Domestic morality, “traditional dogma”, and Christianity in a rural Zambian community

Abstract
Hugo Hinfelaar described, for precolonial times, a comprehensive domestic religion and family spirituality which he called “traditional dogma” or “family dogma”. What is left of it in Zambia? When and for what purposes are traditional religious beliefs invoked today and scrutinised in marriage and the domestic sphere? While many say, “We have no culture left!” traditional dogma continues to function as a “moral grammar” that anchors cultural identity. The marital life of a couple becomes scrutinised along traditional beliefs during family crises. When people accept this scrutiny, they (re-)submit themselves under the wider family and thereby reconstitute the family under the traditional moral compass. On the one hand, Christian churches came with meticulous moral and sexual standards which were to replace traditional beliefs, while on the other hand, they belittled and bypassed the domestic self-regulating mechanisms that enforce morality, because they were linked to traditional beliefs. I am writing this paper from my perspective as a Catholic priest, who experiences, much like Hugo Hinfelaar before, that the void left by tradition has not been filled by the Christian faith. Hinfelaar’s concern for a creative dialogue between Christianity and traditional dogma still waits to be adopted.

Introduction

Christians’ ideas about marriage, kinship obligations, belonging, morality, sanctions for moral transgressions, and ritual-religious redress are not only determined by church rules, but also by the demands of tradition. Hugo Hinfelaar used the term “traditional dogma” or “family dogma” to describe – from the example of Bemba speaking people – an ancient religion and spirituality that once guided people in Zambia through married life and family life. As an historian, Hinfelaar investigated how traditional ideas may have underpinned popular Zambian religious movements, by giving a sense of agency and authority to women. As a theologian, he advocated for a respectful dialogue with women who constantly try to negotiate concepts of traditional dogma. For him, the idea of inculturation, often used in Catholic circles, had to prove itself on the domestic level, but failed to do so. His research had a clear pastoral aim: how to develop or restore a primeval image of mutual harmony in the household between the two sexes, sustained by daily ritual, and thus providing a foundation for a domestic, Christian spirituality.

I look at Hinfelaar’s ideas and that of his critiques in order to draw out more clearly by whom, and to what purpose, traditional beliefs are invoked and scrutinised today. My research is gathered from the parish in which I work as a Catholic priest, in the Luangwa Valley, that is inhabited mainly by Wiza, Senga and Chewa-speaking people with various cultural traditions. They are organised through matrilineal clans among the Wiza and bi-lineal descent among the Senga. People first and foremost belong to a wider family, which provides access to land, security, help for work, connections, and care during times of

sickness. This sense of belonging influences the decisions that people take and the questions they are required to address in times of crisis.

An example of a non-negotiable belief

During a visit in one of our prayer centres, a woman approached me, with a baby in her arm, asking for prayers for her marriage.

> This is my sixth child, but I nearly died during delivery. I never had such problems before; I bore all other children easily. But this one did not find the path. It blocked itself. At the clinic they referred me to Kamoto hospital [100 km away]. There my family ordered my husband to come. He confessed. He was going out with another woman. Still, I needed a caesarean.

Of course I agreed to pray, but also wanted the husband to be present. Here is his side of the story, given to me in the presence of his wife:

> We had a good marriage. I love my wife and the children. God has really blessed me. But then came Satan. I started to go out with this other lady and jumped. For no reason, really. While my wife was pregnant, I told the other woman that I would take her as my second wife.

There is a common belief in many Zambian societies that a man who commits adultery while his wife is pregnant will cause problems at childbirth. Such misadventures can lead to the death of the unborn child and of the mother, unless he confesses and counteracting medicines are administered. He may also secretly administer such medicines himself through her food or drinking water. Suspects, including those no longer sharing this belief, will be subjected to strong cultural sanctions. Since the man pleaded guilty, he had paid some fines to the family, including the high costs for transport to and from the hospital, for several people.

I did not share the underlying belief-system of the couple. I did believe, however, in the power of prayer and was concerned that it connected with their own experience. I was also searching in my mind for the unspoken reasons as to why the husband would buy into the traditional discourse. At the same time, I recognised in the narratives a sense of wonder that moral transgressions have biological consequences. Biology and spirituality/religion are not strictly separated in Zambia. I felt it would be wrong for me as their pastor to downplay this sense of wonder about the spiritual and moral world.

I did not want to endorse beliefs that I do not hold myself – I would not be congruent. At the same time, I wanted to build a bridge between our prayers and the woman's bodily awareness of approaching death as pointing to a spiritual condition in their marriage.

And her survival, and that of her child, as a call for greater mutual commitment. I am not sure whether my intervention helped the couple to overcome their crisis. But it grew out of an attempt to respect and work with their own religious sensibilities. The difficult childbirth had become her bodily felt awareness for divining the unfaithfulness of her husband. Her belief was not negotiable. I guessed that the man's relationship with the other woman had shown itself also in other signs. I would have acted differently if he had not confessed. But I had to admit that the belief had provided her with an effective means for redressing his adulterous affair. The husband on his part, by confessing to the family, acknowledged their authority to scrutinise his marital life on the terms of traditional belief. As a result, he reintegrated himself back into the family.

Audrey Richards' "dogma relating sex and fire"

