood from the point of view of the need to analyze issues critically, rationally and conceptually, and at a fundamental level. To apply this to the theme of social reconstruction itself requires that one proceed to the deeper intellectual level of asking what social reconstruction means, whether Africa needs it, and why now rather than at any other time in history.

To engage in that kind of critical and intellectual examination is in effect to discard the negative cultural trait of slavish acceptance of whatever is offered so that, freed from such a mentality others will cease to be dictators.

Reflection, introspection and a critical examination of our past may reveal, for example, that behind the specter of war are negative cultural elements related to intolerance. According to the major thesis of this paper, to reconstruct the empirical factors sustaining war we shall need to look closely at the internal cultural elements, now almost part of our moral fabric, and to see how we could so reconstruct them as to foster the positive values of tolerance even as we rout out the vices of intolerance. If, for example, the elders, chiefs, or even husbands have taught their young, subordinates or wives respectively never to answer back as part of a positive moral code, this could be the time to teach a new virtue of listening to the weak, of internally encouraging patient consideration of the feelings of others. These cultural traits, if nurtured increasingly on a broader national and international scale, could help overcome the empirical problem of war. If individuals could in their close environs of family and neighborhoods appropriate positive traits, the task of rebuilding institutions in such wise that they no longer support the empirical factors of war would be made easier.

If, in other circumstances the need for social reconstruction lies in the economic field, the approach would be similar, namely, a careful study of the negative cultural traits that have all the while supported undesirable economic structures.

Africa needs:

- a Marshal Plan, not in terms of finance, but in its cultural, intellectual and conceptual frameworks;
- a close examination of issues like cultural laxity towards work, leanings toward corruption by leaders, and a sober view concerning money and management;
- a check on such cultural traits as lack of accountability, and an instinctive desire to get rich quickly.

A whole complex of negative cultural traits needs to be overhauled.

CONCLUSION

By talking of reconstructing conceptual and cultural elements we are implicitly rejecting cultural determinism, showing that it is within the people's power to alter culture and eventually the superstructures erected upon it. Through subscribing to cultural possibilism, we see the

human person as ultimately responsible for charting a course for one's own development and for humankind.

Social reconstruction, which is basically a concrete task, will be meaningfully undertaken only when people, as cultural possibilists, rid themselves of the negative cultural traits supporting infrastructures that need reconstruction and go to work replacing them creatively with positive alternatives.

NOTES

1. Robert W. Green (ed), *Protestantism, Capitalism, and Social Science. The Weber Thesis controversy* (Boston: Health), 2nd Edition.

2. George Tatham, "Environmentalism and Possibilism" in Griffith Taylor, (ed) *Geography in the Twentieth Century*(London: Butler and Tanner), p. 128.

3. *Ibid*., p. 128.

4. Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and Creation of Prosperity* (New York: Free Press, 1995); Hamish Hamilton, as quoted in "Cultural Explanations; The Man in the Baghdad Cape". *The Economist* (Nov. 9th, 1996), p. 24.

5. *Ibid*., p. 24.

6. A.A. Mazrui has lucidly argued this point in his article "Social Distance and the Trans-class man in Africa". *Political Science Papers*, 1968/69 (Kampala: Social Sciences Council Conference, Makerere Institute of Social Research), p. 195.

7. A.A. Mazrui: "Development in a Multi-cultural Context: Trends and Tensions" In Ismail Serageldin and June Taboroff (eds.), *Culture and Development in Africa*, Proceedings of an International Conference held at the World Bank, Washington D.C., Environmentally Sustainable Development; Washington: Proceedings Series No.1, p. 129.

8. Bertrand Russell: *History of Western Philosophy and Its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd), p. 420.

9. *Chamber's Encyclopedia*, Vol. VIII, SV "Korean Language", p. 260.

10. Kwasi Wiredu: *Philosophy and an African Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 2.

MODERNISATION AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION: AFRICA AT THE CROSSROADS
S.A. MWANAHEWA

INTRODUCTION

The object of this paper is to make a logical survey of the fallacies and contradictions evident in the political and economic status of the majority of Africa states. It is true that Africa was infested with anomalies embedded in her cultures long before the onset of colonialism. It is well known that kingly administration was largely based on the "*ad baculum*" fallacy that "might makes right".1 The atrocities of king Mwanga in Uganda and "Nkosi"2 Shakazulu in Southern Africa are cases in point.

When the winds of colonialism blew towards Africa, this status quo was either maintained or given a new orientation: maintained in a sense that some states like those under Britain were mainly governed through indirect rule; and given a new orientation in a sense that some states were governed through "divide-and-rule" and others through assimilation.

In this new development the *baculum* changed hands from a native king or traditional ruler to the colonial offices based in Europe. It is at this juncture that the first contradiction was hatched. Political and economic policies which were to steer Africa along the road of "civilisation" and economic development were tailored in Europe in the form of straight jackets. The civilisation of Africa became the white man's burden. The sad implication of this phenomenon was that almost everything African in the form of culture was perceived as dark, evil and disoriented. The first victims were the African traditional religions, African technology, African agricultural practices and eventually almost all the artifacts, values and practices in African cultures. Unfortunately, this trend has continued appearing in different forms and shapes up to the present fantastic developments of social reconstruction and modernization. Social reconstruction and modernisation are not putting forward anything new. These fantastic ideas remind Africans of their inferior position in the world. Their basic message is that the landmarks of African identity in the form of cultural practices such as politics and economics are backward and out of place. It is high time Africa embraced such modernistic ideas as privatisation, structural adjustments and market economy.

The point at hand was referred to as a contradiction in the sense that the European tailored ideas, which had little if anything to do with Africa and everything to do with the countries of their origin, were passed on to African kings and chiefs for implementation. Many African leaders, then and now, have continued to implement them uncritically; this continues to place Africa at crossroads. There are those who believe that Africa should assert herself and advance those ideas which are of interest to Africa. They believe that modernistic ideas are sending Africa to prematurely her grave. This view is seen in Ongang's words: "the drums and the toll of death of African identity . . . can be heard at a distance."3

In opposition to this position are Africa leaders whose hands and brains are tied by forces beyond their control, and who project modernistic ideas of social reconstruction and modernization as best for Africa. Fortunately for Africa, this crop of African leaders includes exceptions like Mwamar Gadafi of Libya. Given this state of affairs, one cannot avoid echoing the classical question "Which way Africa?"

Given the perennial history of fallacies and contradictions, there emerges inevitably wonder whether social reconstruction and modernisation can be realised objectively in Africa. The present chapter will focus on this issue.

It is common knowledge that Africa is endowed with the gifts of nature. These include raw material reserves in the form of fertile lands, minerals, water resources, forests, relatively good climates and extensive empty space. The rest of the world, which is congested in terms of space, comparatively devoid of raw materials and deprived in terms of good climate, cannot help but crave for Africa. This gifted state of affairs has continued to place Africa in a vulnerable position. The survey in this presentation attempts to expose the contradictions therein. The problem here is that African leaders are well informed about the rich endowments of Africa. Instead of facilitating the native Africans to develop and eventually benefit from the gifts of their continent, they continue to offer these gifts of Africa to foreign forces whose basic interest is to exhaust its resources, or occupy it as a well-to-do class leaving the Africans to live as paupers in their mother continent. Kahane reminds us that, "It is the things that we do not know that get us into trouble."4

It should be recalled that traditional Africa emphasized a balance between material wealth and morality. In contrast, social reconstruction and modernisation tend to emphasize a balance between material wealth and law. In the former, morality was the tool for ensuring order in civil society; in the latter it is law which is supposed to serve that purpose. This state of affairs appears fine on the surface; but on close analysis it contains an embedded contradiction. It is a classical dictum that the law is for the protection of the rich, never the poor. The question then is, who are the rich and who are the poor? The rich is the capitalist who lives according to the modern trend of the market economy; the foreigner and the poor is the African who has been for the last two centuries a producer of raw materials for the capitalist. Social reconstruction and modernisation appear poised to swallow up traditional Africa: in other words, the wealthy capitalist or industrialist swallowing up the raw material producer and labourer who is the African. Of course, he will be swallowed up not literally but in a figurative sense because the relationship between the capitalist and the producer of raw materials is in a way symbiotic. However, such a symbiosis is absurd for only the capitalist truly lives, while the producer of raw material merely survives.

At this stage a logical quesion is, are not some African statesmen in the name of liberalisation in a way encouraging the emergence of capitalism by Africans? It should be remembered that in Africa capitalism is to a great extent tied to politics, indeed, to the politics not of democracy, but of division; not of law and order, but of corruption and intrigue. It is common knowledge that in order for politicians to succeed, they must have allies who are capitalists. If they cannot woo them to their side, the remaining option is to become capitalists themselves. But politicians cannot succeed in this venture if they follow business ethics, for capital takes a relatively long period to build. So they resort to corruption, bribery and heavy taxation of the unsuspecting masses. Because they get this capital dishonestly they do not want to relinguish power. Hence, there is a tendency to transform from democratic leaders to dictators. They want to remain in power for life not because they are political geniuses, but because they must protect their property through state security organs like the intelligence, police and army, who to some extent also thrive on the same loot.

It is well known that Africa has not been short of these voluntary lunatics who have attempted to userp the position of God on earth. In the 1970s Uganda had Idi Amin who crowned himself with the highest rank in the military (Field Marshal). The connotation was that he was

the highest symbol of death, which he proceeded to demonstrate by eliminating the pseudo-capitalists and intellectuals. He did not stop at that; by indirectly killing a Ugandan Archbishop, he demonstrated that he did not fear God himself. In the heart of Africa Bocasa crowned himself Emperor of the Central African Republic. Further south Kamuzu Banda also identified himself as president for life.

These leaders, who were biologically black, in essence were creations of colonialism. They not only spoiled the image of Africa, but destroyed the very fabric of African culture which in the words of Malingo stipulates that "African traditions convey certain values, some of which could be used in modern Africa."5

This chapter intends to identify some of the anomalies evident in African political and economic life.

THE SCENARIO OF POLITICS IN AFRICA

It is almost impossible to talk of social reconstruction and modernisation in Africa outside the realm of politics. To some extent it is the distortions in the political arena which have provided the platform for the developed nations to talk of social reconstruction and modernisation.

For a long time Africa has been characterised by a number of problems. These include ignorance and illiteracy for which the figures in Africa average around sixty percent. The problem with such a community of people is that it suvives more on sense experience than on intellectual sophistication. They are able to apprehend fully or comprehend knowledge received by their senses. But epistemology contends that sense knowledge does not escape the traps of illusion and superficiality. It is true that a largely illiterate community can still understand its problems, but in the majority of cases these problems do not go beyond the demands of survival. Even the forty percent of the population which is literate is not sufficiently educated to be able to analyse issues as they present themselves in politics. That leaves a small fraction of about twenty percent of the literate who are well enough educated to understand issues as they emerge: the political fate of Africa is based upon this small population. Hopeless as it appears, this entails further problems, for it is not the educated few who necessarily end up in high political positions. Idi Amin of Uganda, his vice president, Mustafa Idris and Okello Tito Lutwa were illiterates in the actual sense of the word; one time Sergeant Doe of Liberia is another case in point. They were at one time in charge of political affairs at the top level. In Uganda, for example, to become a member of parliament the educational requirement is "senior six". Once one is a member of parliament, one is a potential minister who could turn out to be in charge of political affairs.

