Witchcraft Simplex: Experiences of Globalized Pentecostalism in Central and Northwestern Tanzania

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INTRODUCTION

One Sunday in September 2014 in a central Tanzanian town, I attended a Pentecostal service in the church of the Assemblies of God. After a first placid hour of thanksgiving when devotees could publicly share in Swahili their personal experiences of divine intervention and subsequent salvation, a guest pastor came on stage to preach. Before him sat a mixed crowd of inhabitants from poverty-stricken Morogoro region, the few better-off occupying the first rows on his right hand. What could the flashy-dressed Black Canadian have in common with this audience, I wondered. The answer came after 1 hour and a half of preaching in English with simultaneous translation in Swahili, punctuated with the collective choir singing. An entranced audience of 500 hung at his lips as his initial dwelling on the verse Isaiah 6:1–8 ‘In the year Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting on a throne’ grew into a series of questions and answers in a scholarly fashion. The dialogue eventually intensified into a commandment exhorting each to become an individual and

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take a decision, following the words of the subsequent verse: ‘here am *I*. Send *me!*’. ‘Yes!’ all screamed in reply to his question whether ‘you will face the obstacle in your life’ and consider ‘every trouble as a blessing’; whether ‘you will pull God’s glory into your spirit’, which will fill ‘your business, your finances, and your family’—in this order of importance—because: ‘WHAT YOU START, GOD WILL FINISH’.

The capital letters flickering on a large screen came at the climax. Everyone visibly agreed that something special had taken place. The pastor called it God-work. Repeating his soulful after-words ‘I got a feeling everything’s gonna be alright,’ which died out in a whisper, he left the stage. The sensory experience was intended to affect each participant. Some cried and a few started to speak in tongues. All cheered. What was initially God’s glory had finally become ‘Jesus touching your lips, your money, your body, your face, your church, your family.’ All participants had as individual bodies merged into a relationship with the personified divinity known as Jesus. Their salvation had led them to enter into the Body of Christ. While imploring the ecstatic audience to now take that first step, and mimicking the physical act repeatedly, the pastor reassured that ‘God is obligated to finish the work.’

The work God will finish refers to prosperity, for which the higher salvation known as baptism with the Holy Spirit is a metaphor. But the obligation not even God Himself can escape, stems from the belief in a singular cosmology obeying a universal law. This law boils down to ‘return on investment.’ We are witnessing a new phase in Pentecostalism, whereby African ripples join a global wave. As noted in the literature review by Birgit Meyer (2004), the study field of Pentecostalism has been a forerunner in illustrating the intercultural exchange and entanglements between the local and the global in postcolonial Africa, particularly, how African churches indigenized Christianity (Fernandez 1982), without opposing themselves to their ‘traditional’ forms of religion (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Ranger 1986). After decolonization in the 1970s and increasingly so with the intensified globalization of the 1990s, those Indigenous African Churches gave way to a new seminal breed, the Charismatic Pentecostal churches. It, however, meant an ideological inversion regarding capitalism, from resistance to adherence (Meyer 2004: 454). This chapter explores how the adherence in cultural terms became experiential in the current globalized phase of Pentecostalism; how it changed people’s experience of the world, particularly of witches and spirits. We cannot ignore the miracle happening

daily, of American TV channels as well as a visiting pastor from Canada managing to speak the language of the Morogoro born-again.

The point of view, the reader should know, is that of an Africanist who has mainly worked on witchcraft and with healers, not faith healers. In a first section, I describe the social process of ‘nuclearization,’ which structurally established a sense of bewitchment that prepared Tanzanians for Pentecostalism. The subsequent sections discuss the epistemological differences with Catholicism and with local traditions of healing as experienced by the healers themselves. The final part applies the concept of simplex relations to the universalism of Pentecostal spirits, whose aversion to parallel cosmologies and whose minimal biographies seem to befit the local process of globalization.

THE PENTECOSTALIST MEANING OF WITCHCRAFT IN MONO-CENTRIC COMMUNITIES

Every ethnographer speaking a local language with an educated Tanzanian, such as a teacher or civil servant, has had the pleasure of being looked upon in sincere sympathy and admiration.¹ Knowledge of local concepts, especially in the field of witchcraft, will be met with more praise and probably laughter and high fives. But it would be a mistake to assume that one’s interlocutor is thus attesting to pride over ethnicity. Soon dawns upon the ethnographer the interlocutor’s disinterest in reflecting on the local concept. The relationship of Tanzanian and other African elites with their ancestral traditions is ambivalent, fraught with colonial stereotypes as well as with a history of selective recuperation after national independence (Mudimbe 1988). Western Christian education erodes the cultural rootedness of certain concepts, reducing their experiential depth in relation to the rest of the cosmology. Among educated Tanzanians references to medicinal traditions as a rule call for ridicule or exaggeration.