The belief that played itself out in the above drama is part of a whole system of beliefs related to what Hinfelaar called "traditional dogma". A dogma is a normative foundation taken for granted by a community, a basis that should not be questioned, on which communal life depends. In relation to the Bemba worldview, the word was first used by the pioneering anthropologist Audrey Richards, who did her fieldwork in Northern Rhodesia during the 1930s. She called it the "dogma relating sex and fire" and believed that Bemba ritual behaviour could not be understood outside of this dogma (Richards 2005: starting at location 544). Sexual relations convey to a couple the ritual state of being hot. In this state it is dangerous for them to approach the ancestors, and they pollute the cooking fire when touching it. Babies who eat food prepared from this fire may get sick or die. Richards described the need for parents to purify themselves after sex, with the help of a tiny pot that the girl obtains from her paternal aunt at marriage. "It is still spoken of with the utmost secrecy and shyness and still survives even in the face of strong opposition from missionaries." Since adulterers cannot purify themselves, their ritual state of hotness can bring disaster on both children and spouse. Richards described the art of Bemba motherhood as guarding children and household from the dangers of polluted fire. This becomes somehow eased after the "kupoka mwana" ceremony, an act of sexual intercourse by the parents and the lighting of a new fire. Richard's described the dogma also in relation to chiefly rites, funerals, and other parts of ritual, economic, and social life, as well as the utmost care taken to prevent menstrual blood from contaminating the family. "On her handling of the hearth depends her husband's power of access to his ancestral spirits, ... the blessings which are available for gardens, bush and village, political life and warfare" (Kindle location 2680). It was not only sex that made a person "hot" and likable to pollute a fire, but also murder or the killing of a lion. The dogma established boundaries between hot and cold spheres of life and structured daily life and relationships. A girl's initiation rite (chisungu), which made her become part of

the adult women's world, confirmed for all the participating women the dogma for the next generation.

Sexual scrutiny as a form of governance?

The relationship of "sex and fire", or the regulation of hot and cold spheres of life and body states, as Morris (1985: 30) or Wolf (2001: 97) called it, has been affirmed also in other Zambian cultures. The countless daily practices surrounding the traditional belief system had at its root the desire to protect health and life, and to protect especially the innocent (small children, the elderly, a spouse) from deadly defilement. Megan Vaughan restudied the work of Audrey Richards and reflected (in an article of 2008) on the high level of public scrutiny of the sexual life of married people that Richards had observed. Vaughan therefore asked if Foucault's concept of governance through "productive power" (as outlined in his *History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge*) could be applicable to the dogma relating sex and fire in precolonial society. In contrast to "repressive power" (say a chief's power to kill, mutilate, sell people into slavery, punish, and control trade), "productive power" is not enforced by one group of society over another. People participate in the creation of productive power with every speech act, work and gesture through which they make themselves part of the group and internalise its categories and standards of health and of the human body. It is a way that society regulates itself from within. Since people scrutinised each other on such interiorised health categories, society – scattered over a vast territory – became governable as a social body, once royal authority managed to link the body of the chief to this form of productive power:

> The sex life of the Chitimukulu and the purification rites connected with it were central to the well-being of the entire country, and the same principles applied to the sexual lives of his subjects. Through these symbolic mechanisms, then, the life and death of the Chitimukulu were connected to the life and death of every subject (Vaughan 2008: 386).

The elaborate burial rites of Chitimukulu, the Bemba chief, brought this point home in the most gruesome fashion. The king's death meant absolute disaster and was followed by killings and a lengthy period of anarchy, in which the land itself became cold and broken. The chief's real power, both Richards and Vaughan argued, rested not in his army but in people's beliefs: that the fertility of the land and the welfare of the people had a connection to the body of the chief. These beliefs brought the polity together as a single population.

Both Richards and Vaughan were interested in the question how precolonial structures and beliefs continued to play into colonial experiences in times of radical transformation. The same question should of course also be asked in regard to postcolonial and "Christian" times. Richards had presented a down-to-earth and open

interpretation of the traditional dogma relating hot and cold forces of the cosmos, mainly in relation to the overall functioning and maintenance of Bemba society. Vaughan looked at it in terms of governance and "regulation from within" (Foucault's productive power). Hinfelaar had a different entry-point: For him, traditional dogma should first and foremost be seen as a house religion that, through many ordinary details of tradition, opened up a way for approaching and communicating with "the Transcendent". By this he meant the spiritual world of ancestors, various divinities, and ultimately God who sustain and protect family, offspring, the land, and fertility.

Hinfelaar's view of traditional dogma

Unlike Richards, Hinfelaar considered chiefly power as a secondary and distorting structure imposed on a religion that belonged to the realm of domestic life and the extended family, and that received its meaning from the family. Women played the vital roles when approaching "the Transcendent". Harmony between husband and wife was crucial in this process, but this harmony was lost. Hinfelaar noticed much nostalgia when women talked about the past: about a time when the traditions were kept. He tried to reach an old stratum that continued to give women energies and religious animation.

Women described their past religious roles to Hinfelaar as "chibinda wa ng'anda", "kabumba wa mapepo" and "NaChimbusa wa Chisungu". The first term, which he translated as "the enabler of the domestic cult", greatly overlaps with Richards' "dogma relating sex and fire". Hot and cold spheres of life became a creative and productive force, when correctly brought together, as could be witnessed in cooking, beer brewing, pottery, blacksmithing, or the rhythm of the rainy season that follows the cold and the hot season. Hinfelaar recognized in the channelling of the sexual energy of a married couple towards fertility a stronger religious dimension than Richards. Harmony with the spiritual world came from following the traditions of the ancestors. Sexual and bodily fluids (menstrual blood, sperm, etc.) were feared and handled with utmost care because they were related to the sacred, mysterious and creative forces. Out of balance, life's energies could unleash a destructive side. Such defilement could come from actual or intended adultery, understood as a "mixing of blood". Hinfelaar argued that sex was understood as a religious act that had to take place in a mood of harmony and understanding between husband and wife. It was preceded by lengthy conversations during which they also invoked the ancestors, and followed by a cleansing rite. Adultery and other misconducts needed to be confessed for the cleansing to be effective. Hinfelaar believed that this primeval understanding attained many complications with the proliferation of polygamy and the imposition of centralised rule, that connected ideas of fertility to the royal cult. The second term (kabumba wa mapepo, "initiators of public worship") established the woman as the vital link to the ancestors: she kept the lufuba, the ancestral spirit shrine. Women were indispensable for intercessory prayers and for discerning the messages

coming from the ancestors, for example through the world of dreams. Disaster and hunger were signs that the ancestors were displeased. Female agency was crucial for re-establishing relationships with the spirits. The third term, NaChimbusa wa Chisungu, "protector of the miraculous event" (of a woman's first menstruation) describes women as masters of the girls' initiation rites, held partly in the forest and partly in the village. In a worldview that depended on complementarity between male and female roles, women always protected their rites from intrusion of the male folk. Men had a role to play in the rites, but important teachings took place in a women-only zone. The leading initiators (banacimbusa) were highly respected across families as guardians of tradition and played a religious role in the life of a young couple.