The contradiction highlighted here is that the lower level electorate, which is largely ignorant about political matters, is responsible for the election of a member of parliament who is equally ignorant about politics. It is difficult to imagine the sort of reconstruction and modernisation which can take place in a society where the ignorant mass puts its trust in a semi-illiterate member of parliament to make decisions on their behalf on political matters of which he is largely ignorant. In a situation where the half-blind leads the blind, one expects nothing short of disaster. Kahane again reminds us that: "We are put in trouble by things that we know little about."6

Another problem which is bedeviling Africa is hunger. It is common knowledge that Africa's biggest source of foreign currency is the export of agricultural products. Africa contains large chunks of fertile lands. It is ironical to learn that part of the food which is exported to

Europe comes back to Africa through the World Food Programme to serve starving Africans. This food is distributed to institutions like schools, colleges and hospitals, to mention a few. The largest quantity of food aid goes to refugee camps to serve the victims of wars created by African politicians. Africa, which is one of the leading continents in the production of cotton for textiles depends significantly on second hand clothes donated by developed countries. This trend of affairs does not please Africans; rather it makes them bitter, for they feel betrayed by the political systems which are supposed to take care of them.

The problem which emerges is that it is difficult to envisage reconstruction and modernisation among people who are starving and embittered, not because they are lazy or because their continent is not fertile, but because of political chaos caused by myopic politicians.

While hunger has invaded Africa largely due to political chaos, Africa is at the same time submerged in mass poverty. In rural Africa many families still live in grass thatched huts, and others in houses made of mud and wattle. Levels of hygiene are below standard. People drink stagnant water from ponds which, apart from supplying unhygienic water, are breeding grounds for mosquitoes and such other waterborne diseases as bilhazea and cholera. Attempting to escape these appalling conditions, many people seek sanctuary in big cities and towns. Being illiterate and unskilled, most of these people, instead of finding heaven, find hell. They are marginalised to the outskirts of the cities and the infamous slums where at times conditions are worse than those in rural areas whence they came. Again mass poverty is a consequence not of a poor continent, but of bad politics.

While some families of the educated elite employed in the civil service go with one meal a day, some African leaders boast of billions of dollars in European banks. Ex-President Mobutu of Zaire alone was quoted as possessing four billion dollars in Sweden and Switzerland. This excludes his accounts in Belgium and his assets in France. If reconstruction and modernisation are to be executed by the likes of Mobutu, who unfortunately are not in short supply in Africa, one cannot help but wonder.

Another problem that besets Africa is lawlessness which is notable in many parts of the continent. Memories of massacres in Rwanda and Burundi which claimed thousands of lives are still vivid. In Northern Uganda, recently, people have lost their noses, lips and ears extrajudiciously. In Liberia children are using guns like toys. In Algeria people are slaughtered every day like goats."7 Again the big cause is political mismanagement by Africa leaders. In such a state of near anarchy, it is difficult to imagine the sort of success which reconstruction and modernisation could have.

One needs to mention corruption as another factor eating into the marrow of the African states. This seems to be part and parcel of governance in Africa, as can be illustrated with the following example. In order to be placed high in society one of the conditions is education, preferably university education. But how does an individual reach the university? In some cases in order for one to enter the nursery school which is the entry point of the educational ladder the parent has first to bribe the admissions officer. This business transaction is done in the presence of the child for whom it becomes the first lesson in the art of corruption. Here, we are reminded of the saying that "when you steal in the company of a child, you have shown him what to do."8 At the end, the children must do leaving examinations. Some members in the school administration will bribe some officials in the examination section to make available to them in advance the national examination. Students who are able are asked to pay money to obtain these ahead of time. Some students are instructed secretly on how to answer the questions.

The dramatic climax comes at the point of getting a job after schooling. In most cases, it is not what you know which will get you the job, but either whom you know or the "day's Ntandikwa"9 to the personnel manager. Your status on the job will to some extent depend on the weight of the "entandikwa" you are able to give.

We now have potential officers whose entry point into the system was founded on corruption and whose exit into public life is crowned by corruption. Some of these will enter the educational system, others into health, others into administration, customs offices, revenue offices, the political system, the army or politics; yet others will enter the judicial system to ensure justice and human rights into their countries. In a period of social reconstruction and modernisation can they be the champions!

Then there is a problem of sectarianism which since the time of independence has entered and influenced African politics. Almost everywhere throughout Africa where multiparty democracy sets foot a head of state wins election largely by drawing support from his tribal group. What happens thereafter is a chain of that particular tribe in the most sensitive organs of the state machinery, in the security forces and in businesses. In Uganda the phrase which describes this state of affairs is "Twariire".10 Given such a situation, one is left to wonder whether the fruits of reconstruction will not fall victim to sectarianism.

Political instability is another anomaly characteristic of African states. Since the 1950s when the wave of independence swept over almost the entire continent, large parts of Africa have never experienced political stability. Liberation movements and wars of liberation gave birth to the Maumau in Kenya, Majimaji in Tanganyika, Flerimo in Mozambique; and this instability has proliferated up to the present. Further, sandwitched between the Soviet Union and the United State of America during the Cold War, Africa became a scape goat. Problems, initiated outside Africa, were hatched within Africa. We are aware in Uganda of the exiling of King Mutesa I, in Zaire of the murder of Patrice Lamumba, in Ghana the murder of Kwame Nkurumah, to mention but a few. The anomaly in this case is that while the conglomerates in Europe and the Soviet Union profited from the sale of arms, Africa continued to nurture and develop a perpetual state of instability. It is in this state of affairs that social reconstruction and modernisation knock at the doors of the African continent.

Problems of this nature set up chain reactions of other problems which are particularly noticeable in Africa, including disease and low life expectancy. The threat of Aids threatens to wipe out the entire continent continues to be the concern of Europe and the United States. But in rural Africa malaria and worms are killing many more people than Aids. The statistics of this appalling state of affairs are never released, however, due to the sorry state of the general medical and health conditions. Large communities within the African states survive on the services of traditional herbalists. How will reconstruction and modernisation cure the sick continent of Africa?

Contradictions again are seen in European and American models of administration. Africa receives the definition of democracy from Abraham Lincon as "government of the people, by the people, for the people," which sounds satisfying and worth emulating. But the problem is that African leaders have captured that definition and domesticated it to themselves. Today Africa talks of democracy as "government of the head of state, by the head of state and for the head of state." This over-turning of the norm provides the taproot for political chaos. Constitutions, which should advocate the supremacy of the law above person, place heads of state above the law. Kahane reminds us that: "Where law ends tyranny begins."11

Some heads of state begin by bribing noisy members of the opposition with ministerial and other managerial jobs. Ministers from his own party are at the leader's mercy as he has power to appoint them and remove them at will. Because he is above the law he cannot be investigated by such state security organs as the police. In any case, it is the head of state who appoints the commanders of the army, police and prisons, and can remove them according to his whims and fancies. Above all he is commander-in-chief, with power to declare war or peace. These excessive powers make him feel like God's representative on earth. With no active opposition in place, he domesticates the state into a personal private estate. Instead of addressing the social needs of the country, he is obsessed with his personal security, creating hords of soldiers around him in the form of a special presidential guard, special force, and the like. He has an unwritten contract with these forces to keep him in power; in turn, he shares with them the fruits from his private estate. Without a miracle in Africa, it is these people who will be in charge of reconstruction and modernisation.

THE SCENARIO OF THE ECONOMY IN AFRICA

In Africa economics determines politics. It is inconceivable therefore to analyse the political arena while leaving out the economic. As in politics, the contradictions in the economies are based largely on the *ad baculum* fallacy. It is common knowledge that almost all African countries are being run as charity states: the bulk of the money which helps in constructing and maintaining the social infrastructure is either donations from private organisations in Europe and United States of America or grants from those governments. Consequently, Africa finds it difficult to think independently. European economies are perpetually in charge of African politics.

Before the end of the cold war Africa had two options. Either it became an ally of the Soviet Union and therefore wore communist clothing, or of United States of America and therefore wore capitalist attire. There was almost nothing unique for Africa in terms of politics or economics.

Some countries like Tanzania adopted the Eastern mode of economics. Nyerere's words reflect this maximum: "In our traditional society, we were individuals within a community. We took care of the community and the community took care of us"12

Other African states opted for a Western economic model. With the fall of communism the Western model is sweeping across the African continent. Social reconstruction and modernisation now are seen in terms of the capitalist model. Hence, it is necessary to examine how capitalism took root in Africa in order to see whether capitalism will be fessible in Africa.

Before colonialism Africa was a forgotten or dark continent. Little was known about the economic potential of this mass of land which happens to be the second largest on earth, with a population of over 500,000,000 million. Colonialism exposed to Europe this potential market and source of raw materials. At the time of partition, Europe set about avidly acquiring shares of the treasure constituted by Africa's viable climate, agricultural potential and virgin mineral resources. Since then Africa has become for Europe a treasured infant. But Europe's crime in Africa is that instead of developing the economic potential of this land, it created agents in the form of political leaders who have continued to mutilate and vandalise her economically. Its strategy was to control Africa from South to North. South Africa was targeted for its richness in fossil oil, not to mention its mineral potential. In the North, Egypt occupied a particularly important position due to its role in the Middle East. Europe and America needed Egypt because

of its Suez Canal as a gateway to the Arab oil in the East and a channel for European and American goods. The United States has bribed Egypt with 2.5 billion dollars annually in exchange for signing the famous Camp David Accord, making Egypt its second largest beneficiary next to Israel which gets 3.5 billion dollars. Considering the fact that the total of US foreign aid is seven billion, that leaves only one billion for the rest of the world. This is a very good example of the *ad Buculum* fallacy that "might makes right" — here that economics determines politics.

The only African country to stand against the encroachments of the United States is Libya. Ghadafi, whose military training was at Sandhurst, realized that King Idris was receiving huge bribes from Britain which benefited the king and his family and not the Libyans. The bribes were meant to enable Britain to syphon off the best light crude oil produced by Libya. In 1969 he organised a *coup d'état* which overthrew the monarchy. Consequently America lost her huge naval base at Bengazi and Britain lost hers at Tripoli. In 1974 Ghadafi nationalised all the oil installations, worth 5.1 billion. Raising the cost of a barrell from three to 42 dollars gave him the money to assist all the liberation movements in Africa which opposed capitalist exploitation.

Looking for a starting point for social reconstruction and modernisation, Libya could be an ideal, because the crusade to build houses has enabled Libya to have more flats than people: flats are built for babies still in the womb. A Libyan pays 20 percent of the cost of the flat for five years and owns it thereafter. But what is the picture elsewhere in Africa? Zaire became a looting ground for the United States, reflected in the fact that Zaire became one of the places in Africa where capitalism clashed with communism. A diehard supporter of the Zairian government, the United States was the first to declare Mobutu*persona non grata*13 — yet another grand contradiction witnessed in modern Africa. The hypocrisy conforms to the Banyankore saying: *Omuguta ku gwooma enshohera zigwaamuka*14 (When the hide dries flies migrate).

In East Africa Kenya became a strong investment base for Europe. This drove the indigenous Kenyans to the edge in their own country, as Europeans occupied the most fertile lands and the most lucrative parts of the urban areas. This situation gave birth to the expression "`wanakubwa' (an European master) and `boy' (an African servant)."15 After independence the situation may have changed, but the change is indeed slight if at all. The ideas of reconstruction and modernisation may sound good to the Kenyan elite, but given the intense brain washing which has swept the entire African continent, it may be difficult to convince some rural Kenyans that Europeans and Kenyans can operate on the some wave length.

Uganda equally became a favorite of Britain as the British interest in Uganda was mainly economic. It took over land in Buganda and gave it authority for management. Britain allocated land to Kabaka (King of Buganda) and his chiefs in payment for allowing Britain to carry out its economic activities; the rest of the land was allocated to the Queen of Britain as crown land. Again, although conditions changed slightly after independence, it is not for nothing that the West, including the United State, has launched a crusade to invest heavily in Uganda and to set privatisation and structural adjustment conditions. This is reconstruction and modernisation in its naked form. History has yet to tell whether this move is for the benefit of Uganda or Europe and America.