Pentecostal adherents differ from other Christians in that their services take traditional belief seriously, albeit for representing the main evil in their all-out attack on ‘witchcraft’.² The Pentecostal attack can count on the sympathy of educated elites, who have for a long time wanted to see an end to their compatriots’ belief in magic and witchcraft (Geschiere 2013). A remarkable conflation occurs of combating witches and combating the belief in witchcraft, as if beliefs, cosmologies and the frame in which one experiences the world would not make a difference. By proclaiming to exterminate witchcraft, Pentecostal churches do not

eradicate the belief in witchcraft. They only reinforce it. Witchcraft's reality becomes stronger with every witch they claim to have converted. A motif staged during church services is the redemptive testimony of new adherents. Ideally, the sins confessed are those of a witch, like in the BBC documentary on a Ugandan pastor claiming to have performed over sixty child sacrifices as a healer before he became a Christian.³ The conflation of witch and healer is another telling piece of the puzzle. Charismatic Christians treat these figures as interchangeable because they as Christians do not experience the opposition and transition between the two frames, namely between the magical intervention of the healer and the invisible hold of the witch over the victim. In traditional Bantu healing, the witch stands for a disempowering lethal claim rooted in kinship and community ethics, until rituals and initiation conjure up the empowering frame of magic, which renders the curse manageable. After divination has revealed the identity of the witch, the impinging absolute Other of witchcraft becomes an everyday participant in the arena of magical warfare. In the Pentecostalist understanding, however, there is one world, God's kingdom. In such understanding of religion, the emphasis is on the literal content of beliefs and not on the frame of experience, which can generate diverse beliefs. For witchcraft to become culturally globalized and cross-culturally comprehensible, its meaning had to stop shifting between experiential frames. An analogy can be drawn with the early modern prosecutors simplifying the identity of the accused during Europe's witch-craze. The witches supposedly represented the medieval traditions the elites wanted to ban with the slogan 'no charity, no tradition, no solidarity' (MacFarlane 1999). The leveling urge imputed to the witch illustrates the epistemological irritation felt by upcoming capitalist elites.

As we could observe in the mid-1990s, a division grew in Tanzanian rural communities undergoing urbanization and the neoliberal effects of the government's implementation of the IMF's structural adjustment policy. In a period of maximum two generations, educated Christianized groups speaking the national language of Swahili had culturally uprooted themselves to together form a closed informal network, a margin within the villages and nascent towns to live out their modernity, with small benefits such as privileged access to government services offered by their acquaintances. Many of them had formed the vanguard of Nyerere's Ujamaa villagization policy in the late 1970s, which forced peasant communities to centralize around the public services of dispensary, school and cotton store. After a few years, the farmers returned to their old

villages (*mahame*) because the artificially created centers had caused land erosion among agro-pastoralists as well as conflicts to fester in the community, culminating in a boom of witchcraft accusations (cf. Hyden 1980). Centralization meant the imposition of a mono-centric residence pattern and social dynamic on farmers who lived in fenced extended compounds at some distance from each other and who were used to dealing cautiously with proximity, in greeting, meeting, herding, and all forms of social exchange. They were used to a polycentric system, integrating in the fairly autonomous 'center' of the homestead (*kaya*) their economy (as farmers and herders), their decision-making (*ha shikome*, at the hearth outside), worship (at the ancestral altars), education (under the tree), and family. Among those multiple centers in each valley, a consensus had to be found for anything collective to happen. A small survey conducted by me in 1997 among 110 farmers in villages where a development project named MRHP cooperated with credit groups indicated the growing gap. Most of the project's participants preferred to live in the Ujamaa centers, in a nuclear family and nuclear house without the hygienic risks of herding. They advocated independence (*kujitegemea*) from clan expectations, freedom from clan solidarity. For help they counted on loans from the anonymous outside world, consisting of NGOs, banks and government administration. They identified with the outside world, which left them marginalized in the rural community. In their eyes, they occupied a structural position of intrusion. They tragically were the ones feeling most bewitched, obsessed with the possibility of witchcraft surrounding them, as later appeared in the religion many of them embraced. Pentecostalism has been their solution to keep on living in the village, for they had bereft themselves of the soothing practices of social exchange of polycentric society (including non-kin alliance via bridewealth, initiatory memberships, cattle-exchange, and divination). The Tanzanian version of modernity seems to have been this nuclearization of the lifeworld: an external orientation combined with a shrunk network nearby, expecting witchcraft from the surrounding community. Many of those in search of social promotion have emigrated to town and city where social expectations are less pronounced.⁴ Those staying joined or created a margin for modernity, such as the credit group and the Charismatic church. The price for their courageous act was a cultural invention much less syncretistic than one could have hoped for. They denied themselves the experiential depth of local cosmologies inadvertently built up over centuries of cultural trial and error in polycentric society.

Of particular relevance to our argument is the structural state of Pentecostals feeling intruded upon in their own society. The other members of the community are absolute outsiders: 'outsiders' because they do not see the sin that the converted see; 'absolute' because they will not be relative outsiders, to relate to, exchange with or learn from. The healing of the Pentecostals differs from that of patients going to healers to be delivered of a curse, to thus end their bewitchment and return to ordinary life. In Pentecostalism, the bewitchment is constant, and with it the desire to detect evil, at a weekly, even daily basis, invoking, and repelling it in church, always remembering.