These three roles gave to women a comprehensive religious agency which was linked to the daily practices of guarding the fire, recurring events of a woman's cycle and of the human life-cycle (birth, puberty and marriage, death) and the need to navigate through exceptional calamities like draught and sicknesses. Hinfelaar thought that the imposition of Bemba chieftaincy (starting with the 18th Century), then Colonialism and finally the introduction of Christianity led to the marginalisation of women from their spiritual roles.

The break-down of dogma

While Audrey Richards did her fieldwork in the 1930s, Hinfelaar did his in the 1980s, with many descriptions of the dogma given in the past tense. Many domestic and agricultural rituals had lost their importance in a post-colonial, modern and largely Christian Zambia. Women's spiritual awareness and conceptions were belittled or labelled as pagan. In new generations, modern life and school education had taken away reverential fear for tradition. Old taboos were obsolete. Hinfelaar noticed that neither state nor church had left much room for controlling the perceived consequences of sexual defilement and the spiritual perils and chaos that follow them. Only biomedical reasons were acknowledged to have real explanatory power, even when the silent horrors of the AIDS pandemic mirrored the symptoms of traditional defilements. Christianity also left little space for ancestral dreams or the ancestral community that guarded a family's moral life. The church regarded initiation rites as helpful for sustaining the moral fabric, but they needed to be scrutinised for pagan, sinful and explicit sexual elements (Hinfelaar 2015: 151). Their link to fertility and continuity of the clan and of life was not always well understood. After independence, "The title NaChimbusa gradually lost its religious significance" (1994: 164-165).

In the process, Hinfelaar believed that traditional dogma degenerated into a disparate assembly of rites that were still kept out of fear but that had become disconnected from any positive relationship between husband and wife. The man became known as the head of the household. There were few sanctions left to control promiscuity.

Now, “The women lived in constant fear of contamination with its fatal consequences and now this fear became associated and exacerbated by the occurrence of sexual transmitted diseases” (1994: 132). Secretive usage of manipulative medicines proliferated. Hinfelaar pointed out the vast gulf between the ideal picture of harmony and the actual present-day realities.

Hinfelaar’s attempts to recover traditional dogma

Hinfelaar examined movements at the fringes of Christianity that were giving domestic life new spiritual meaning: the Lumpa Church of Alice Lenshina and the Mutima Church of Emilio Mulolani. His research was also marked by tumults in the Catholic Church in response to Archbishop Milingo. Their enormous success puzzled mainstream Christian thought.

(1) Hinfelaar stated that his research was greatly influenced by his experiences with an unshakable and uncompromising resolve of women adherents of Lenshina whom he encountered in his engagements with the Lumpa movement during his early missionary life. For him, it was a religious resolve. He believed that Lenshina, through her songs, teachings, and rituals, had managed to tap into an old reservoir of spiritual aspirations. Take the example of Lenshina’s popular rite of baptism, that demanded spontaneous confession of past sins, witchcraft and adultery, while the husband sat on the lap of his wife. Each one handed over their charms and secret medicines. Then they jumped, husband and wife holding hands, over a wide line – imitating the jump during initiation rites – into a common new life. For Hinfelaar, it demonstrated Lenshina’s ability to arouse a domestic spirituality that restored to women a sense of control over marital relations (Hinfelaar, 1994, 73-100).

(2) Also Emilio Mulolani’s Church of the Sweet Heart (Mutima uwalowa uwa Makumbi) led to a wide exodus of Catholics in urban and rural areas. At that time, Catholic worship separated the sexes, proclaimed basically an all-male Trinitarian God, and concentrated leadership (priests, teachers, catechists) amongst the men. Emilio stressed the complementary roles of the two sexes in worship and presented the female and humble side of God side by side with her male expressions, which the triumphant European Church, the companion to colonialism, was unable to perceive and live. God had prepared Africans through a long history of suffering and discrimination for the revelation of her female persons.[1]

Emilio attributed a natural dignity and authority to women’s ways of intelligent service. In contrast, where men’s lives were marked by beer drinking, greed, laziness and promiscuity, male charism and authority found natural limits. Emilio focused on complementarity as leading to greater communion with God. Together as man and woman, and not each in a separate way by oneself, do they become the image of God. Emilio restored marriage and the family home as the centre of prayer life and worship.

The common meal after worship taken by men and women (husband and wife) together (ubwali bwa citemwiko), the purification rites before sexual acts, or the motherhood of God were for Hinfelaar indications that he was digging into traditional dogma and processing it in a new and creative way (1994: 101-125).

(3) In 1971, Hugo became secretary to Archbishop Milingo. He worked with him for ten years. Milingo became known for his healing ministry and exorcisms, and the controversies this aroused with the church hierarchy. Hinfelaar witnessed this ministry as part of a wider concern of Milingo who wanted his church to become more accessible and sensitive towards people's daily struggles (Hinfelaar 2015: 282). But what have evil spirits to do with traditional dogma? It was evident to everyone that many more women than men were afflicted by the evil spirits that Milingo was driving out. Milingo was certain about the ontological reality of the spirit world and its influence and interaction with the visible world. At the same time, he was concerned with women's increasing marginalisation and impoverishment, also inside the church. Hinfelaar approached spirit possession more from the viewpoint of history and anthropology. He referred to the work of I. M. Lewis (1989), and considered spirit possession as "last resort of creative redress" for many women whose "status as wives, mothers, and home-makers had become dangerously insecure" in the modern Christian world (Hinfelaar 1996: 168). Going beyond Lewis, however, he argued that women possessed by evil spirits:

> saw themselves contaminated by the evil of the whole community, of the whole nation and burdened by it. ... It was not uncommon during this purification rite for women to confess the misdeeds of their family, the social and economic injustices that they were suffering as well as their illnesses. It was then that one got a glimpse of women's original role of BanaKabumba (1996: 172-173).