Let us see the contradiction embedded in this move. Investments involving agrobased industries require huge chunks of land to produce raw materials for these industries. After acquiring land for an industry which may be relatively small, extensive land is needed on which to produce raw materials for the industry. A highly placed politician in Uganda one time said that the constitution should contain a provision "which enables government to acquire land

compulsorily for industrialization".16The implication here is that Ugandans should prepare to surrender their land constitutionally. One wonders whether this is not opening the gates for repossessing crown land. The contradiction is seen in the words of the same politician:

> Because peasants in their home area were nomads . . . they were exploited and oppressed by land policies, such as ranching schemes, which displaced them from their traditional lands. Such policies were instituted by British colonialists and supported by local collaborator chiefs and, later, by neocolonial independence politicians.
> Because of the background and an early determination to fight against political and social injustice . . . I decided in 1966 to lead a campaign telling the peasants . . . to fence their land and refuse to vacate it.17

If this trend continues in Uganda reconstruction and modernisation will crash these fences like the Berlin wall in East Germany. Again history will tell whether it will be ordinary Ugandans who benefit from these modern moves. Uganda is an example; the other African states should be prepared to lose their lands or, if they are lucky, to be marginalised by the powerful capitalistic forces from Europe, the United States and now the orient.

CULTURAL AFRICA

Before concluding let us see whether cultural Africa has anything to offer to the rest of the world. Its first contribution can be seen in terms of its traditional judicial system. This is handled by a team of experienced elders, in contrast to the professional occidental judicial system which is handled by a team of professional lawyers. If 'the law catches the poor and not the rich', since most people in African states are poor, the occidental legal system is not for them. The occidental legal system has within its structures certain weaknesses which can be exploited by shrewd lawyers to the advantage of the rich and the disadvantage of the poor. Now and then we hear of the extra-judicial killings in police cells and state prisons all over Africa.

The typical traditional African court is transparent, free from corruption or bribery and manipulation by elements within the system. Usually testimony is by eye or ear witnesses. The practice is so straight forward that even the relatives of the defendant can bear testimony against their close relative and then help him to bear the penalty (which in most cases is compensation). This transparency does not exist in the occidental judicial system where it is claimed that close relatives even when they know the truth are not obliged to testify against the criminal. The African moral code is worth emulating.

Another component which could be borrowed from Africa by the occidental world is its human-based rather than capital-based insurance. This insurance is reflected in the proverb that "he who has people is richer than he who has money." Almost the entire continent of Africa believes in the spirit of collectivisation, togetherness and sharing at moments of happiness and sadness. This practice is enshrined in the traditional structures of clans or even tribes. People invest in people in terms of their action and behaviour toward others. For instance, if a house catches fire in the village, the problem is not left to the owner of the house alone; it becomes the responsibility of everyone in the village to ensure that the victim is comforted and compensated through erecting a new house for the family and replacing the damaged property.

The same goes for every calamity. If a dangerous animal invades a village, all able-bodied men participate in its destruction. It is true as well for all such major calamities as wars, famine

and the usual everyday deaths. The victims and the bereaved are always surrounded by the company of everybody, near and distant. Concern of individuals for all and of all for the individual serves as strong insurance based on the human bond. This serves also to curb human selfishness and envy, because a person with such vices is isolated by society, without whose support an individual finds it very difficult to survive.

CONCLUSION

This presentation has tried to demonstrate that the fall of communism has left Africa in a vulnerable state. Although Africa has its own inbuilt contradictions based on its cultural makeup, many of the contradictions are rooted in the *ad baculum* fallacy of 'might makes right'. This is evident on the political and economic fronts. Although the ideas of social reconstruction and modernisation are recent developments, their roots sink into the political and economic structures of the colonial and post-colonial periods, when the contradictions discussed were consciously or unconsciously put in place. The political situation in the larger part of Africa has been outlined and its contradictions sketched. It has been shown also that Africa would not have been devastated by external forces without the collaboration of African agents by its political leaders who stood to gain. This was a betrayal of the people who put trust in them to shape their destiny. The leaders turned into monsters who, together with their colonial masters, syphoned off the wealth of their countries to Europe and the United States.

The analysis has further probed into the economic situation of Africa. It has shown that although Africa is endowed with huge economic potentials, the average African has not benefited much from these natural gifts. In Africa economics determines the nature of politics, but the economic structures have not been designed by Africans but imported *in toto* from Europe or America. These have been maladjusted for Africa, and have left it largely illiterate, sick, poor and above all politically and economically pitiable.

Given the present unfavourable political and economic variables, it would be surprising if social reconstruction and modernisation could objectively benefit Africa. This carries an implied warning that the intentions implanted in structural adjustments and privatisation are calculated to enable Europe and America to pick up where they left off when Africa gained independence in the late 50s and early 60s.

This presentation does not in any way condemn or discredit social reconstruction and modernisation. It is sceptical only of whether this move will succeed in the present conditions in which history has placed Africa. The suggestion being put forward is that instead of inviting multi-national industrialists to come to invest and buy state corporations, Africa leaders should contract with international financial institutions to secure loans for the indigenous potential capitalists. In other wards local investment and purchase of parastatals should play the primary role, while foreign investment plays a secondary role.

NOTES

1. J.H. Copi and C. Cohen, *Introduction to Logic*, 8th Ed. (New York: Macmillan. 1990), p. 105.
2. South African name (Zulu) for King.
3. J.J. Ongang, "The Death of Africa Traditional Religion", in *Quarterly Review of Religious Studies*. Vol. II (No. 1, Sep - Dec).

4. H. Kahane, *Logic and Contemporary Rhetorics* (Calfonia: World Worth, 1971), p. iv.

5. E. Malingo, *The World in Between* (Nairobi: Gweru Press, 1995), p. 86.

6. Kahane, *op. cit.*, p. iv.

7. CNN News

8. Kinyankore proverb (one of the tribes in Uganda).

9. Loan or beginning capital, which at times can mean a bribe. The expression is used in Uganda.

10. Kinyankore word (one of the languages spoken in Uganda) which means once you attain political power, you have solved your financial problems.

11. H. Kahane, *op. cit.*, p. 480.

12. J.K. Nyerere, *Ujamaa Essays on Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 67.

13. CNN World News.

14. A Kinyankore proverb in Uganda.

15. A Kenyan expression, which sometimes meant white master.

16. UTV News.

17. Y.K. Museveni, *Tackling the Tasks Ahead: Election Manifesto*, 1996, p. 2.

SOCIAL IDENTITY AND CONFLICT:
A POSITIVE APPROACH
BYARUHANGA RUKOOKO ARCHANGEL

INTRODUCTION

On the world scene today, we have experienced dramatic social changes and events, most of which have been explained in terms of social identities. Perhaps the most remarkable event in recent years is that of the Rwandan genocide in which over one million ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus were savagely massacred by the so-called extremist Hutus in 1994. The Banyamulenge (extension of the Tutsi-Hutu conflict) episode flowed into Eastern Zaire.1 Indeed, it would be more adequate to include the whole of central, if not the whole of Africa, as facing the dehumanizing problem of social identities. Moreover, beyond Africa in the period after the changes of 1989, no single social problem has been as elusive or tragic as that of social identity (ethnicity) in Central and Eastern Europe. Many other parts of the world have not escaped this problem.

In spite of this being a deadly social problem, various commentators on the subject of "identity" have expressed it in nominalist terms. It has been referred to as a "narrative" (Martin, 1993 and Rex: 1995, 21-33). In ordinary terms, a narrative is a story or account and implicitly therefore a social creation. Put differently, social identities are not necessary;2 they might or might not be. This, in effect, declares the term "identity" ineffective in describing social reality or, simply as being fictious or imaginary.

But this is precisely the source of the problem, because the consequence of such a theory is that the so-called social identities are superficial and could or should be dispensed with. This interpretation has not lacked practical implementation. For example, in the period after independence, most African states faced with the problem of pluralist societies or social identities, decided to suppress pluralist social paradigms of development in favor of monolithic centralized ones (Barongo, 1990:65). This simplification is unacceptable. When millions of people are dying one should not call it a "narrative". The word "identity" may be abstract, but when applied to a social process it bears a specific meaning whose application can have strong effect. (Interestingly, while the word "identity" is denigrated and rejected, the word "specificity" is accepted in its stead [Martin, 1995:17] without realizing that the two words could be synonyms in the context of social process.)

In this connection, there is definite need for a more authentic analysis and a positive approach to the glaring reality of the problem of social identity. Further, such analysis is essential to the understanding of social changes and events in our world today. Against this background, I maintain that:

1. Epistemologically (or metaphysically), identity is *prima facie* and *a priori* a conflictural relation. This is the existential reality which must be recognized as such.
2. Social identities are the result of nexus of man as an invariable factor, on the one hand, and his environment, on the other.
3. Social identities suggest the existence of "multi-wealth" which should be converted into a "commonwealth".

THE NOTION OF IDENTITY

In order to understand the notion of social identity, it is essential to come to terms with the term "identity" first. This is a metaphysical term, and as such abstract. As a consequence, its referent cannot be pointed at and said to be this or that. Nevertheless, it can be described, and in this regard identity means a state of being the same in nature, quality or otherwise, in contradistinction to others which are different.

To identify, therefore, is to delineate or isolate the features which mark out the referent in question from others. Put differently, identity is defined in terms of others — what it is not — and hence of contrast or conflict! Thus to talk of identity is to talk of a conflictual relation. This forms the basis of the underlying philosophical problem of identity, which can be stated as: what true explanation can account for the cosmological features which are the same or seemingly permanent, on the one hand, and those which are changing or diverse, on the other.

This problem was first raised by the pre-Socratic Greek cosmologists or philosopher scientists, who included Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes. They were struck by the fact that nature was an organized physical system governed by a kind of law or constancy. They noted that nature was forever re-arranging, changing, and renewing itself. Yet, in spite of unending change, there was stark continuity (Copleston, 1985: 13-21). Hence their question: "What is real vis-a-vis change and diversity?" These philosophers were searching for identity or reality. Put differently, they were trying to "identify reality".

This philosophical issue was drawn to an extreme by the later ancient philosophers — Parmenides, Zeno and Plato, on the one hand, — who insisted that reality was identified with permanence and by Heraclitus, on the other, who insisted that reality was identifiable with change. Even at this level, a conflict is discernible, but this is much more so when Heraclitus says that being exists in many or that identity exists in difference (Walsh, 1985: 1-6). Here, Heraclitus not only expresses the fact of cosmological conflict, but he also points out that the changes and tensions are struggling to create a balance; in effect, that the cosmos is sustained by conflicts and their resolution.

This view of a dual conflictual cosmological constitution is often referred to as the common sense view of the universe. This view seems to be supported not only by observation, but also by logical considerations. For, when it is asserted that something is changing, does this not at the same time imply that there is something which remains permanent or unaffected by the transformations. Otherwise one may ask: What is it that is changing? As a consequence, it is the delineation of that which remains unaffected by transformations — the problem of identity — that has traditionally been the concern of philosophers.

Before concluding, it may be useful to make a further distinction within the problem of identity. In one sense, identity implies permanence amidst change, but in another sense it may imply one or unity amidst diversity or many. For example, when we see two objects with a similar color, we may wish to ascertain whether or not the two are identical. In this case, we are concerned with the problem of identity in the latter context of one versus many. However, when we want to know whether a daughter of Mr. Okello has not grown up, we are concerned with the former meaning — identity in spite of transformations in the passage of time.