EXORCISMS COMPARED

The above divergence creating profound misunderstandings within rural communities struck me during the first year of fieldwork on Sukuma healing rituals south of Lake Victoria. By coincidence, I had witnessed an experiment, the significance of which I could not have gathered at the time. It was 1995, still before the big wave of literature on Pentecostalism in Africa. Two Pentecostal pastors had come to a healer's compound where I stayed. In my presence they persuaded the healer named Solile, famous for his treatment of *mayabu* mental illness, to let them perform an exorcism on one of his patients in order to prove that the Word of God was stronger than any of Solile's heathen methods. Sudden healing would indeed be a miracle in the eyes of the Sukuma healer, who is used to long-term treatments including ingestion of soothing concoctions, medicinal massages twice daily and regular monitoring of spirit support through divination so that after about 2 years the patients suffering from *mayabu* bewitchment, with symptoms of depression, can return home. The exorcist scene led by the pastors and witnessed by me from a distance should be summed up in the following terms: loud and atrocious admonishments of the patient, repeated references to the devil, panic in the patient leading to a fit, and a bewildered ethnographer barely 3 months in the field, now harshly confronted with the ambivalence of participatory observation. Just before leaving for Solile's place, I had been visited at home by a Tanzanian civil servant and a member of the Seventh day Adventist's church warning me about going to the village where 'the thing called witchcraft' reigns. Unlike his friends in town, the civil servant said, he took the danger seriously. But his experience of witchcraft could not be multilayered like that of Solile's patients.

Wherever ‘magic’ works in the world, the reason is a sense of differential relatedness. As in the case of Sukuma farmers, the power of *bugota*, medicine, depends on the relatedness or ‘kinship’ of ingredients with other meaningful parts of culture (Stroeken 2010; see also Myhre, this volume). The ingredients with much symbolical significance are called ‘entrances’ (*shingila*). The relatedness, among others in the form of metonymic resemblance between ingredient and goal of the remedy, can also be experienced by the user, who as a parent or novice prepares the concoction of ingredients. In the healer’s compound, the ethnographer observes the distinction between bewitchment, which is a form of anxiety engendering ideas of persecution, and the making of magic, which is a productive act with therapeutic benefits ending the anxiety. The therapeutic effect of magic depends on cosmological particulars such as symbols that cannot easily be translated across cultures. The globalization of the witchcraft concept thus comes at a price. Subtle shifts of experiential frames get lost. The subsuming of very distinct medicinal, spiritual, and witchcraft-related experiences under ‘the occult’ by anthropologists and historians alike, criticized in a polemical paper by Ranger (2007), exemplifies the experiential conflation, say ‘atrophy,’ that comes with the globalization of cultural concepts.

Pentecostal pastors have the same tendency of treating magic, bewitchment, divination, ritual sacrifice, and spirit possession as belonging to one domain, that of ‘the occult,’ or ‘the devil.’ Among Sukuma-speaking farmers, however, each of these practices evokes its own type or frame of experience, whereby shifts between them are felt by the participants, a feeling that lies at the very core of Bantu spirit healing and is fostered in life through initiation (cf. Devisch 1993). The different practices magnify experiential frames that cover the wide palette of everyday relations between self and outside world. Exchanging with the world (via magic), feeling intruded by it (in bewitchment), identifying its hidden causes (through divination), expelling the intruder (via exorcism), harnessing the power of externality (through sacrifice) or being in synchrony with the outside world (in spirit possession) are basic structures that accompany experiences in all domains of life, not just religion. Local terms denote existential distinctions such as the one made by Ingold (2000) between a scientist’s building perspective and a hunter’s dwelling perspective. Yet, these frames appear together in some societies, in all their oppositionality, the first frame linking bewitchment to the logic of commoditization, the second frame connecting magic to economic

exchange blessed by the community. The experiential frame crosscuts the domains that our Western education segregates as economic, political, social, religious, and so on. The cultural plurality of these domains blinds us to the fact that in our society the various experiences they produce belong to the same frame. If our economy is capitalistic, so are our religion and politics, because other frames of experience are institutionally discouraged in modern Western society.⁵ Therefore, Sukuma healers with their plural frames have been losing terrain fast.

Solile's reaction of scorn not only after but also before their session of 'spiritual healing' was telling. He wanted to give it a chance but never really believed in their miracle cure. The exhorting cries of the exorcists while brandishing the Bible contrasted sharply with the long-term methodic approach of Sukuma medicinal traditions. Pentecostal healing is rather impervious to the both cosmologically and biographically rooted meanings obtained by the patient from the therapeutic rituals, divinatory sessions, historically 'thick' medicines, collective routines of application to the body, and the regularly monitored communications as well as strategic dealings with the spirits. All these practices form a meaningful whole interrelating therapy with the rest of life, which lacked in the Pentecostal attack launched against the devil by those visiting pastors. In the pastors' experience the witch is not biographically specified, a significant other in the victim's life history. The witch remains like all demons that could possess the speaker-in-tongues, an absolute Other.