For Hinfelaar, the phenomenon of evil spirits running amok in the lives of so many Christian women demonstrated the failure of the Church to offer a more intuitive family spirituality after the collapse of traditional dogma. The quality of domestic, marital and sexual life clearly formed for many women the springboard for finding God in the wider world, or for finding spiritual disaster.

(4) Hinfelaar also looked at the place of women's agency inside the Catholic Church. The agency of young and creative men in the rise of Zambian Pentecostalism has often (and rightly) been stressed. By extension, one may gain the impression that women had less religious agency or creativity. In the Catholic Church, women established themselves as its backbone, and Hinfelaar wanted to trace historically the struggle of women to transform the church into their spiritual home. This is even more amazing since he highlights the overbearing presence of clerical tutelage, insensitivities, and the belittling of women's spiritual beliefs that compromise women's vocation. Hinfelaar looked at

women's understanding of the Eucharist, implicit rules about purity, confession, Catholic marriage laws, and the clear stance against abortion and polygamy, the family apostolate and the independence achieved by lay-movements. Yet the mystery of the feminisation of the laity remains not yet fully explained. Today, we have to admit that women, much more than men, have created opportunities in the church to form common mental and bodily links, symbolic worlds, in which they combine Christian and traditional teachings in their own ways (not of course without tensions). Women church groups have mapped out for themselves role models that are often based on the traditional initiation rites. The re-enactments of these rites play an important role in popular movements like the "Ba Nazareti" or the "St Anna". The Catholic Church today may rather lack meaningful role models for married men. (At that point, I believe, Hinfelaar's study and endeavour stands in need to be complemented.)

Critique

Hinfelaar showed much respect for traditional dogma, but not everybody wants to engage with it. Many pastoral agents, teachers and health workers regard it as an obsolete bundle of superstitions and outdated beliefs. Not unlike the colonial church, they want to do away with traditions that are incompatible with modern education. Take the example of death during childbirth. Maybe, it could be true that a woman, rightly or wrongly convinced of the adultery of her husband, developed serious and fatal complications in a situation of stress and panic; maybe beliefs can trigger a whole chain of unfortunate biomedical reactions. But should the reason for such a death not be sought in the field of biology, instead of some ancestral structure of mystical punishments? The Zambian law outlaws the attribution of death "in some non-natural way" to adultery; it can make an innocent person responsible for an unfortunate death.[2] And, since the quest for confession and for preparing traditional medicines consumes much time in the critical situation preceding childbirth, they can delay the seeking of medical help. "If they had come earlier, we could have saved them!" is a standard remark given by medical personnel in clinics and hospitals, together with the viewpoint that traditional medicines administered to pregnant women may be more harmful than helpful. Similar reasons are given in response to many other practices of traditional belief. Where the biomedical model is applied in an absolutist sense, it leaves little room for cultural or spiritual health categories or discernment patterns.

When examining Tumbuka initiation rites (in the area of our neighbouring parish), Christine Mushibwe (2009) blamed these rites for the prevalence of early pregnancies and marriages, traumatising experiences, school dropouts, and the perpetuation of oppressive taboos and false beliefs about reproductive life. For her, such rites, together with many other cultural traditions, preserve the suppression of women by women under the authority of men. Her viewpoint contrasts with other studies that evaluate the rites

in a more positive light and in an emic way, and as opening up ways of female agency.[3] But Mushibwe's point mirrors the frustrations that many pastoral workers in the church encounter, when people give much more credence to local narratives of healers and elders than to the biomedical discourse of schools, hospitals and church.

Hinfelaar's way of dealing with the gulf between traditional and modern voices was to promote dialogue. He recognised that women's agency is largely based on the religio-cultural heritage. Chammah Kaunda (2015) argued that the denial of that heritage will almost always lead to crippling people's agency. Hinfelaar saw in traditional dogma not a second-class option for those who do not make it into the modern world, but a religion, a way of communion with "the Transcendent". As such, it cannot be reduced to or solely judged by biological, social or psychological categories. It deserves respect in its own right, and has the right to pose a challenge to other ways of life. Eventually, traditional dogma needs to find its own way of becoming meaningful in the modern world, a challenge that every religion has to cope with.

At this point another set of critique sets in, from within the academic community. Malcolm Ruel endorsed the broad lines of Hinfelaar's analysis but also pointed out that he attributed a certain abstract version of "the Transcendent" to Bemba domestic dogma, which he then conveniently identified with Lesa (the Bemba divinity). The project of inculturation made Lesa resemble and become identic with the Christian God. Indeed, many inculturation theologians have been criticised for aligning African traditional religious visions too easily with theological concepts derived from the Western Christian worldview and dissolving the former in the latter.[4] Hinfelaar presented problematic elements of tradition (for example exaggerated fears of defilements, polygamy, or teachings that place a woman under the authority of a man) as historical distortions that were brought by the royal intruders and political turmoil; he seemed to absolve original religion from any contradictions with modern, Christian sentiments. Ruel did not doubt that there was a family cult prior to chieftaincy. But since evidence is sparse, the idealised version that Hinfelaar presented may be somewhat an ahistorical picture. Audrey Richards had looked at Bemba dogma in a more profane way: for the actors, rituals seemed to bring their results simply through correct performance. While Richards recognised the role of the ancestors as foundation of traditional dogma, she was surprised about the lack of religious vocabulary in the rites she observed and in people's descriptions of the rites. She did not witness much outreach to "the Transcendent". Ruel finally asked if Hinfelaar's endeavour for inculturation "is not itself on a par with the way in which incoming Luba-Lunda chiefs assimilated pre-existing ideas in the development of the royal and chiefly cults" (Ruel 1997, 88).