Thus, in view of what has been discussed above, I want to re-assert my earlier position that identity necessarily involves a conflictual relation, which relation is pervasive in the cosmos and *a fortiori*, in man and his environment. Even such recent writers as J. Austin (1961), admit

this conflictual relation. Therefore, when treating issues related to identity, a conflictual relation should be accepted and treated as such. In short, the solutions of the identity related problems must begin from recognizing and appreciating identity, both in nature and society, as conflictual. This is an authentic approach. To deny or suppress it is neither useful nor possible without causing social instability because it is a denial of reality. Further, treating identity as a narrative fails to perceive it as a natural manifestation.

Social Identity

Applied to society, the problem of identity then is expressed at two levels: one, how is the identity of a person to be expressed vis-a-vis other persons and in the passage of time; two, how is social identity expressed in the context of other societies and of the passage of time. We call the former individual identity and the latter, multiple identity.

Individual Identity. It may be difficult to define the identity of man as an individual. But if done, it would be a positive step in the direction of grappling with the problem of social conflict or identity related social problems; hence an attempt is worthwhile. Thus, while at one time one is seen as existent, at another one is seen as unfulfilled; and while one is seen as closed at one time, one is seen as open at another. Traditionally and most generically, persons are seen from two standpoints: that of the body which provides the basis for one's determination and material interests, and that of the spirit which provides the basis for one's infinity and rationality. Even at this level, one is seen as a conflictual or antinomical unity. To be able to understand one's social identity, this antinomical duality has to be taken into consideration. Notwithstanding, this dichotomy is not sufficient.3

This abstractive duality does not say much about the nature of the identity, although it forms the basis of the explanation of one's identity and the conflict associated therewith. There is no such thing as a person living independently of the external world or one's environment, whether historical, cultural or otherwise. One is a result of both the individual the object or subject called man and of one's environment. One is a recipient of the external world, much as one participates in the creation of the external world. Therefore, one is both a product and producer of the external world and of oneself.

In terms of the body, one could be described as physical, biological and psychological. As a physical object, one is either tall or heavy, has a heart and a head — they provide him with a specific shape and volume different from other objects or beings, but "distinct" enough to agree with the shape of others as human beings. As a biological object, one's heart pumps blood to other parts of the body, the stomach digests the food which it must obtain, the skin contracts under cold weather while it expands under warm weather; all these must function in an environment and agree with how other people's bodies function. So far, these are obvious cases of identity and difference.

In regard to the spiritual aspect, one conceives of oneself in terms of the other. Ricoeur, in his study of the ontology of the Self, distinguishes between two aspects of identity: "Sameness" which is based on the ideas of relations through time — a kind of mental continuum which is similar to Leibnitz's theory of consciousness — and "selfhood" which is constituted by all the identifications to which a person has consented while at the same time allowing for change and evolution. Ricoeur then asserts that sameness cannot be conceived without the conception of selfhood. His conclusion is that the One cannot be conceived without the Other (Ricoeur, 1990).

In effect, this means that to talk of the "One" is talk of the "Other" and to talk of the "Other" is talk of the "One".

Recent studies in psychology and philosophy have added a much greater understanding man. They seem to agree with regard to the problem of identity. Psychoanalysts have argued and demonstrated an indissoluble connection between the Self and the Other. Accordingly, the Other reveals the reality of Self through a multifaceted Self (Mannoni, 1969); that is, one's existence needs the existence of the Other not only in physical and social terms, but also psychologically. Relationships and communication are possible because of the consciousness that the Other exists. Otherwise, how could we talk of emotions in the category of love and hate. Language too, has been shown to demonstrate the issue of identity in difference. In linguistic terms, the conscience of "we" means relative heterogeneity, which implies that the opposite is constitutive of the "we". In this way, Landowski emphasizes, if only in linguistic terms, the existence of the Other from the view of the Self (Landwoski, 1991).

However, in spite of this propensity of the Self for the Other, there is stark fear and insecurity of the self with regard to the Other. While the self enjoys and reposes in the Other, one still is in conflict with the Other. Thus, out of the yearning for the Other, one responds to one's family but may feel more secure in a clan, nationality, nation, regional body like the EEC or EA community and the like. One may even cherish a universal body such as the United Nations which, I believe, was borne out of the propensity for the Other.

Whereas this progressive association supports the views of Landwoski, Mannoni and Ricoeur, a propensity for progressively smaller association to the level of talking of and cherishing individual identity and personal privacy emphasizes one's wish to repose in one's self. Put succinctly, whereas the propensity of association does exist, the propensity of "dis-association" or disaggregation also exists. For example, attempts to fill the post of Secretary General of the United Nations reflect such disaggrative human propensities. The Africans converge on a specific candidate, the Americans look for another sympathetic to American interests, while the Russians and Chinese support another specific candidates, all according to each nation's or group of nations' interests. Even within a nation, there are dis-associative or disaggrative tendencies. The war in Northern Uganda is being interpreted in ethnic terms (*The Monitor*, November 29th, 1996). That is to say, the Banyankole who are in the South of Uganda want the Luos in the North to suffer the consequences of the war. Within the Banyankole too, it is alleged that the Bahima are benefiting because they belong to the same sub-grouping as the President himself. This view could be extrapolated to include individuals: did not Museveni as President condemn individual soldiers for "reaping money from corpses" (*The Monitor*, November 29th, 1996).

In this regard one can talk of tensions in the community. To talk of society or community is to talk of simultaneous intersubjectivity and subjectivity, conflict and reconciliation. This is because while one's desires constitute one's subjectivity, at the same time there is common desire for social order or common good, wherein lies the embodiment of intersubjectivity (Lonergan, 1983:214-218). It is these associative and de-associative propensities that express the conflict in nature, man and society. But apparently, the conflict, as Heraclitus claimed, is essential for balancing and the search for harmony as demanded by the rational and transcendent character of the human person.

However, it should be mentioned as well that the identity of man in terms of cognitive paradigms is influenced also by one's externality. The selfhood or identity of a person is influenced, not only by one's colleagues, but also by one's wider environment. In other words,

one's spirituality is not expressed *ex-nihilo*; one is a nexus of forces from within and outside oneself. Even though one possesses free will, it is exercised within an epistemological framework. In other words, the rationality of man also tries to put order in the confluence of internal and external influences (Ruch, 1984: 180-198).

In general, the external influences include history, culture, environment and relationships. These affect one's spirituality. When these combine with the body, a composite being is created. Thus depending on the vivacity of the specific force(s) and whether they be body- or spirit-related, the person will be what he/she is. It is dependent upon these factors, as well as on the period and space that one's choices, goals, principles and habits, in a word, one's identity will be formed.

Multiple Social Identities: Having said this about an individual's identity, social identity or collective personality is not very different. Thus, if there can be an internal conflict in man, the individual, *a fortiori* a great conflict should be expected in society for, as Plato said, society is "an individual writ large." When the problem of identity versus multiplicity is enlarged to the social level the conflicts are multiplied.

Thus, the term "social identity" reflects a group of people who are homogenous and permanent in spite of change and multiplicity. In other words, the people in question have certain features invariable in time and space. This means also that, in spite of changes, the people in question remain the same. This description is partly meaningless if taken literally. However, if we recall what we said above, namely, that identity has meaning only when it is linked to other things, then social identity has meaning when a group of people is seen against other groups. In other words, the group in question lacks complete identification without other groups. Practically, this means that, such a group, generally, has a similar physical, psychological and ideological position vis-a-vis other groups. This meaning is quite sufficient for purposes of understanding social reality.

For example, the Rwanda case involves the Tutsi who are generally tall and slender with long teeth and long noses, whereas the Hutus are short, stout and shift in their movement. The former are shepherds while the later are farmers. The term social identity means that a specific group of people has such specific dominant characteristics in contrast to other groups. Of course, as a social grouping, they cannot be completely homogeneous. The term "people" allows for difference because, unlike objects, people are unlimited in number and can realize themselves in unnumbered ways including such factors as bodily interests, psychological endowments and cultural achievements. A group of people can do likewise.

Nonetheless, when the term social identity is employed, it is meant to bring forward certain dominant characteristics which people either have or do not have in relation to other people. Doornboss shows how the Bairu are different from the Bahima (Doornboss, 1978:147). At least, verifiable propositions can be made about a social identity. For example, under the present conditions in Zaire, we can reasonably assert that the Tutsi are hostile to the Hutu or vice versa. This states the existence of conflict in society at two levels: within a specific social identity and against other social identities, and the term identity can be applied meaningfully.

Thus, at the collective level as well as at the individual level, there is not only an expression of conflict, but also the possibilities of its rebalancing, reconciliation and tension resolution. Ricoeur shows this as we have seen. Auge affirms that the other is present in all cultures and in organizations of all kinds (Auge, 1988). Amselle too, defines identity in Africa as the utterance of difference considered as a system of relations.

In addition, even though African identities are based on opposition, they create grounds for negotiation and establishing balances of power. This is possible because the utterance of identity in Africa involves forgetting the conditions of social conflict (Amselle, 1990), for we must not forget the communalist spirit ascribed to Africa.

In general, therefore, we can make the following observations.

- Identity and conflict are inseparable. This occurs not only at the level of nature or the cosmos, but also at the level of human persons and all societies. Conflict occurs not only internally, but also externally; not only bodily but also spiritually. In spite of the person's free will, social identity is influenced by the vivacity of the nexus of the operating forces.
- Whether psychologically, physically or spiritually, the interaction of various forces serves to support our position: first recognize and appreciate the conflict in nature, man and society, and then try to bring about reconciliation.
- The person's free will, as manifestation of one's transcendence, should assist in going beyond different influences and making one's choices rationally.

THE RELEVANCE OF THE CONFLICT OF IDENTITIES

How this social identity manifests itself must be examined and assessed. But first there is this question: Does social conflict matter; does it have consequences? This is a difficult question because, as we have said, though conflict is seemingly universal, yet the violence is not equally universal.

Different ethnicities co-exist, religious groupings co-exist, ideological groups can co-exist; so why should this be a basis for the deaths of millions? In answer I would first raise another question: Would a social conflict occur were this latent cosmological conflict to be absent?

Let us recognize that before there can be a fight, there must be fighters, just as before there can be philosophy, there must be philosophers. In short, before there can be a conflict there must be "conflictors", for conflict is not possible *ex-nihilo*. Therefore, to talk of a social conflict is to presuppose people who conflict. In other words, the existence of conflictual parties provides the basis for the conflict. In this regard social identities do matter or, more technically, the conflictual latency matters. The latent conflict does not imply a specific concrete and active conflict, but it is ever waiting for an opportunity to be active. Put succinctly, do away with the conflictual substratum and the conflict disappears.

The Manifestation of the Conflict of Social Identities

It was observed earlier, that the latent cosmological and social conflicts are influenced by both internal and external factors. With regard to the internal aspect, the individual is able to rationalize one's experience and form a general view of reality. This exercise can be transposed to a social grouping. The result of such rationalization is the building of a shared mental edifice. This is called an ideology — a people's ideology, their spirit or their ethos. Perhaps it is the ideology or common consciousness of being one in relation to the Other that gives social groupings the characteristic of being referred to as social identities.

Apparently, more than any other factor, consciousness defines the boundary of the relevant social identity, notwithstanding the fact that the boundaries are susceptible to change (Okwudiba Nnoli: 1989/1). For that matter, an ideology is a social instrument because it contains the ideals

or goals, the content and methods, for obtaining the goals of that social identity. In the case of social identity, the ideology involves production of a theory of difference which often is transformed into the devalorisation of the Other. The Other is presented as an enemy who is a threat (whether real or not) to the social identity in question, while the identity in question present itself either as superior, better or at least positive. As a consequence, the ideologized social identity is mobilized against the Other who is seen as a threat to the identity's interests including its existence. The Other may follow similar steps.