CATHOLIC VERSUS CHARISMATIC COSMOLOGIES IN CONGO AND TANZANIA

The othering does not mean a choice for simplicity, but rather seems an effective way of dealing with the complexities of life in Africa today. It is thus that I interpret the following discussions on the cultural attraction of Pentecostalism in Lubumbashi, the second largest Congolese city, near the Zambian border. A taxi-driver, whose job exemplifies global-local entanglements for his income depends on the fluctuation of the dollar rate, the oil price, and clients' participation in the urban economy, explained to me why he and his wife have become Pentecostals while their children stay Catholic and go to Catholic schools. He gave me three reasons. The first concerns adults only: sin, which explains the generational division of religious adherence. 'Treating sins is an individual

thing for Catholics, to be settled between you and God, whereas among Pentecostalists it is general.' (*Traiter les péchés, c'est individuel pour les catholiques, à régler entre toi et le bon Dieu, tandis que chez les pentecôtistes c'est général*). During the sermon everybody in the audience feels saved. The collectivity of the ceremony reminds of the purification rites with white kaolin among Chokwe and Lamba groups outside Lubumbashi. The collective dimension of Pentecostal services narrows the distance with the precolonial religious past, which Catholic practices precisely tended to magnify. In further contrast, since diviners and healers have to work in hiding in most African countries due to legal prohibition on their trade, their sessions have become private, losing significance at the level of collective release.

The second and third element my interlocutor mentioned in one go: deliverance with the Holy Spirit (*Délivrance avec le saint Esprit*) comprising 'deliverance from demonic possession' (*possession démoniaque*) 'or from family ties' (*liens familiaux*). The latter is a euphemism for bewitchment, typically in a context of unmet expectations or imputed jealousy, calling for black magic or poisoning. Healers without the faith are said to take advantage of those situations to falsely accuse and make money. Then again, Catholic services do not acknowledge, let alone solve these preoccupations of their adherents. Nothing is really 'felt' in those services. But the differences are 'small', he added.

The legacy of Catholicism in these parts of Africa is important to comprehend current local religiosity, as illustrated by discussions between two *Lusbois* intellectuals, one still a Catholic, the other a born-again. Both agreed on the Pentecostalist attraction axed on individual sensory experience and group solidarity, *le concret et la solidarité*. The convert takes the gospel literally (*L'évangile est vrai, pas du symbolisme*) in explicit comparison with the Catholic ambiguity about the Bible, a presumably characteristic two-facedness, of saying one thing and doing another. Pentecostal clarity is what the taxi-driver appreciated as well. Everything that is customary is forbidden (*Tout ce qui est coutume est interdit*). He explicitly referred to the sacrifice he had heard a Chokwe chief talk about in my presence. Such is the paradox. The ceremonial deliverance, led by a Canadian messenger of neoliberalism, has the collective and purifying effect in continuity with long-standing local traditions. Only now, what the participants have to be purified of is those traditions.

In the mid-1990s in northwest Tanzania, the epistemological gap was clear between the Catholic priest's idealized sermon and the churchgoers' actual beliefs. It led to a diversity of Christian expressions (Wijsen 1993). Missionaries tried to 'enculturate' the gospel, known as *utamudini* in Swahili, to adapt it to local cultures. It seemed a logical strategy of evangelizing. In Pentecostal services in Tanzania, no attempt of enculturation is made. How then to explain its success? How could it captivate so many in its latest version which blatantly ignores the fact of pluralism, of Tanzanians having learned to negotiate between the parallel and sometimes conflicting truths of colonial government, of Islam or missionary Christianity, of precolonial traditions, of new healing cults and religious movements, of national neo-traditionalism, and of postcolonial trends of neoliberalism? The plurality is precisely what the Pentecostalist message resolves. Just as the precolonial interest in the invisible facilitated people's capacity of living with and in many worlds, and allowed Westerners to bring the gospel and erect churches where ideas about a transcendent realm could be spread, the Pentecostalist mass-conversion is made possible by Tanzanians' current immersion in cultural complexity, negatively portrayed in media and popular culture as benefiting the heathen masters of 'cunning,' *bongo*. At the same time, Pentecostalism addresses at the grassroots of society what Catholicism avoided because of the magical connotation: the this-worldly aspect of religion, or 'historiopraxis', the *making of* instead of just invoking history (Coleman 2011). The religion postulates the continuity between the individual believer and God in this life. It mysteriously overshadows the radical contrast with the mentioned plurality of worlds. Whereas Catholicism institutes a dualism of sacred and profane worlds, the Pentecostal message acknowledges only one world. In that world, the believers treat as satanic the many forces that once guided their or their ascendants' lives.

Therefore, it is not surprising to note that today Pentecostalists are unlikely to visit a healer's compound. As I could observe in two field visits in the frame of university exchange in 2012, the researchers belonging to a Charismatic church, who formed the majority, refused to enter the compounds of traditional healers, despite their specialization in community outreach. Unlike 20 years ago, healers are no longer competitors on the same market of belief. The Pentecostalist cosmology trails in its shadow a meta-cosmology, a thinking about cosmologies that excludes certain cosmologies as demonic. Monotheistic religions have an exclusive meta-cosmology that can be contrasted with the inclusive, open truth-claim of