I keep this critique in mind when I look at the place of traditional dogma in a contemporary Zambian rural community. Here, I merely want to make a remark on Ruel's last point. It is obvious that Hinfelaar's aim of research was not only on the academic level

of history but also part of his missionary vocation of sharing and at the same time struggling with his faith. Ruel rightly says that Hinfelaar endeavoured to assimilate pre-existing ideas for the church's purposes. Inculturation for Hinfelaar meant "That the new religion of Christ should not destroy the old tradition, even when it has become archaic, but complete it and bring it to perfection" (1994: 91). He expectedly judged "completion" and "perfection" from the viewpoint of the Christian faith. But to put this position on a par with chiefly power presumes that the aim had to do with ruling or governing. While it may not be possible to exonerate the church at large from this assumption, I believe that Hinfelaar's writings, (together with the research that he asked Catholic seminarians to perform by sending them back to their grandparents and elders,) were aimed at facilitating greater dialogue and mutual appreciation. The same people who struggle today with tradition also seek meaning from their Christian Church; in the process both may change in their expressions.

A final point of critique with which I want to engage suggests that Hinfelaar expected too much from the symbols that he analysed and also from traditional beliefs, maybe more than the people who used them. David Gordon researched the Lumpa Church (nearly fifty years after Hinfelaar's own encounters with Lenshina's followers): "In my many interviews, Lumpa Church adherents did not agree with Hinfelaar's interpretation of Lumpa symbols" (2012: Kindle Locations 4184-4185). For Gordon, "Bemba religious dogma" had little or nothing to do with Lumpa's success. Maybe, the old religion of women was, and is, much less fundamental than Hinfelaar thought?

Obviously, judgement about the validity of Hinfelaar's interpretation of Lumpa symbols belongs to women adherents of Lumpa.[5] Gordon did not elucidate with which specific interpretations his own interviewees disagreed, and which meanings they gave in their place. Instead, he devalued symbolic interpretation altogether in favour of linking Lumpa agency directly to the spirit world. "For Lenshina's followers, the spirit world was real, not symbolic." (Kindle Locations 4187-4188). Gordon made himself use of interesting symbolisms in his analysis. His point vis-a-vis Hinfelaar is, however, that Lumpa's adherents found legitimacy and motivation for their actions not in a new way of living an old religious dogma, but in Lenshina's meeting with Jesus upon her death and coming back to life, her mission from God, her authority against witchcraft, her vision of a new Jerusalem, and her rejection of corrupted, backward-pointing powers that seemed to legitimise the mission churches, chiefs, and UNIP. Lumpa's agency rested in a promise of help coming directly from the world beyond, mediated by Lenshina's vision.

The priority of the future over the past in many believers' motivational horizon is important to keep in mind when discussing traditional beliefs. Hinfelaar stressed that the quest for a better and a different future was inherent in traditional dogma itself, which he described in Bemba mythology as a journey from the West (the past, the ancestors) to a new dawn in the East. (1994: 3-6). Walking in tradition ("ukwenda mu ntambi") means

going forward, not backwards. Gordon must be credited for his forceful stress on the agency of the heavenly world when explaining believers' actions. But he did not pursue the same question that Hinfelaar tried to answer (successfully, or unsuccessfully): How did the agency of women of the new Jerusalem connect with their day-to-day practices, among themselves, not only as an agency against (witches, rosaries, Catholics, Protestants, "abalwani" – enemies), but also as a religious spirituality (Hinfelaar) or – in secular terms – a "productive power" (Foucault, Vaughan) that regulated life from within? To experience a vocation or an encounter with the "spirit world" is one thing, but to sustain it over time, with the help of discipline, routine, and daily rituals, is another.[6] The creation of mental and bodily enacted connections (symbolism) seems rather crucial in this process. When Gordon built up a dichotomy between a symbolic/intellectual and a literal understanding of the "spirit world" (he associated Hinfelaar – incorrectly – only with the former),[7] he may have himself impoverished an analysis of agency within the complexities of life. Hinfelaar looked for the symbols that Lumpa hymns connected to Lenshina's vision of the New Jerusalem – many were clearly taken from the initiation rites, even if Gordon claims that their meaning had not much influence on the movement.[8] Lenshina offered a new future, but it was dependent on a full cleansing and deliverance from witchcraft and secret medicines. Hinfelaar knew that these were located especially in the wider family and in marriage. He explored how Lenshina in her return to the sources ("ukubwelela kwi shinte") linked her evangelical call for conversion to the ideals of monogamous marriages for those who have been cleansed ("abasambwa"). For Hinfelaar, this was a new version of the dogma around "Seed, Blood, and Fire" (1994: 105).

The northern part of the Luangwa Valley (the area of this research) was heavily marked by the Lumpa church. In my own interviews with Lenshina's supporters and opponents (Udelhoven 2015: 184-191), I was told that many people walked to Sione (Kasomo, Chinsali) *as couples* together with their witnessing families. Some went full of hope and wonder, "because we wanted to see Jesus with our own eyes" and "hear God speaking to us directly." Others, returning miners, were forced upon arrival by their wives' families to receive Lenshina's baptism and hand over their charms as a precondition for reintegration in the village. Maybe the quests for a direct encounter with the heavenly world and the demand for more structure in married life and in relations with the wider family were not exclusive of each other as a neat exclusion of traditional dogma from Lenshina's success would suggest. Where both meet, Hinfelaar's concern for a meaningful family spirituality would be addressed.

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I have presented in this first part Hinfelaar's argument and those of his critics. They pose important questions that I now take up in the second part: Which space does traditional dogma occupy today? In which ways, if any, do people understand traditional

dogma in a religious or spiritual sense? How does it constitute agency for sustaining family life from within?