In the process, members of the identity who are devoted to the expression of the ideology and who can harmonize the prevalent feelings and strategies emerge as leaders and mobilize the identity. These leaders could be religious, businessmen, politicians, teachers, professionals or even the elderly who explain their history "wisely". The message is that either our history has always been superior or that our existence has always been threatened, and that now is the opportunity to defend our history or to fight for our existence. At this level, the conflict becomes political as it relates to who is stronger, or who is correct or who should distribute what and how it should be distributed. Interest now becomes power or how we should defend or liberate ourselves.

For an ideology to be effective it must be received by a number of people who generally have fuzzy feelings. These feelings are given explicit expression by the leaders. The ideology acquires an emotional mobilization strategy because it touches on the deeper feelings a number of people cherish, although it retains a semblance of a reasoned set of ideas. This emotionality is engineered from the three axes of history, space and culture (Martin, 1995:12-13).

With regard to history, the group is infused with nostalgic feelings of the past as it constructs the past — we were rulers, we never cultivated. These are collective memories which may give impetus to the emotionality of a specific group. Even when the history is traumatic, it serves to intensify the emotionality of the group. For example, the Bairu — Banyankore (Western Uganda) vehemently reject any attempts to re-install a king even as a cultural head because the king was a preserve of the Bahima whose rule was cruel and still has great emotional impact on the Bairu memories.4 In any case, the historical events and changes affect the emotions of the group.

Closely, related to the aspect of history, is that of culture. Culture involves all that society has achieved including knowledge, affectivity and material accumulation. Very often, culture also involves the goals of the members. For example, the Banyankore boys on maturing must begin preparing for marriage — which includes paying the bride price. This then becomes a major goal in life until they are married. Those cherishing Christian ideals do not settle until they have married in church. Dress, music, language, foods too have affective influence on group consciousness. The meaning carried by certain words or objects also highly influences the emotional aspect of the people. Let me illustrate: traditionally Banyankore boys would never marry a woman who already had a child with another man; such a woman would be called "Kishiki-makazi" — girl-woman. Thus, if a person used this term in reference to such a female, a lot would be implied such as having lesser vital force.5

Space too, has its force in relation to social identity. There is a sense of belonging of people in an historical place, or of people being in a different place from their home. They may feel their destiny lies at the specific place because their ancestors lived and were buried there. The confluence of their life is presented as being fixed at their home place. For example, in Uganda, there are many student and non student associations based on their places of origin. This reflects the weight and relevance placed on the space called home. For instance, traditionally, the

Baganda never sell their ancestral burial grounds (Ebbija). However, more importantly, space may come up in relation to the exercise of power. We are in our country and cannot be ruled by foreigners is a prevalent fiction in Uganda in reference to President Museveni of Uganda.6Put differently, the group feels that they should be masters without external competition or infiltration.

Put together, these elements carry great emotive potential and most likely will affect one's decisions and actions, as well as one's choices and goals. These do have the capacity in themselves to cause social events and changes, including building a world view. However, when the emotional manifestation is supported by a form of rationalization, tension builds up and any incident can result in violence.

For example, in Rwanda, since the 1962 revolution, the Hutus have wielded power while the Tutsis have lived in diaspora. For a long time, the principle of Hutus administration was based on the fear, suspicion and hatred of the Tutsis. It was generally believed and sometimes expressed that if the Tutsis returned to Rwanda or, worse still, if they gained power, the Hutu would be harassed or even annihilated — and apparently these fears were vindicated. Not only was this belief expressed, but it was also turned into a divisive ideology which percolated through to the whole society in Rwanda and outside. Therefore, when the Tutsis started to negotiate their return to Rwanda, the anti-Tutsi feelings were presented as truths among the Hutus who also organized resistance against the return of the Tutsi to Rwanda. As a terrible consequence, when the Hutu president was killed, genocide ensued.

There was effort on both sides to organize and to stop the "threat" or make it disappear. Thus while the Hutus built anti-Tutsi ideology, the Tutsi too formulated their anti-Hutu ideology — both antagonistic ideologies. For example, referring to the Hutu, one old Tutsi man living in Uganda said: "Bashangwa batategyeka". This means that, the Hutu never rule or that, it is not their business to rule!

In this regard therefore, social identity is characterized by a conflictual relationship or "otherness" of fear, suspicion and struggle on both sides. In addition, it should be recognized that both insiders and outsiders serve to enhance the social identity and its attendant conflict by way of building conflicting ideologies. Further, I would mention again that, within a specific social identity there is also considerable disagreement. To take again the example of Rwanda: there are "moderate" Hutus and "extremist" ones.

RELATIVITY, COMPETITION AND CHOICE OF SOCIAL IDENTITIES

We observed earlier that human choices depend upon the confluence of forces acting from within and without. This neither means that the operation of these forces is mechanical, nor does it mean that they operate in the same manner all the time, nor does it mean that the one on whom these forces are acting remains the same. In effect, this implies a high range relativity whose both epistemological and practical consequences can be easily guessed. Put differently, depending upon the force or vivacity of a specific influence and the transcendence of one's own self, one will make one's choice. This too, implies the possibility of existence of more than one identity in a person's environment. Hence, the competition of identities acting upon a person out of which one makes one's choice between one, two or three options.

There is a good example and probably a unique one among the Banyankole in Ankole, there are two major socio-ethnic identities, the Bairu and the Bahima. Upon the advent of colonialism and Christianity, the Bahima who were mainly rulers adopted the Anglicanism religion of the

colonizers almost without exception, while the Bairu divided in equal numbers between Catholicism and Anglicanism, while a minimal number chose traditional religions. However, when the Bairu Anglicans challenged the Bahima over their preserve of power (when Hima alleged supremacy), a re-arrangement ensued. The Bahima joined the DP which was mainly a Catholic political party, while the Bairu Anglicans joined the UPC which was a political party for the Uganda Anglicans (Doornboss, 1978:127). As a social fact this alignment and reorganization had a number of implications.

First, as pointed out earlier, depending on the force of specific conditions one chooses an identity. In our case, in spite of the Bahima being Protestant Anglicans they rejected the UPC and joined the DP because of its force upon them at the time.

Second, in spite of the Anglican Bairu and Catholic Bairu claiming one ethnic identity, they were separated on the basis of religion and politics.

Third, it serves to attest to the rationality and transcendence of the human person who makes choices among competing identities. Indeed, it should be noted that absence of competition implies absence of choice. Man will always try to identify with one or several groups, which implies a choice of reference groups and a rejection of others.

It should be pointed out also that the choices made are not without cost. Still using the Hutus and Tutsis as an example, the former were equally hacked to death by their fellow, but extremist, Hutus when they accused them of reckless genocide. This social choice of whether the moderate Hutus were to be killed or not attests to the possibility of human choice and transcendence, much as it affirms the presence of conflict within the social generalities. Human choice affirms one's transcendence or infiniteness, for he could not choose unless he were infinite. Choice therefore is a reflection of one's human nature, and as social, one's choice of social identities is an invariable human condition.

Identities are part and parcel of society. One must necessarily make a choice in different situations and any attempts to deny or denigrate his choices to the level of calling them "narratives" is to obscure the necessity of human choices, even though it be in reference to social identities. That one must make a choice is the nature of social reality. What is most fundamental is not what choice one makes, but that as a living spiritual and transcendent being one has to make a choice.

However, the wide range of choice smacks of danger. We recognize any choice of man without exampling even murderous choices. This is as open-ended as the unhampered freedom which results in anarchy. But this again can be left to the limitless transcendence of man that allows him, through culture and environment to formulate ethical principles and values that restrain him from unethical choices. Hence man's choices are highly relative as they depend on the variable forces acting upon him.

Fourth, one is capable of changing from one social identity to another or simply suppressing one in favor of another.

Last, the same individual can embrace a manifold of identities even though such identities may seem contradictory. Thus, even though the Bahima were largely Protestant, they generally rejected the UPC whose membership was fundamentally Anglican in favor of the DP, a Catholic party.

THE POSSIBILITY OF A COMMONWEALTH

So far, what we have done is to highlight and call for recognition that identity in nature, man and society manifests simultaneous conflict, unity and reconciliation. Phrased differently, identity declares conflict in nature — human included — but also accepts unity or homogeneity and yearning for harmony. It is my view that it is from this standpoint that the solution to the problems of social identity lies. Of course, it is very difficult to devise a totally successful rational social system; however, it is fair to keep trying in the hope that a fairer one can be found. In this case, we proceed to propound one, based on the meaning of identity — or unity or homogeneity, on the one hand — and of difference, on the other. With regard to homogeneity, the relevant social system would presuppose a monolithic view of persons and societies irrespective of physical, cultural and environmental differentiation. Man is assumed to be the same everywhere, at all times and in all circumstances; in other words, there is an attempt to author a universal man, a universal culture, universal values and universal environment. The social system that most likely would recommend itself to such paradigm is socialism, whose consequences are too well known. Except for emphasis laid on the universality of human nature, a homogenizing system is likely to be a trite project precisely because it ignores the aspect of the latent conflict in identity. It will be recalled that, drawing from similar premises, the first African statesmen adopted a socio-political system that proved unsuccessful, if not disastrous — Kaunda, Nkrumah, Nyerere and many others. Interestingly, Uganda's President, Museveni, is currently recasting social monolithism in the form of a supposedly all embracing mono-ideological movement. I have serious misgivings whether this movement will hold.

The social paradigm which I will develop and defend is one whose foundation is conflict! Superficially, it may seem hopeless to anchor ourselves on conflict for a solution to identity related social problems. However, I wish to point out that, primarily, once we have accepted that conflict is a fundamental representation of identity, it is not possible to construct a social system that evades this reality. So, in which way does conflict form a viable basis for harmony?

In the first instance, we pointed out earlier that conflict is potential or latent although often it has been sparked into activity. This latent conflict, therefore, ought to be accepted and exploited for harmony. Hence, it is my view that the conflict which is reflected in the natural propensity to diverge or separate could be exploited by promoting individualism both at the personal and societal level. Put differently, the conflictual situation demands an atomized or a decentralized social system. This implies greater recognition and consequent promotion of individual freedom and independent decision and action. In other words, this implies equality and justice, which in addition to freedom are important pillars of human existence. In essence, this is opposed to monolithism.

In fact, drawing from this principle, several societies or countries developed social systems and policies which have given them some stability, for example, such policies as "ethnic arithmetic", federalism, ethnic balancing, ethnic proportionality principle or even the recent proportional representation of political parties and decentralization. Other related polices have included quotas in admission to schools, universities or the army, discriminatory appointment of public figures, which recently are gender sensitive. The NRM government in Uganda tried to accommodate all religious proportionally, which contributed to Uganda's general stability for some time, until other factors came in. I think it is precisely because the religious conflicts, which are significant factors in Uganda, were recognized that there was stability. In short, individual choices should be given priority over communal choices. This is not to say that communal choices are insignificant, but rather that, the individual counts before the society.

This position too, is problematic and could lead to anarchism. Even if it is not an anarchism, it may be useful to look at the social systems of the continent of Africa from a pragmatic point of view, i.e., how successfully they have performed vis-a-vis closed, monolithic systems. They appear to have faired acceptably, notwithstanding their difficulties. However, even this negative corollary could be avoided by recourse to Ricoeur's view of the Self and the Other, where the two are ever coveting each other (Ricoeur, 1990). In contrast to a social system based on unity and homogeneity or even on forceful unity and blanket equality, this latter principle of the Self yearning or searching for the Other assumes intentional preference and choice. In other word, it allows greater consideration for the rational, emotional and physical opening to a preferred union of the different cultural identities. This approach recognizes that all — both Self and Other — affirm the intention to exchange what they possess. Hence, it allows for a conversion of the multi-wealth into a commonwealth for the good of humankind.