magical practices. All over Africa, Christian missions have attempted the ploy of subverting the local belief in ancestral spirits by presenting the latter as demons and using the word *shetani*, devils, for them in sermons and Bible translations (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 1991). The ploy never prevented Tanzanians from pairing various Christian, Islamic, and other religious expressions. The multiplicity proper to their country is embodied by the Swahili concept of *dawa*, medicine, which has an inclusive cosmology, allowing for multiple frames of experience, and therefore encountered even in hospitals in the facilitating of traditional medicine by the nurses (Langwick 2008). It is indicative about Pentecostalism that magical practice is its ultimate enemy, the destruction of the amulets and fetishes by the pastor a famous sight on TV. There are socio-structural factors that bred the globally financed and increasingly homogenized political ideology of Pentecostalism 3.0. However, in this paper, I am looking for the answer at the experiential level. Pentecostalism in Tanzania shares with magic a this-worldly aspect, the continuity between life and spirit: your belief can make your wish come true. That should make them competitors. Magic loses the fight where its experiential rootedness in the cosmology vanishes. That is the case for customers no longer experiencing the shift between plural frames, from the disempowerment of bewitchment to the empowerment of magic. Thus Pentecostalism can make magic obsolete. Magic can only threaten Pentecostalism in its existence if magic is understood in its local (Sukuma) sense, as containing *shingila*, an ingredient expressing hope (or ‘subjunctivity,’ cf. Reynolds-Whyte 1997) and thus articulating the uncertainty of belief in its workings. That articulation fits in magic’s pluralist cosmology, but obviously not in Pentecostalism. Magic is the killjoy of religious belief.

It is not so much the belief in magical effect that antagonizes the Christian soul as magic’s inclusive cosmology perturbing all religious belief. Probably the antagonism does not work in two ways, since magic’s inclusive cosmology could not exclude Pentecostalism (even if that belief is exclusive). One conundrum remains. We should expect from all users of magic the same disdain as Solile’s. Yet the growing success of Pentecostalism in rural Tanzania is undeniable. Does this attest to the experiential atrophy pervading society? A concrete element is that this region in northwest Tanzania, which secretly kept and adapted its traditions, has since the turn of the millennium largely abandoned its initiations into medicine and divination. The initiations guaranteed the degree of knowledge needed among adults to scrutinize a healer’s quality, which

indeed depended on that person's ability of cosmologically grounding the medicines and thus providing the users with experiential depth.

SIMPLEX AND MULTIPLEX EXPERIENCES OF CULTURE

The suggestion of impoverished experiences of life in modernity is not new. The Weberian trope on the iron cage of rationalization sought to identify the dark side of modernity in similar terms. Yet, if studies of globalization have demonstrated anything it is that rationality has not increased, rather that the world has not ceased to produce rationalities as well as irrationalities, a-rationalities, and magic (Kapferer 2005). To depart from Weber's idealist framework and from the materialism of its opponents, we should situate meaning not either in ideas or in social relations or in the experiencing body, but in all three at once. Yet, how to think culture, society, and experience together?

A useful pointer on relating culture and society to experience is Max Gluckman's (1967) distinction between simplex and multiplex societies. The less stratified a society is, the more complex any of its moral issues will be, Gluckman argued. In village communities, which are socially not very stratified, the personal ties with other members are multiple, in the sense of being simultaneously based on the kinship, initiatory membership, corporate alliance, political interests, and so on. Decisions on the right conduct can follow any of these lines of thought, depending on negotiation and palaver. That makes such societies 'multiplex' instead of simple. Rituals inculcating encompassing values can help to manage multiplexity. Prolonged greetings in the morning let Sukuma-speaking farmers take the time to address each other in a biographically correct way, determining the other's line of descent and choosing the kinship position relevant for the encounter, the terms of address the following suit. In the case of joking relationship, people switch to a frame challenging the other's seniority by strategically picking out other social bases than a descent to determine seniority. The multiplex practice resembles a game of chess, quite unlike the anonymous, 'simplex' greetings in modern cities.

To take another example, traffic in the streets and on national roads in Tanzania takes its yearly toll on passengers' lives by reproducing an unspoken rule. Which vehicle can overtake another and claim priority? An a-cultural law seems to prevail, where goods come before people,

police have to be bribed, expensive trucks have priority, and the newer brand of vehicle occupies a higher rank. The linear logic resembles the cultural frame of capitalism: the individual invests money and subsequently is entitled to the outcome (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000). It is the universal law even God cannot escape.

Modern, secular, and urbanized societies have less overlap of social roles due to the structural differentiation of society in subsystems, such as politics (State), religion (Church), economy (Market), education (School), and family (Home). The functionalist scheme was perfected in the system theory of Niklas Luhmann (1995). In some sociological applications, the scheme led to a definition of secularization as a process of gradual loss of moral encompassment due to the segregation of religion into a mere subsystem of society (Dobbelaere 1999). For our discussion the upshot of structural differentiation at the level of experience is interesting. From a macro-perspective and in cultural terms the subsystems are very complex, yet at the level of personal experience, the subsystems are designed to facilitate predictable decisions and simplify moral choices. The so-called complex societies appear to be simplex in the experiential sense. People learn to fragment their expectations. Cities, for example, foster the anonymity of navigating between the subsystems, itself a new experience introduced since modernity. It is, however, an experience of simplex society, of personal ties whose multiplicity has eroded and has differentiated into separate roles, thus denying the subject the both healing and bewitching transformation known in rituals and initiations (and perhaps underestimated by Victor Turner), of shifting between opposite frames of experience. Without experiential shifts, a society's power structure becomes fixed and linearly hierarchical. The previous sections illustrated the simplex experience of witchcraft in some Pentecostalist settings. The rest of this chapter compares multiplex and simplex experiences of spirits.