The loss of tradition in the Luangwa Valley

I shift my reflection now towards the area in which I live and work, and towards the present tense, ninety years after the fieldwork experiences of Audrey Richards and thirty to fifty years after those of Hinfelaar. Culturally and historically, it is a different area from that of Richards and Hinfelaar, even if Wiza people see themselves as relatives of the Bisa of the plateau among whom Hinfelaar lived. But there are enough similarities. Christian churches have only a limited impact on people's domestic lives. In 2018 and 2019, we interviewed individuals and couples, groups of headmen and headwomen, women groups as well as men groups about the meaning of blessings in a marriage and the challenges of married life. I have assembled the following quote from selected answers that were given as summaries of group discussions:

> Blessings in marriage means that there is understanding ("kupulikana, kuumvwana"). They have children who remain united and supportive. They have good relationships with family and neighbours. They succeed in what they do.
>
> But today? Marriage is just a game ("sewero chabe"). Marriages break because we have thrown away our traditions. The youths just marry themselves – the parents are the last ones to know. Girls become pregnant before any marriage negotiations. This year, eight girls got pregnant in grade 7, in this school alone. When they teach about HIV, they show them everything. So they try it out. The "alangizi" [traditional teachers of initiation] are no longer consulted.
>
> In the past, parents married their daughters early and these marriages lasted, because the families were supportive. But now, the girl chooses herself without any regard to her parents, and it ends in divorce after the first fight. And a girl not married? She is free for all and asked by all!
>
> In the past, girls were really taught [in initiation]. Today we cannot confine them anymore for a long time, because of the schools. And there is no longer anything like the "mphala" [open shelter, where boys learnt from the elders]. Boys just learn from the streets and from the phone [pornography].
>
> The introduction of "gender" [an assertive women-rights approach] has taken away our culture but has failed to replace it with a new culture. In the past, chiefs and headmen punished boys and men who misbehaved. But today to be a chief is just a business. Headmen have no longer any power. There is no fear left.

> Family solidarity ("ubale") is low because of competition after divorce. Children of one wife compete with those of another wife for resources. The sparsity of [marriageable] men brings much competition and suspicions between women.[9]
> A good marriage is one where they understand each other's point of view. But today, couples do not know how to deal with the expectations for money and wealth ("chuma"). Nobody prepares them for that.

This narrative blames the loss of tradition for all the ills and crisis in marriage and family life. People associate traditional dogma with a golden past that is no longer recoverable but that has not been replaced by anything meaningful. Outsiders' advice and also the churches' advice may work in another world, maybe a better world, but not in theirs.

Hinfelaar was (rightly) criticised by Ruel for presenting an idealised version of traditional dogma of the past. But for many people today the golden past is such an ideal world. They strongly affirm Audrey Richards' descriptions of the workings of the dogma: "It is true!" Tradition brings a sense of rootedness and rightness, and the void left by tradition has made common living precarious.

The "local narrative" contrasts sharply with another narrative, stronger among salaried workers, teachers, and health workers, known as "alendo" (visitors but also outsiders): They experience local traditions to be very much alive, but as a hostile force:

> Here in the valley tradition is still very strong. People don't want new ideas. You can't argue. In your "milandu" (legal cases), and even in your marriage, they drag in all the wider family. And they even threaten you directly [with witchcraft]! You can't fight tradition.

While the local narrative bewails the loss of tradition, the "alendo narrative" shows that tradition continues to constitute a power, and that local families know how to invoke it over and against others when their common interest is at stake, a point to which I will return.

Tradition as a shared grammar

Do people see traditional dogma as a religious spirituality in the sense of some conscious "communion with the Transcendent", as Hinfelaar saw it for the past? For some, we could call it religious in an inversed sense: when bad things happen, one feels punished by tradition and at odds with the mysterious forces that suddenly reappear – after having been ignored all through life. On the other hand, tradition continues to maintain a vision of cultural identity and of morality – or the loss of thereof. It is associated with the ancestors, with protecting life and harmony and comes with a sense of wonder and

responsibility. It gives an appreciation to whom one belongs and provides the moral compass for this belonging.

People digest traditional beliefs today through various explanatory models. Take the example of death in childbirth due to adultery that tradition attributes to the mixing of blood ("kusakanizga ndopa", "kusakanya mulopa"). Some link the mechanism to the power of the ancestors, which explains for them why biology may work differently for other nations and peoples. One initiator (mlangizi) referred to child psychology and explained that "the unborn child knows adultery by the mixing of blood, is sad, and no longer wants to live." Another one explained that adultery opens the body to demonic influences and "establishes a covenant" and "the price of sin is death". Mixing of blood here goes hand in hand with mixing with the devil. For others, tradition simply works; they are not much bothered about the why and how. "It is God's own secret!" ("Chinsinsi cha Mulungu!") Already Audrey Richards (2005 [1956]: part iii) had left us with a differentiated pattern of ways in which people explain their beliefs to themselves and to others.

Traditional beliefs are believed, rejected or followed in different degrees and situations with variations regarding age, gender, levels of formal education and class. Others accept them in certain circumstances, "just in case". And, quite a few people who rejected traditional beliefs during their time in school, reaccepted them when they became older. It is also obvious that beliefs change over time. Consider, for example, their interplay with biomedical concepts in the wake of the AIDS pandemic,[10] or the shifting boundaries of the "dual medical system", the traditional and the modern (Mkandawire, Lugina and Bezner-Kerr, 2011). People negotiate with tradition in order to make sense of present challenges, and in the process may also modify, reduce or develop tradition according to their needs and sense of morality.

Nevertheless, people have maintained a strong sense of correctness when using cultural expressions. The terminology follows a shared grammar, in Wittgenstein's sense, external to the speaker, about shared "rules for use of a word".[11] People correct each other about the proper ways of applying traditional concepts. They follow an established pattern against which a given application has to prove itself. One becomes an elder not just by age but by one's ability to distinguish rightful from wrongful usages of cultural terms, even if one believes in them only in a partial way. Confusing the terms violates the sense of cultural and historical identity. An analogy can be found in the usage of proverbs: A given proverb can be applied to new situations. But it cannot be stretched out indefinitely. An elder maintains a sense of rightness and congruity about the representations of cultural terms – by virtue of being better attuned to the shared grammar and the ability to recall previous occurrences. This applies also to the beliefs that are related to traditional dogma.

Scrutiny

When is tradition invoked as a moral compass, by whom, and to which effects? I answer this question by looking at contemporary practices that can be associated with Hinfelaar's tripartite dogma. Let me start with the woman's role as "the enabler of the domestic cult".[12] The secret marriage vessel, so crucial in Richards' and Hinfelaar's reports, is important also in our area, including for young couples. Most refer to it as "kabiya" (small clay pot) and it is kept by the wife. It is used for gentle cleaning and massaging after a conjugal meeting and for the rites of mutual shaving of pubic hair. From time to time, the wife also warms up water for massaging the body of the husband as a reward (or request) for a good performance. In our discussions, cleansing was presented as a hygienic and erotic venture, not as religious or ritual.[13] It was not associated with removing hotness from the couple.[14] However, it gives people a sense of rootedness in tradition and is followed because of this. In one meeting, even young men who had married by eloping with a girl without going through traditional marriage instructions expressed much interest in the presence of the kabiya: "It is bad not to be taught!" The kabiya gives the status of a recognized marriage.