CONCLUSION

Social identities have generated serious social problems which today threaten the very existence of humankind. Nonetheless, their cognitional acceptability remains fuzzy. However, if solutions are to be found, greater and clearer conceptualization is a pre-requisite. The notion of identity has a specific meaning when applied to society, denigration of which does not help the situation. It is primarily characterized by conflict and it has to be understood as such.

Social identity is the result of external and internal factors; that is one makes choices depending upon social circumstances and other factors which impinge upon one from outside and from within. These factors are variable, but include cultural ingredients, environment and persons themselves. Competition among these factors reflects competition between social identities and hence between peoples.

Though social identities involve conflict, this makes possible understanding of social identities wherein lies the answer to its related problems. On his basis it is possible to conceive and work toward an harmonious union of several identities in a commonwealth based on individual freedom.

NOTES

1. Once the Hutu fled the Rwanda-Zaire border, they met nostility from the Tutsis living in Eastern Zaire. Thus the initial factor, which was ethnic conflict between the Tutsis and the Hutus, has acquired wider dimensions.

2. The word "necessary" is used here in the Thomistic sense. That is to say, we could have social identities or not.

3. Whenever the human person is considered from the dualist standpoint, I am at loss as to where I should place the psychological aspect. For example, where do we place hatred — in relation to the body or in relation to the spirit?

4. The old Ankore kingdom had two ethnic groups (identities) — the Hima, from whom came the kings and the Bairu whose major occupation was cultivation and serving the Hima.

5. The usage here is Tempelean — that beings in Africa, are conceived as having hierarchical levels of existence.

6. Rumors have been rife in Uganda that President Museveni was Rwandese and therefore should not become president of Uganda.

REFERENCES

Amselle, T.L. (1990) Cited in D.C. Martin, "The Choices of Identity", A. Zegeye and D.T. Goldberg (eds.),*Social Identities: Journal of Race, Nation and Culture*. Carfax, vol. 1, n. 1, 1995.

Auge, M. (1988) *Ibid.*

Austin, J.L. (1961) "The Meaning of Words", in *Philosophical Papers*. Oxford.

Barongo, Y. (1990) "Ethnic Pluralism and Political Centralization: The Basis of Political Conflict", in Rupesinghe, *Conflict Resolution in Uganda*. London: James Currey, 1989.

Copleston, F. (1985) *A History of Philosophy*. New York: Doubleday.

Doornboss, M. (1978) *Not All the Kingsmen: Inequality as a Political Instrument in Ankole, Uganda*. The Heague: Mouton Publishers.

Landowski, F. (1991) Cited in D.C. Martin. *Op. cit.*, p. 6.

Lonergan, B. (1983) *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*. London: Darton and Logman, Todd.

Mannomi, O. (1969) Cited in D.C. Martin. *Op. cit.*, p. 6.

Martin, D.C. (1995) "The Choices of Identity", A. Zegeye (ed.) *Social Identities*, vol. 1, n. 1, Carfax, 5-20.

Okwudiba, N. (1989) "Ethnic Conflict in Africa" (Working Paper 1/1989). Codesria Dakar, Senegal.

Ricoeur, P. (1990) Cited in D.C. Martin. *Op. cit.*, p. 7.

Rex, T. (1995) "Ethnic Identity and the Nation State; the Political Sociology in Social Identities", A. Zegeye (ed.), *op. cit*.

Ruch, A.E. (1984) *African Philosophy: An Introduction to the Main Philosophical Trends in Contemporary Africa*. Rome: Off. Libri Catolici.

Walsh, M. (1985) *A History of Philosophy*. London: Geoffrey Chapmen.

GLOBALIZATION AS DIVERSITY IN UNITY
GEORGE F. McLEAN

THE EMERGENCE OF GLOBAL CONCERNS

During the 1950s and 1960s the development of technological capabilities made it possible to design vehicles with sufficient thrust and precision to be able to break the bonds of earth and soar towards the planets. By the end of the 60s, as projected by President Kennedy, Neil Armstrong landed on the moon. What he saw *there* was of little interest — a barren rocky terrain, alternating between great heat and frigid cold. But what he saw *from there* was of the greatest consequence. With a few of his predecessor in space exploration, he was able for the first time in human history to look at the Earth and see it whole. Throughout the millennia humankind had always seen fragments, piece by piece; now for the first time the earth was seen globally.

At the time, astronomers sought avidly to learn about the moon. But for philosophers the questions were rather what would be found about humankind, about relations between peoples and about their presence in nature. More importantly, they wondered if this would change the way in which people understood themselves in all these regards: Would this intensify the trend to see all and everyone as an object? Or could it contribute to overcoming alienation and *anomie*, to transforming antipathies into bonds of friendship? But, if this were to take place, would life be reduced to a deadly stasis? Though the stakes were high, the philosophical questioning at first was languid. Now, at the end of this millennium these questions of globalization emerge with a full and fascinating force.

Why now rather than then? This would seem to relate notably to the end of the Cold War, especially if this be traced deeply to the roots of the modern outlook as a whole. Prof. Lu Xiaohe1 has pointed out how, at the very beginnings of modern times, Giovanni Battista Vico (1668-1744) identified the limitations of the then new modern way of thinking as bearing the potential to lead to violent opposition for lack of an adequate capability to take account of the unity of the whole. If the cold war was the final denouement of this fatal flaw, and the world is no longer structured in a bipolar fashion, then it is no longer the parts which give sense to the whole, but the converse: the global is the basis of the meaning of its participants.

Proximately, this is a matter of communication and commercial interchange, but their full deployment depends in turn upon a politique of positive human cooperation in an integral human project. Thus today we reread Kennedy's words about bearing any burden in defence of freedom in terms of his positive context, namely, his invitation to all humankind to transcend limiting divisions and join together to make real progress. Of this his promise to break beyond a divided planet and go to the noon by the end of that decade was symbol and harbinger. The process of globalization transcends regional concerns. This is not to deny them, but to respond to them from a more inclusive vantage point in term of which all can have their full meaning and the opportunity to work together to determine their own destiny. This is the heart of the issue of globalization and cultural identities.

Until recently the term 'globalization' was so little used that it warranted only two lines in Webster unabridged international dictionary.2 For the term 'global,' however, three meanings are listed:

- first, geometric, namely, a spherical shape;
- second, geographic, namely, the entire world, with the connotation of being complete. This was extended by the ancient Greeks to signify perfection itself: Parmenides spoke of the One, eternal and unchanging as being spherical.
- third, qualitative, namely, the state of being comprehensive, unified or integrated.

It is interesting to note that Webster's saw this third character of global as implying "lacking in particularizing detail" or "highly undifferentiated". Today's challenge is more complex and more rich, namely, to achieve a comprehensive vision whose integration is not at the expense of the components, but their enhancement and full appreciation.

For insight on these issues I would turn to Nicholas of Cusa, born almost six hundred years ago (1401-1464) at a special juncture in Western thought. Often he is described as the last of the medievals and the first of the moderns. In the high middle ages Thomas Aquinas and others had reunited the traditions of Plato and Aristotle on the basis of the Christian discovery of the special significance of existence. In this synthesis primacy was given to Aristotle whose structure for the sciences began with *Physics* as specified by multiple and changing things, whence it ascended to its culmination in the unity of the divine life at the end of his *Metaphysics*.3 The ladder between the two constituted a richly diversified hierarchy of being.

John Dewey4 stressed — perhaps to strongly — the relation of that ancient hierarchic world view to the Ptolemaic system in which the earth is the center around which the sun and the planets revolve at a series of levels in a finite universe. He traced the development of the modern outlook to the change to the Copernican heliocentric model of an infinite but undifferentiated universe.

Nicholas of Cusa bridged the two. He continued the sense of a hierarchical differentiation of being from the minimal to the infinite, but almost a century before Copernicus (1473-1543) he saw the earth as but one of the spheres revolving around the sun.

His outlook with regard to the relations between peoples was equally pioneering. As Papal legate to Constantinople shortly after this had been taken by the Turks — much to the shock of all Europe — Cusa was able to see the diversity of peoples not as negating, but as promoting unity.

His broad and ranging political, scientific, philosophical and theological interests qualified him as a fully Renaissance man. In time he was made a Cardinal in Rome, where he is buried. The dissertation of Dr. David De Leonardis, *Ethical Implications of Unity and the Divine in Nicholas of Cusa*,5 expanded by the addition of sections on economic, social and religious unity, was published by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy in 1998. This chapter emerges from that exploration which I directed.

It will proceed by looking first at the manner of thinking involved and second at Cusa's reconciliation of unity and diversity in a harmony which Confucius might be expected to find of special interest. Thirdly, on these bases, it will look at the special dynamism with which this endows his sense of being. Fourth, it will sample briefly some of the implications which this global vision could have for contemporary problems of economic, social and religious life sketched in figures IV-VII.

GLOBAL THINKING

History

Any understanding of the work of the mind in the thought of Nicholas of Cusa must be situated in the context of the Platonic notion of participation (*mimesis* or image) whereby the many forms fundamentally are images of the one idea. For Plato, whose sense of reality was relatively passive, this meant that the many mirrored or were like (assimilated to) the one archetype or idea. Correspondingly, in knowing multiple things the mind, as it were, remembers having encountered and been impressed by, or assimilated to, the one archetypic idea which they image, all converging progressively toward a supreme One. For Cusa, with Plato, this appreciation of the one remains foundational for the knowledge of any particular. Here it is important to note how Cusa reconceives the nature of this one — not only, but also — in global terms.

To this Aristotle, whose thought began from the active processes of physical change, added a more active role for mind. This not only mirrors, but actively shapes the character, if not the content, of its knowledge. As an Aristotelian Aquinas too considered the mind to be active, but in the end the objectivity of its knowledge depended upon a passive relation to its object: beings "can by their very nature bring about a true apprehension of themselves in the human intellects which, as is said in the *Metaphysics*, is measured by things."6

Cusa's sense of mind unites both emphases: the original measures the image, which in turn becomes like, or is assimilated to, the original. Sense knowledge is measured by the object; this is even part of its process of assimilation to the divine mind.7 But, as E. Cassirer8 notes, Cusa shifts the initiative to the mind operating through the senses, imagination, reason and intellect. Rather than being simply formed by sense data, the mind actively informs the senses and conforms and configures their data in order that the mind might be assimilated to the object. Thus both "extramental objects and the human mind are measures of cognitive assimilation, that is to say, we become like the non-mental things we know, and we fashion the conceptual and judgmental tools whereby we take them into ourselves as known."9

But in saying this Miller seems not to have reached the key point for our concerns for global awareness — or of Cusa's, for that matter. This is not merely the classical realist distinction between what is known, which is on the part of the thing, and the way in which it is known, which reflects the mind by which the thing is known. Cusa has added two moves. First, the One of Plato is not an ideal form, but the universe of reality (and this in the image of God as the absolute One); second, the human mind (also in the image of the divine mind) is essentially concerned with this totality of reality, in terms of which global awareness all its knowledge is carried out.

Discursive Reasoning

In his study on mind,10 Cusa distinguishes three levels of knowledge, the first two are discursive reasoning, the third is intellection. The first begins from sense knowledge of particular material objects. This is incremental as our experiences occur one by one and we begin to construct a map of the region, to use a simile of L. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.11

But for Cusa the knowledge of the multiple physical things by the lower powers of sensation and imagination raises the question of the unity of things which must be treated in terms of the concepts of reason and intellect.12 For the forms in things are not the true forms, but are clouded

by the changeableness of matter.13 The exact nature of anything then is unattainable by us except in analogies and figures grounded essentially in the global sense had by our higher powers.14

But while sense knowledge is inadequate for a global vision Cusa considers innate knowledge or a separated world of ideas to be unnecessary and distractive. Hence, he concludes: (a) that sense knowledge is required; (b) that both the physical object and the mind are active in the assimilation or shaping of the mind, (c) that in this process the mind with its global matrix is superior in that it informs or shapes the work of the senses, and (d) that it is unable fully to grasp the nature of the object in itself.