PENTECOSTAL DEMONS SUBSTITUTING FOR MULTIPLEX SPIRITS

Could Pentecostalism, through practices, such as 'speaking in tongues' and prophecies, be a substitution for spirit cults in Africa? Ethnographers have pointed to correspondences of Pentecostal services with healing rituals, in terms of their ecstatic features (Binsbergen 2004) and their inclination to mimicry, mixing appropriation, and parody of foreign

undomesticated powers, including unleashed capitalism (Devisch 1996). Others have emphasized the Pentecostalist convert's 'clean break with the past' (Meyer 1998; Dijk 1997) that demonized clan and precolonial traditions, which in turn facilitated the adoption of underlying Western ideas of individualism and neoliberalism (found in Republican circles in the Southern US among others). The two views do not contradict each other, for indeed the neoliberal message of salvation can flourish in communities whose members are used to depending on invisible forces.

There exist similarities between charismatic and traditional ecstatic religions, an obvious one being the convert's social transformation including detachment from the extended family (cf. Lewis 1971). But the differences seem more fundamental. First of all, the Christian salvation through repentance and belief in God has little affinity with the dependence on whimsical spirits, which are neither good nor bad in the (Bantu) cosmologies of Eastern Africa. The capitalist logic of return on investment frontally collides with the fundamental state of contingency which the healer's patients experience when waiting for the unsure 'arrival' of ancestral voices in oracles, or when engaging in the daily play of magic and counter-magic yielding an uncertain outcome for their life force.

Second, and not in the least, the plurality does not tally with the conversion. Prior to initiation into the Chwezi cult of spirit possession, the medium (*manga*) will wear a bracelet called *ngalike*, a noun derived from the verb *kugalika*, 'to change one's mind.' The change the *manga* must undergo is a shift in experiencing the world, which hinges on the plurality of worlds and the many cults specialized in each of these worlds. In the Chwezi cult, belief in the spirit means a shift of frames and not a change permanent as in a conversion after the descent of the Holy Spirit. What is more: the Pentecostal experience of conversion actually arises from culturally uprooting oneself. That could not work in the healer's pluralist cosmology. The crucial difference with ritual healing and divination is that Pentecostalism allows for one world only. What the Pentecostalist understands by evil is the possibility of many perspectives, which is exactly what the diviner takes for granted. The one encompassing law of Pentecostalism to which even God must obey condemns pluralism. Acceptance of multiple frames of experience amounts to disbelief, which is the ultimate evil.

Bantu divination and healing have a long tradition of integrating foreign beliefs. The *majini* and *pepo* spirits from Islam spread across Eastern Africa in the past century and sometimes they did at the detriment of

ancestral spirit cults because those Muslim beings began to infiltrate divinatory diagnoses. The oracle had to choose at some stage which type of spirit was at work: a *djinn* or a clan ancestor. The one lost a client to the other while recognizing the other's skill. The oracle also told whether the spirit-led illness was a curse stumbled on by accident or sent purposefully by a witch. In contrast, the Pentecostalist call for conversion never entered the diviner's diagnosis. The oracular frame of experience does not accord with the exclusive truth-claim of Christian conversion.

Only at the cost of experiential depth could Pentecostal exorcism replace local spirit practices. Attesting to the important experiential change, it did replace them, if we interpret the words of Malamala, the leader of the Chwezi cult, well (personal communication 12/9/2015). According to him, the cult has been compelled to move and recruit in the region of Bariadi and Bunda, thus east from its main catchment area 20 years ago, which was southwest from Lake Victoria and a much larger region. The change of catchment area corresponds to the spread of Pentecostal churches from urban centers in Kagera, Kigoma, Kahama, and further afield to the west from Rwanda and Uganda, where the Chwezi cult and its variants, the Kubandwa and Ryangombe cults, died out earlier on.

Just as the concept of witch has been globalized, so as to comprise virtually everything occult, and thus no longer denotes a particular frame of experience to snap out of with the help of the healer's counter-magic, so too has the concept of spirit been globalized, to comprise realities as different as the biographically unique call, the demonic curse and divine grace. This cultural globalization of spirit and witchcraft benefits the dualist Christian frame, separating the normal from the occult, good from evil, over which Bible and priest can decide. The process seems to have had a predecessor in precolonial central Africa. From Rwandan mythology can be derived that the cult of Ryangombe arose at a time, some 500 years ago when King Ndori sought to introduce an autocratic model of the rule (Heusch 1966). The spirit cult originated at the margin of society to maintain the reciprocal, interdependent relation with the spirits, which the king wanted to get rid of. Today, we witness the next phase in the process, as Pentecostalism has entered the margins of society to reorganize people's relations with the spirit world.