The rite of mutual shaving of pubic hair is scrutinised by couples themselves (shaving oneself is considered a proof of adultery) and, in the event of sickness or death, by their families. If found "dirty", the other spouse can face serious accusations in the inter-family meetings of having neglected an essential marriage duty. Different traditions exist about the correct procedures of this rite in polygamous unions. But there are also many complaints about a lack of clarity and non-compliance.

Audrey Richards' "dogma relating sex and fire" is known especially in regards to defilements. Much in line with Richards' account, old people prefer to eat their food prepared in their own pots and cooked on a fire that is undefiled by "hot" (potentially sexually active) people, less they contract "mdulo" – the "cutting disease" (pl. midulo) in form of a serious coughing sickness. I do not intend to specify all the instances of midulo, as they are well documented for other areas, past and present.[15] People insist that "normal sickness" and midulo have different symptoms. Nevertheless, there is much overlapping, and foregoing treatment in the clinic is frowned upon even in case of mdulo. Traditional and biomedical answers are not seen in entirely exclusive terms.

Depending on context and symptoms, a specific *mdulo* may be attributed to adultery, secret abortions of a neighbour or family member, neglect of menstrual taboos, or non-compliance with socially imposed restrictions ("mijungulo"), especially the required times of sexual abstinence i.e. during a funeral (especially of an own child), after the birth of a child, or the initiation rites of a daughter. After a miscarriage, the affected woman stops greeting and speaking to others, while her husband should remain close to the house, until released from this obligation. Also the failure to correctly perform a required ritual (like kutenga mwana – the equivalent of kupoka mwana in Audrey

Richards' description) can be blamed for midulo. Many medicines are known and used to mitigate the effects of midulo on a personal level. But some demand arbitration. This is a matter for the concerned families. "The vast majority of cases of mdulo are settled out of court", wrote William Rangeley in 1943 (p. 35), and this is also the case in our area today.

The most tragic case of mdulo is death during childbirth. High amounts of compensation may be claimed by the bereaved family, but often a compromise is found if the accused husband accepts responsibility.[16] Threats of witchcraft may be uttered when he refuses to confess or when his family refuses to honour its financial obligations. Village headmen may mediate. In rare cases, where the two families fail to come to a settlement, they may decide to bring the case before the chief in view of enforcing the required cleansing rites for the surviving husband. The usual locus for arbitration, however, is a meeting between the two families.

The "mixing of blood" principle knows important nuances. A polygamist does not threaten the life of his pregnant wife if he goes to his second wife. "All have become of the same blood," is the answer to this puzzle. "The blood therefore does not mix." He does, however, mix blood and cause her death when he sleeps with a woman not his wife. The fatal law of mdulo does not strike indiscriminately, like gravity or a virus, but is attached to *legal* marriages and sustained through regular sex. Straight after a formal divorce a couple is no longer "one blood".[17]

In most cases, scrutiny about mdulo belongs to the family and to nobody else. By family ("banja", "lupwa"), a person understands the collective of significant relatives whose genealogy he/she can trace in a precise way to either of the two parents. For the Wiza and Chewa, one's own matrilineal clan has priority in many legal matters. Husband and wife have their own separate families, but for their descendants these will form one family – theirs. Family in this stricter sense, capable of enforcing sanctions, may cut across matrilineal clans ("mikowa" – those of the four grandparents), but is limited to known relationships.

The same applies also to other rituals that we can associate with Hinfelaar's dogma: Scrutiny that has teeth belongs to family and not to the general public. Take, for example, the rite of "kumeta" (of shaving) at the end of a funeral. One of its expressed purposes is "kutaya chiŵanda" (to remove the bad spirit/shade) associated with death – from family members and from those who were closely involved in the burial. Take the following description, given by Headman Mtampuka:

> After a burial, there are two rites of kumeta (shaving): the public one ("pa walo" – in the open yard) and the private one ("mu nyumba" – inside the house). The public one, well, there are many opinions. Ŵachitawala (Jehovah Witnesses) and some churches will never do any kumeta in public. Many churches don't want kumeta, because it is "ncha chikunja" (pagan) and they say it cannot remove any chiŵanda, or that

> there is no such thing as a chiŵanda. Look, we call people for kumeta, but often we just place a pair of scissors on their head. Some do it, others don't, and people are not really much concerned. But the kumeta mu nyumba, ah, that one is another matter. If you don't do it and something happens later, like someone gets depressed or sick, the family will blame you.

The kumeta mu nyumba consists of the mutual shaving of husband and wife, which is followed by the couple resuming conjugal relations. Without this rite, the dead person will be ill disposed against the household, especially against his/her close relative. The chief of our area enforces the rules about the kumeta pa walo, but does not get involved in the kumeta mu nyumba. If a suspicion arises because of a mysterious (often mental) sickness in the house, they are dealt with internally, by the wider family, in their own council. Here the guilt of trespassing is established, confessions are given and accepted or refused, promises of change are made, and warnings are issued. These family councils are of no concern to outsiders.

Concerning the second role of women, the link to the ancestors, an occasional *kavuwa* (ancestral shrine) can be found among the Senga, usually kept in response to a dream of an elderly woman of a clan with an acknowledged history. Otherwise, the ancestors have very limited public appearances. Nevertheless, they play a crucial role in constituting the boundary of a family. This becomes evident at funerals. While funerals are very inclusive and many of its tasks are performed by classificatory or biological grandchildren ("azukulu"), the spiritual force linked to the dead person is precarious and can only be handled by the immediate family (for the Wiza only its matrilineal part). To the remaining spouse, who was "one blood" with the deceased, it becomes a chiŵanda, a dark and dangerous force, from which he/she needs to be cleansed.[18]

People recognise that women formed the crucial link to the ancestors in the past, and that more women than men become befallen by various types of (non-ancestral) spirits (known here as "vimbuza", "mashaŵe", "mizimu", "ŵangelo", and demons). The appeasement of such spirits goes along with certain taboos, since the spirits demand a conditioned lifestyle. Women either follow the promptings of the spirits (especially when they become healers) or deny and ignore them because of pressure from family or church. In either case, we may speak of a spirituality in the sense of a continued struggle with or against the spirits. It provokes a sense of crisis and very often calls for domestic readjustments. People with spirits may cause public concern or amusement. But, again, the required adjustments are a matter for the marriage partner and family, not the wider public.