As a result discursive reasoning as regards physical objects is limited in a number of ways. First, it is piecemeal in that it develops only step by step, one thing at a time, in an ongoing temporal progression. Hence, on the macro level discursive reasoning can never know the entirety of reality. On the micro level it cannot comprehend any single entity completely in its nature or quality. This is true especially of the uniqueness or identity, which for humans are their personal and cultural identities.

The paradox of attempting to think globally in these terms is that as we try to form overall unities we abstract more and more from what distinguishes or characterizes free and unique persons so that the process becomes essentially depersonalizing. Hence the drama of globalization as the central phenomenon of the present change of the millennia.

In the 20th century the technological implementation of depersonalization reached such a crises that millions were crushed or exterminated — hundreds of thousands in pogroms, 6 million in the holocaust, 50 million in the Second World War, entire continents impoverished and exploited. In effect the limitations Cusa identifies in discursive reasoning now are simply no longer tolerable and new modes of thinking are required in order to enable life to continue in our times.

Cusa recognizes a second type of discursive reasoning, namely, that of mathematics, which does not share the limitations noted above. But here the objects are not living beings, but mental objects of the same nature as mind. Hence the mind can pivot on itself using its own resources to construct and process concepts and to make judgements which are exact because concerned with what is not changing or material.15 This is Humes's world of relations between ideas.16 But as it deals only with the formal, rather than the existential, it cannot resolve the above human problems, but serves to exacerbate them to the degree that its mode of discursive reasoning becomes exclusive.

Intellection

Hence Nicholas of Cusa turns to a third mode of mental assimilation, which is beyond the work of discursive reason, namely, intellection. Eugene Rice contrasts the two approaches to knowledge by likening discursive reasoning to a wayfarer walking through a valley and encountering things one by one, whereas intellection is like being on a hill whence one surveys the entire valley all at once.17 The latter view is global and the particulars are understood as component parts; each thing has its proper realty, but is also an integral constituent of the whole. It is important to note that the unity of the scene as known by intellection is constituted not by a mere assemblage of single entities juxtaposed in space or time, but as multiple participations in a unity. (Indeed, as we shall see in the next section, the multiple things in the physical order are also limited images of the whole.)

To express this in terms of he modern distinction of analytic and synthetic modes of thought would help, but not at all suffice. With Descartes moderns undertook a search for knowledge that was clear in the sense of identifying the simple natures of each thing, and distinct in the sense that such knowledge should be sufficient at least to be able to distinguish one type of thing from all others.18 This gave primacy to the analytic process of distinguishing all into its component set of simple natures. The supposition was that these were finite in number, that they could all be identified clearly and distinctly by the mind, and that they could then be reassembled by equally clear and distinct links in a process of synthesis.

This has marked the modern mind and set its goals and its limitations. Having determined that only what was clear and distinct to the human mind could qualify for inclusion, due to the limitations of the human mind it was inevitable that the uniqueness of each entity would be omitted as not clear to the human mind. Further, any organic character of the whole also would be omitted, for synthesis could assemble only what was clear and distinct.

For Cusa in contrast, intellection is knowledge in terms not of the parts, but of the whole in which all participate. Here the intellect grasps the meaning and value of the whole. It works with the imagination and reason to work out the full range of possibilities and to grasp how the many fit together: it "depends not upon the number of things which are known, but upon the imaginative thrust of the mind" to be able to know "all the multifarious possibilities which are open to being."19 Finally it is guided by the senses to know which of these possibilities are actual. The significance of the actual beings is not merely what we can garner by the senses, but what is known primarily in terms of the whole by the intellect.

The Aristotelians build knowledge from concrete, changing and hence limited things. Cusa's more Platonic heritage has him build knowledge rather in the global terms of the whole, and ultimately of the One of which the mind as well as things are the images. Where these were but form for Plato, for Cusa they are existents sharing in the active power of being.

The Enlightenment was so intent upon knowledge that it wound up tailoring all to what it could know clearly and distinctly. As with the Procrustean bed, what did not fit these specification was lopped off and discarded as hypothetical or superstition. Cusa's attitude is notably different for it includes humility before reality which it recognizes, and even reveres, above all where it exceeds the human capacity for clarity of conception and power of control.

The human mind, he would recognize, has limitations at both ends of the scale of being. Even a minimal being cannot be exhaustively known. Like attempting to approach a polygon to a circle, no matter how many sides are added, more remain always possible; a circular shape can never be attained in this manner. Such knowledge though partial and incomplete, is valid as far as it goes, but it always can be improved upon. One can only project the circle by the thrust of the imagination.

Knowledge of the absolute, in contrast, cannot be improved upon. Moreover, it is basically unreliable for there is nothing to which the Absolute can be compared.20 Hence, the negative way of saying what God is not and the recognition of our ignorance in that regard constitute the relevant real knowledge, for which reason Cusa entitled a major work: *On Learned Ignorance*.21

We have seen the limitations of knowledge constructed on the basis of multiple limited beings understood as opposed one to another. Unity constructed thereupon not only never manages to grasp such beings fully but simply discards what is not known. Thus the uniqueness of the person cannot be recognized and is lost. Conversely the unities which can be constructed of such contrasting realities remains external and antithetical. Hence, to the degree that it succeeds discursive reasoning is in danger of oppressing the uniqueness of the participants. This

is the classical dilemma of the one and the many; it is the particular challenge of globalization in our day and the basic reason why it is feared as a new mode of (economic) imperialism and oppression.

Cusa's suggestion of another mode of thinking whereby we think in terms of the whole is promising, indeed essential for our new age. But it faces a great test. Can it take account of diversity, and if so how can this be understood as within, rather than in opposition to, unity: Is it possible to conceive diversity as a contribution to unity, rather than as its negation?

Parmenides had shown unity to be the first characteristic of being by opposing being to non being. In these terms each being was itself and nothing less. But such reasoning in terms of the opposition of being to non being bespoke also contrast and opposition between beings, each of which in being itself was precisely not any other being. Today the global reality makes it necessary to ask whether there are more positive and relational modes of conceiving multiplicity.

A GLOBAL STRUCTURE OF UNITY AND DIVERSITY

To summarize then we have seen the new global political, cultural and economic phenomena in which we are situated and in terms of which we are called to act. In looking toward the thought of Nicholas of Cusa we saw that such a global response requires a new dimension of thinking. The characteristic modern discursive reasoning with its analytic approach of breaking all down into its minimum components and reassembling them synthetically, proposed by Descartes in his *Discourse on Method*, proceeds essentially in terms of parts rather than of the whole, of the discrete components without taking account of the overall unity.

As pointed out by Dr. De Leonardis, this entails that relations between peoples and conflict resolution can be carried out only in terms of compromises which leave no one satisfied and plant the seeds of further conflicts. If now the means for conflict are so powerful as to be capable of overwhelming the means for survival, we are faced with the imperative of finding how to proceed in terms of a capacity to grasp the whole.

This pointed to Cusa's power of intellection, joined with that of the imagination, to project what we cannot clearly conceive of the individual person and the divine, to protect what we can only acknowledge of our creative freedom and that of others, and to promote the growth of which we are capable but which lies hidden in a future which is not yet.

As such knowledge is directed toward an ordered reality — ours and that of the entire globe — the central questions are not merely epistemological, but ontological and ethical, namely, what is the global whole in which we exist, and how can we act in relation to others peoples and cultures in ways that promote a collaborative realization of global community in our times?

Unity

In response to this question Cusa would begin by identifying four types or levels of unity:

1. Individual unity — the identity by which each existing as itself in contrast to others.
2. The unity of each individual being as within the whole of being. This is important in grappling with the issue of globalization in our times and is within the focus of the remainder of this chapter.
3. The unity of the universe by which the individuals together form not merely a conglomeration of single entities, as with a pile of rocks, but a unified whole which expresses the

fullness of being. This may be the central contribution of Cusa's thought for a study of globalization.

4. Absolute Unity — the One, God or Being Itself, which, being without distinction, plurality or potentiality, is all that being can be, the fullness of being, and hence not subject to greater of lesser degree.22

The fourth is central and foundational for religions and for a metaphysics of the issue of globalization. Here, however, we shall focus rather on the ontology and its ethical implication. This directs our attention to the second and especially the third of Cusa's senses of unity to which the recent development of a global awareness corresponds, namely, to the whole or total universe in which we have our being, live and intersect with nature and with others.

This has been appreciated in various ways in the past: in the totem which was the unifier for the life and universe of the primitive peoples, in the myths which united gods and nature in a genetic whole, in the One of Parmenides as the natural first step for metaphysics, and in the eschatologies and the classical hierarchies of being, to cite but a few. Now, however, after a long period of analytic and atomic thinking, under the impact of technologies which make conflict too costly and inundate us with global communications, there is special need to take up once again this sense of unity.

Contraction

The situation is delicate however, for in so doing it is imperative to avoid the kind of abstractive thinking described above in which personal uniqueness is dismissed and only the universal remains.23

Cusa's solution is found in the notion of contraction, that is, to begin from the significance of the whole and to recognize it in the very reality of every individual, so that the individual shares in something of the ultimate or definitive reality of the whole of being. One is not then an insignificant speck, as would be the case were I to be measured quantitatively and contrasted to the broad expanse of the globe. Rather I have the importance of the whole as it exists in and as me — and the same is true of other persons and of the parts of nature.

The import of this can be seen through comparison with other attempts to state this participation of the part in the whole. For Plato this was a repetition or imaging by each of that type of the one ideal form. Aristotle soon ceased to employ the term participation as image (*mimesis*) because of the danger it entailed of reducing the individual to but a shadow of what was truly real. Cusa too rejected the separately existing ideas or ideal forms. Instead what had been developed in the Christian cultures was a positive notion of existence as act24 whereby each participant in being was made to be or exist in itself. This is retained by Nicholas of Cusa.

But he would emphasize that the being in which this person or thing participates is the whole of being.25 This does not mean that in a being there is anything alien to its own identity, but that the reality of each being has precisely the meaning of the whole as contracted to this unique instance. To be then is not simply to fall in some minimal way on this side of nothingness, but rather to partake of the totality of being and the meaning of the whole of being and indeed to be a realization of the whole in this unique contraction or instance. It retains its identity, but does so in and of the whole.

De Leonardis formulates this in two principles:

- Principle of Individuality: Each individual contraction uniquely imparts to each entity an inherent value which marks it as indispensable to the whole.

- Principle of Community: Contraction of being makes each thing to be everything in a contracted sense. This creates a community of beings relating all entities on an ontological level.26

Let us stop at this insight to explore its implications for diversity. Generally multiplicity and diversity are seen as opposed to unity: what is one is not many and vice versa; to have many beings is to imply contrast and even possible conflict. When, however, each individual is appreciated as a unique contraction of the whole, others which are distinct and different are complementary rather than contradictory; they are the missing elements toward which one aspires and which can help one grow and live more fully; they are the remainder of the whole of which I am part, which supports and promotes me, and toward whose overall good my life is directed. Taken together they enhance, rather than destroy, the unity. This, of course, is true not of Parmenidean absolute and unlimited One which is the complete and full perfection of being, the fourth instance of unity cited above. But it is true of the third of the above unities which are precisely the reality of global unity, and the second type of unity which is its components seen precisely as members of the global whole.