Diviners and healers in central Tanzania where Christian and Islamic denominations prevail, live deep within the town center, hidden from view of government officers and educated Christians. In northwest Tanzania, they are located at roadsides or at the periphery of the village

to announce their trade and attract customers. Yet, both regions of Tanzania have abandoned the initiatory systems with a public purpose such as social integration. The rite of passage required the involvement of the whole community before and after the teaching in a secluded area of the forest. For very varied reasons, ranging from (neo-)colonial to anti-colonial sentiment, postcolonial Africa has not managed to publicly and unashamedly link up with precolonial traditions. Pentecostalism harbors those sentiments. As a consequence, spirits have lost their history, which was transmitted through oral tradition and oracle, and often dated back many generations. Moreover, the cosmology the spirits partake of is no longer intergenerationally crafted and recrafted, to parallel new cosmologies. As illustrated below, however, in the seclusion of the healer's compound the biographies of spirits and the parallelism of spiritual cosmologies persist.

FROM SPIRIT BIOGRAPHIES TO THE GLOBALIZED FRAME OF SPIRIT

In Morogoro region, the business of healing takes place in fenced houses, not unlike any other in town. External signs of the trade on the roof or fence are rare. By word of mouth, clients know which one of the many specialties at hand a certain healer offers. Cosmologies parallel each other and interweave. Religious conformity is secondary. The *mganga wa korani* treats by reciting Koran verses, after determining the person's life-force (*nyota*, 'star') through divination techniques unacceptable to orthodox Islam. The *mganga wa kibuyu*, 'healer of the calabash', adopts Luguru traditions of divination, yet combines these with the Islamic concept of *majini*, 'spirits' denoting afflictions, and the related Swahili notion of *mapepo mabaya*, 'evil winds'. The adjective suggesting that there may be good winds too is indicative of the negotiation between registers. Orthodox Islam regards spirits as dangerous and external to society, hence in treatment, the healers of the calabash move away from Islamic cosmology to enter the world of traditional healing where spirits are ancestral and can be protective. This is an indication of the extent to which the plurality of cosmologies inheres traditional healing. The oracles of six different diviners I visited in the region last year confirmed the intrinsic plurality. All healers embraced the continuity between life and spirit agency, but none shared the same cosmology. Most of all, they

seemed not to care about forging coherence among their propositions, let alone with those of their colleagues. Each mediumistic vocation has its unique biography; their spirits decide which way is right. The only absent cosmology was Pentecostalism.

One Luguru-speaking healer had a *mzimu*, ‘spirit,’ *wa kuoteshwa*, ‘of being made to grow,’ meaning that this *mzimu* permitted the medium to steer and shape it. He developed an original divination technique with a remarkable tool he named Adija: a shiny reddish-brown calabash connected with a palm-size mirror via two thin strings of tiny white and black pearls, each a foot long. The strings carried halfway a pair of small medicinal bottles, covered with a black hair tuft and strengthened with two wooden amulets. Inside the calabash was a transparent liquid with the power to ‘pull’ the spirit (*kuvuta mzimu*, Swa.). The Adija calabash received the information on the life-force of the client, transmitted ‘like an X-ray’ said the healer, through the two bead strings and appearing in the mirror. The mirrored diagnosis determined whether the illness is caused by the power of God, *ya Mwezi Mungu*, or by ‘superstition,’ *ya ushirikina*, literally ‘polytheism,’ the Arabic notion for heresy and the locally adopted term for witchcraft (also by the healers). The healer emphasized that although his expertise is ‘of the calabash,’ the liquid in his Adija tool combines the forces of both Koranic and calabash healing (and I would add: radiology). In brief, he saw no need to exclude creeds. God and witches act as if belonging to parallel worlds, the one absent when the other is present. Furthermore, the healer had no qualms about calling witchcraft *ushirikina* with the strong connotation of heresy, even if he knew that orthodox Muslims would consider his counter-magic and rituals a form of witchcraft. Heresy is a void and inconsequential concept in his pluralist cosmology. In short, the disciplining of the adherent’s experience, implying control over thought, which the new Charismatic movement stimulates, was absent.

We lack the space here to detail the ways in which Tanzanian communities have perpetuated the biographies of ancestral spirits from the clan and a fortiori, in initiatory cults such as Chwezi, have revived the histories of spirits possessing members (Stroeken 2006). The biography of one’s guiding spirit helps to form one’s self, often embedded in family history (Lambek 1988). In Christianity, it is the same spirit we are to experience—not an ancestral spirit attached to the history of the clan or of a certain locality. Pentecostalism manages to interweave the believer’s

personal path of salvation with the one Spirit, through a relationship that evolves (Coleman 2011). It is not the biographically unique embodiment of the path of the subject, as in the cult spirit of the possessed. The *communitas* of ritual, a collective state famously described by Victor Turner, should not obscure the actual purpose of initiating subjects seeking to become worthy descendants mastering the forest, the plants, and the tools of divination to read personal fortune or expertly consult a healer. The many unique paths of these subjects and their ancestral spirits preclude the existence of a definite, fixed hierarchy (cf. Rio and Smedal 2009).