Hierarchy. After the manner of the medievals Cusa saw the plurality of beings of the universe as constituting a hierarchy of being. Each being was equal in that it constituted a contraction of the whole, but not all were equally contracted. Thus an inorganic being was more contracted than a living organism, and a conscious being was less contracted than either of them. This constituted a hierarchy or gradation of beings. By thinking globally or in terms of the whole, Cusa was able to appreciate the diversity of being in a way that heightened this ordered sense of unity.

Lovejoy wrote classically of *The Great Claim of Being*27 in which each being was situated between, and in relation to, the next lower and the next higher in the hierarchy. We had, in other words, our neighbors with whom we shared, but there was always the danger that we were correspondingly distanced from other beings. Thus the sense of the human as "lord of nature" could and did turn into exploitation and depredation. Cusa's sense of beings as contractions of the whole unites each one intimately to all other realities in one's being, one's realization, and hence one's concerns. This converts the sense of master into that of steward for the welfare of the parts of nature which do not possess consciousness or freedom. These become the ecological concerns of humankind.

Another approach, built upon this sense of each distinct being as equal inasmuch as each participates in the whole, would image overall reality as a mosaic. But Cusa's sense of each of those piece as also a contraction of the whole went further by adding the importance not only of each to the whole as in a mosaic, but of the whole in and by each being. Unity then is enhanced and is the concern of each being to the full extent of its own reality understood as an integral participant in the whole.

However, both these metaphors of a chain of being and of a mosaic are static. They leave the particular or individual beings as juxtaposed externally one to the other. Neither takes account of the way in which beings interact with the others or, more deeply, are even constituted internally by these relations to others. What Cusa sees for the realm of being is relationships which are not externally juxtaposed, but internal to the very make up of the individuals.

Internal Relations. This internal relationship is made possible precisely by a global sense of the whole.28 For this Cusa may have drawn more directly from the Trinity, but this in turn is conceived through analogy to the family of which individuals are contractions, especially as this is lived as the interpersonal relations of a culture grounded in such a theology. The philosopher can look into that social life as a point of manifestation of being. Indeed, hermeneutics29 would suggest that this constitutes not only a *locus philosophicus* whence insight can be drawn, but the prejudgments of philosophers which constitute the basic philosophical insights themselves. The critical scientific interchange of philosophy is a process of controlled adjustment and perfection of these insights.

In a family all the persons are fully members and in that sense fully of the same nature. But the father generates the son while the son proceeds from the father. Hence, while mutually constituted by the same relation of one to the other, the father and son are distinct precisely as generator and generated. Life and all that the father is and has is given from the father to the son. Correspondingly, all that the son is and has is received from the father. As giver and receiver the two are distinguished in the family precisely as the different terms of the one relation. Hence each shares in the very definition of the other: the father is father only by the son, and vice versa.

Further, generation is not a negative relation of exclusion or opposition; just the opposite — it is a positive relation of love, generosity and sharing. Hence, the unity or identity of each is via relation (the second unity), rather than opposition or negation as was the case in the first level of unity. In this way the whole that is the family is included in the definition of the father and of the son each of whom are particular contractions of the whole.

To highlight this internal and active sense of contraction and hierarchy Cusa uses also the analogy of a seed.30 This is able to develop and grow only by heat from the sun, water from the clouds and nourishment from the earth. Hence, all of these elements of the whole are interrelated in mutual dependence. Moreover, thereby the seed brings new being into existence — which in turn will be creative, etc. Finally, by this action of the sun and clouds, the seed and the earth, precisely as contractions of the whole, the universe itself is made fruitful and unfolds. But this is identically to perfect and fulfill the universe. Hence, the plurality of beings, far from being detrimental to the unity and perfection of the universe, is the key thereto.

Explicatio-Complicatio. Cusa speaks of this as an *explicatio* or unfolding of the perfection of being, to which corresponds the converse, namely, by folding together (*complicatio*) the various levels of being constitute the perfection of the whole. Hence Cusa's hierarchy of being has special richness when taken in the light of his sense of a global unity. The classical hierarchy was a sequence of distinct levels of beings, each external to the other. The great gap between the multiple physical or material beings and the absolute One was filled in by an order of spiritual or angelic beings. As limited these were not the absolute, yet as spiritual they were not physical or material. This left the material or physical dimension of being out of the point of integration.

In contrast, Cusa, while continuing the overall graduation, sees it rather in terms of mutual inclusion, rather than of exclusion. Thus inorganic material beings do not contain the perfection of animate or conscious being, but plants include the perfections of the material as well as life. Animals are not self-conscious, but they do integrate material, animate and conscious perfection. Humans include all four: inorganic, animate and conscious and spiritual life.

In this light, the relation to all others through the contraction of being is intensified as beings include more levels of being in their nature. On this scale humans as material and as alive on all

three levels of life: plant, animal and spirit, play a uniquely unitive and comprehensive role in the hierarchy of being. If the issue is not simple individuality by negative and exclusive contrast to others (the first level of unity), but uniqueness by positive and inclusive relation to others, then human persons and the human community are truly the nucleus of a unity that is global.

A DYNAMIC GLOBAL ORDER

Thus far we have been speaking especially in terms of existence and formal causality by which the various beings within the global reality are to specific degrees contractions of the whole. To this, however, should be added efficient and final causality by which the ordered universe of reality takes on a dynamic and even developmental character. This has a number of implications: directedness, dynamism, cohesion, complementarity and harmony.31 Cusa's global vision is of a uniquely active universe of being.

1. *Direction to the Perfection of the Global Whole*: As contractions of the whole, finite beings are not merely products ejected by and from the universe of being, but rather are limited expressions of the whole. Their entire reality is a limited image of the whole from which they derive their being, without which they cannot exist, and in which they find their true end or purpose. As changing, developing, living and moving they are integral to the universe in which they find their perfection or realization and to the perfection of which they contribute by the full actuality and activity of their reality.

This cannot be simply random or chaotic, oriented equally to being and its destruction, for then nothing would survive. Rather there is in being a directedness to its realization and perfection, rather then to its contrary. A rock resists annihilation; a plant will grow if given water and nutrition; an animal will seek these out and defend itself vigorously when necessary. All this when brought into cooperative causal interaction has a direction, namely, to the perfection of the whole.

2. *Dynamic Unfolding of the Global Whole*: As an unfolding (*explicatio*) of the whole, the diverse beings (the second type of unity) are opposed neither to the whole (the third type of unity) or to the absolute One (the fourth type of unity). Rather, after the Platonic insight, all unfolds from the One and returns thereto.

To this Cusa makes an important addition. In his global vision this is not merely a matter of individual forms; beings are directed to the One as a whole, that is, by interacting with others (unity 3). Further, this is not a matter only of external interaction between aliens. Seen in the light of reality as a whole, each being is a unique and indispensable contraction of the whole. Hence finite realities interact not merely as a multiplicity, but as an internally related and constituted community with shared and interdependent goals and powers.

3. *Cohesion and Complementarity in a Global Unity*: Every being is then related to every other in this grand community almost as parts of one body. Each depends upon the other in order to survive and by each the whole realizes its goal. But a global vision, such as that of Cusa, takes a step further, for if each part is a contraction of the whole then, as with the DNA for the individual cell, "in order for anything to be what it is it must also be in a certain sense everything which exists."32The other is not alien, but part of my own definition.

From this it follows that the realization of each is required for the realization of the whole, just as each team member must perform well for the success of the whole. But in Cusa's global view the reverse is also true, namely, it is by acting with others and indeed in the service of others or for their good that one reaches one's full realization. This again is not far from the experience of the family, but tends to be lost sight of in other human and commercial relations. It is by interacting with, and for, others that one activates one's creative possibilities and most approximates the full realization of being. Thus, "the goal of each is to become harmoniously integrated into the whole of being and thereby to achieve the fullest development of its own unique nature."33

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

There is much more to be said on these topics. The role of the imagination should be exploited to understand the nature and role of cultures. If a global outlook be evolved in which unity is promoted by diversity then the progress of world unification can be not at the cost of the multiple cultures, but through their deployment and interaction. Strategy can move beyond the dichotomy of business and begging to the true mega project for the new millennium, namely to develop a global community in which all are looked upon with appreciation and progress is evoked by mutual respect.

For this Cusa's global view has pervasive implications. To overcome past human tendencies to subdue and exploit nature some would want to eliminate the unique role of the humans in the hierarchy of being. Cusa would recognize the equality of all as irreducible individuals within the whole. Yet he would also recognize the unique position of humankind in that hierarchy as integrating all possible levels — inorganic, living, conscious and spiritual — within the one existing being. To express that humankind realizes all the types of possibilities of life Cusa uses the term "poss-est".

This, however, is not a license to plunder and exploit the rest, but a commission and destiny to assist in bringing out of others and of the whole realizations not otherwise possible to them. It is then the view of Teilhard de Chardin34 that it is precisely in man that we must look for further global evolution.

The relation of person to person also is shaped notably by such a vision. Generally it has been seen that order rather then conflict is the condition for the exercise of freedom. This is to appreciate the whole globally, rather than merely as a set of contrasting individuals. It is this context which truly enables and promotes the exercise of human freedom.

To see each as a contraction of the whole provides each not only with equality, but with definitive status as endowed by the significance of the whole. I cannot be instrumentalized, much less reduced either abstractively or concretely to a least common denominator. Thus equality can be promoted without the reductionism entailed by egalitarianism. At the same time, by thinking in global terms it becomes possible to see that diversity is the key to enriching the whole and thereby to drawing it closer to the fullness of perfection.

De Leonardis says this well when he concludes:

> Human endeavors can be successful only to the extent that they achieve this integration whereby the isolation of the lone individual is overcome by social participation and the emptiness of alienation is transformed by unifying love into an active and liberating communal existence.35

NOTES

1. Lu Xiaohe, "G.B. Vico and the Contemporary Civil World", in Wang Miaoyang, Yu Xuanmeng and M. Dy, *Civil Society in a Chinese Content: Chinese Philosophical Studies XV* (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1997), pp. 37-45.

2. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (Springfield, MA: Merriam, 1969).

3. XII, 71072b 26-19.

4. *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (Boston: Beacon, 1920).

5. (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1998).

6. *Idiota de Mente / The Layman: about Mind*, tran. and ed. Clyde Lee Miller (New York: Abaris, 1979).

7. Trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinnes (New York: Humanities, 1961).

8. *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).

9. *De Veritate*, q. 1, 8. "Truth in the intellect is measured by things themselves," *ibid.*, I, 5.

10. *De Mente*, 4, p. 53 and 55.

11. Miller in *De Mente*, intro., p. 24.

12. *De Mente*, 7, p. 63.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

16. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Chicago: Regnery, 1960), pp. 14-21.

17. Eugene Rice, "Nicholas of Cusa's Idea of Wisdom," *Traditio* 13 (1957), 358.

18. Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, 2.

19. D. De Leonardis, p. 60.

20. Henry Bett, *Nicholas of Cusa* (London: Meuthin, 1932), p. 180.

21. Trans. G. Heron (London: Routledge, Kegan, Paul, 1954).

22. G. McLean, *Plenitude and Participation: The Unity of Man in God* (Madras: University of Madras, 1978).

23. *Of Learned Ignorance*.

24. G. McLean, *Tradition, Harmony and Transcendence* (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1994), pp. 95-102.

25. *Of Learned Ignorance*, pp. 84-88.

26. De Leonardis, p. 228.

27. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (New York: Harper, 1960).

28. *Of Learned Ignorance*, I, 9-10.

29. H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroads, 1975).

30. *Dato Patris Luminum* in Jasper Hopkins, *Nicholas of Cusa's Metaphors of Contraction* (Minneapolis: Banning, 1983), p. 25.

31. De Leonardis, pp. 233-236.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 235.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 236.

34. *Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper, 1959).

35. De Leonardis, p. 241.