All reflections in this chapter seem to converge on the view that Pentecostalism is a religious practice befitting the era of globalization, nuclearization, and neoliberalism. Defined as a process that compresses time and expands scales of influence resulting from the free(r) flow of goods, people, and ideas (Brenner 1999), globalization means a greater probability of localities admitting external influences in their midst as well as triggering local ripostes entailing cultural innovation and syncretism (Hannerz 1992), hence producing cultural heterogeneity. My point has not been to reject this claim but to elicit what it conceals: while networks of cultural influences, as effectively drawn up by ANT studies among others, have only grown more complex, the experiential depth of spirit and witch has atrophied. The experiential atrophy has been a corollary of cultural inflation. By depth, I did not mean the intensity of personal experience, which anthropologists are not equipped to measure. I meant the extent to which one practice is related to other practices and thus ‘rooted’ in history. In the case of much experiential depth, the practice is embedded in a cosmology and co-determining it. Then practices are *differentially* related, that is, born from a strong sense of distinction and allowing for a wide palette of sensation. Among the many faces of globalization, one is to individualize subjectivities, but another paradoxically is to standardize experiences, making their biographical uniqueness disappear. Globalized settings reproduce cultural differences at will, creating so-called superdiversity, which is not conducive to experiencing the symbolic oppositions amidst the diversity, or to experience the shifts between them. Pentecostalism is a multilayered phenomenon but, we have argued, in its most effective popular variants it is the reflection and the driver of this atrophying process, a reflection of its globalized view on the supernatural is hinged on public discourses in African schools, NGO’s and churches, yet also a driver as it has found

in Christian conversion a universal substitution for the reciprocal, personal, and biographical relations with ancestral spirits. Spiritual warfare has been so effective as to rob the spirits of a history and a name. Both in Africa and Melanesia, evangelism has been confrontational, perfecting the art of 'world-breaking' (Rio, MacCarthy and Blanes, this volume). Surely, no other art could have assisted both God and capitalism against their remaining competitors: the spirit, calling for personal subversion, and the witch, embodying our continuity with the past.

CONCLUSIONS

Whence the Pentecostalist obsession with the witch, incorporating in it the spirit as an evil intruding the self? The obsession is that of a whole society. If life is supposed to know only one form, to remain stuck to one experiential frame, then bewitchment is its name. No other religion than Pentecostalism has the meta-cosmology to master that game.

Since Enlightenment, the domains of science, democratic politics, and ethics proceed on the assumption of universal categories, seeking laws or truths governing that one world. However, our one world is allowed to contain plurality within, for it produces truths-under-construction through democratic consensus (Habermas 1985). Monotheistic religions have little room for the contingency of such democracy. Christianity hence established the dualism of worlds, the profane one being reserved for the scientist's cosmology. Contemporary Pentecostalism presents a fourth type of cosmology, differing from magic (many worlds), religion (dualism), and science (one plural world). Its tendency is toward a singular world without inner plurality. The relation between individual and good, or God, is direct. No capricious spirits should come in between. People receive a return on investment. The preachers are the brokers ensuring that people dare the move to that world. While other ideologies, religions, and science present an ideal to strive for that may not be attainable, here is a religion that appeals and excites for projecting its ideal on this world, and claiming the ideal is already attained: it is only up to the individual to embrace it. God will finish, provided that you start.

It is unconventional to distinguish between on the one hand cultural complexity, for example, operationalized as the number of different cultural elements and their interrelations, and on the other hand experiential depth, which refers to the integration of all those elements in a whole, a

cosmology (one cosmo-logic) embodied by the subjects. The suggestion of comparing cultures in terms of the members' experiences is almost a taboo in anthropology since subjectivities are supposed to be incommensurable, even more than cultures. It is thus only in a roundabout way that we could put forward indications of experiential atrophy, such as the rising success of Pentecostalism in a globalizing and increasingly neoliberal society, the suitability of Pentecostal sermon to neoliberalism, the simplex experience of conversion, the examples of simplex greeting and traffic, the loss of experiential shifts in magic, the vanishing of spirit cult initiations and their replacement by Charismatic possession, the structural intrusion and the choice for Pentecostalism among the educated, the civil servants, the villagized, the nuclearized families, and other outsiders of the community. An alternative view would seem to be the rejection of the idea of 'experiential depth' altogether and to instead state that spirit cults die out simply because they no longer capture the experience of life in current society, while Pentecostalism does, which would explain its success. But such reasoning boils down to the same conclusion about the relevance today of simplex experience and its fascinating complexity.

NOTES

1. This study is based on participatory observation and regular field visits since 1995 in the northwest of Tanzania (predominantly in Mwanza Region) and on annual short research stays since 2012 in central Tanzania (Morogoro Region). Brief field-visits in Kitgum (Northern Uganda) in January 2014 and in Swahili-speaking Lubumbashi (DRC) in November 2015 served as additional points of reference on Pentecostalism in Eastern Africa.
2. During a brief field-visit in Uganda in January 2014 an Acholi diviner told me in an unrecorded interview that she and all healers around Kitgum were the first victims of the LRA's murderous campaign to purify Uganda from witchcraft.
3. The dubitable nature of the claim by pastor Polino Angella was not mentioned by journalist Tim Whewell, who was subsequently summoned for questioning by the Ugandan police, cf. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8536313.stm>.
4. See the so-called 'Mitchell-Swartz hypothesis' asserting that social competition causes less tension where social ties are loose (Marwick 1970: 380).
5. A (mischievous) explanation for this homogenizing pressure is that experiential plurality, maintaining opposite perspectives, hinders globalization as it would slow down communication and keep influences all too local.

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