Finally, initiation rites (mostly known as "usungu") are proudly practiced. The concluding part of the rites is public and an occasion for celebration, gift-giving, beer

drinking and dancing. It is assumed that a girl "who has been taught" has practiced labial prolongation before the rites and that she knows the standard etiquettes of cultural and marital behaviour. These include the rules about respect, hygiene, proper behaviour towards the husband (and men/adults in general), in-laws, and sex, as well as the sexual dance, but also many practical matters. She is also taught the teachings around the kabiya (the secret marriage vessel), the important times of sexual abstinence (mijungulo) and the taboos around the mdulo complex. Church-led initiations separate puberty from marriage rites and removed explicit teachings from the former. They downplay teachings about mdulo and removed elements that they consider repulsive or that clash with church teachings. During the last stage of pregnancy, women come again together for the "usungu ukulu" (the great usungu, strictly attended only by women), after which her dress code changes and other protective measures set in.

Not everybody can afford a public rite for their daughters. But all girls need to receive the teaching lessons "inside the house", when in confinement. These are compulsory. A family wants their daughter to be a respectable and accepted person in society and eventually to become part of the adult women's world. But society's scrutiny no longer has teeth. Scrutiny about the teachings that the girl received is an issue at the point of marriage – for the family of the boy, and also her own family, for example for fear that "she will be returned".

Megan Vaughan's point about the politics of scrutiny begged the question about who scrutinises and to which effects. People may comment about practices related to traditional dogma, but scrutiny in the narrower sense belongs to specific parts of a family (matrilineal, agnatic, or affine). Of course there are exceptions. For example, in closed groups on a dangerous mission (i.e. a hunting/poaching expedition in the "cold" forest), effective scrutiny about sexual abstinence can take place also outside of kin, about each member in the group and their spouses, when something has gone seriously wrong. The exception of a tight group on a specific mission, I believe, confirms the rule that scrutiny about traditional dogma belongs to the family.

Tradition provides frames of reference for this scrutiny, but not always an unambitious roadmap. In the struggle to make sense out of events in the context of competing explanatory schemes, a family reconstitutes or reaffirms a sense of family morality, under which its members need to submit. A person who stays outside the common moral code established by specific parts of traditional dogma becomes estranged. Reference to tradition seeks adherence to a binding moral code and allows to press for compensation. It is a search whose outcome cannot always be predicted. Compare the following cases:

Case 1. A death in childbirth

A woman died in childbirth in a village of one of our prayer centres. Her family understood that the husband's adultery had caused the death, and consulted four different diviners, who confirmed this perception. The husband refused to attend the divinations and denied the accusations. His wife's family then denied him the cleansing rites unless he paid 2000 Kwacha (then 200 US$). He did not pay. They confronted him with the offer to pick any diviner of his choice for the proof of guilt or innocence, which he accepted. However, the night before the agreed consultation, he fled to town and has never come back. He was not cleansed by his late wife's family, for whom he has become an outcast. He seems uninvolved in the lives of his children. Defying the demands of tradition, he remarried in town, "after he shaved himself in a barber shop".

Case 2. The refusal of a confession of guilt

In the same village, more or less at the same time, a woman was accused of having caused the death of her husband, who had vomited blood before his death, a sign of "mphongo". This form of mdulo points to adultery on the part of the wife. She vehemently refused the charges, in spite of her own family trying to persuade her to make a confession and pay a fine, if only for the sake of peace. "According to the tradition of our parents, you are guilty!" She stuck to her not-guilty plea. Eventually she remarried without visible obstacles. She continued to live in the same village and seemed to be on reasonable terms with her own family and somehow even that of her late husband. She had managed to defy tradition, against all odds. However, she later died with anaemia. Many people then related her death to the fact that she had not been properly cleansed because of her defiance of tradition.

Case 3. Another child's death

In one prayer centre, I was called by a man: his seven months old daughter had died. I went to see him to express my sympathy and pray with the family. Obviously, the man was devastated.

> The child was coughing. First, I bought medicines in the shops. When this did not work, we took the child to the clinic. They attended to us and also gave us medicines to take home. To no avail. Then we brought her to the traditional healer. He gave some medicines but said he could not deal with this case. Now the child is dead. It is exactly the same death that all the other children died. There was something in the chest that was moving, and it became very hot. I don't know how my wife's relatives will react. I will go and beat the drum [consult a diviner about witchcraft].

The man had two wives; this was the fourth child of his second wife to die within a few years, in addition to several miscarriages; all her children now were dead. Sadness gripped everybody. Hardly a year earlier, at the occasion of the death of the third child, her family had given him a very strong warning: "We will not tolerate another death!" There were several suspects for witchcraft. But among the scrutinising rumours, there was still another possibility: "chisoni", which translates as being sorry, broken-hearted, sad, rueful, or shame. As a local medical condition, I was told, it causes the death of all small children of a woman whose husband sleeps with one of her close relatives.[19] The father eventually did not become accused by his wife's family of having caused chisoni. But it was clear that a man who went to look for a witch in his own family would himself be scrutinised about his sexual behaviour. Traditional dogma is invoked as a moral power.

In the three examples, a given couple's marital and sexual life was subjected to scrutiny *during times of life-crisis* caused by unexplained death. Tragedy is rarely viewed in complete isolation from crisis in relationships and norms of morality, and more specifically within the family. Sometimes we find several schemes of explanation that compete with each other. But even when biomedical causes are discerned, they are also made part of a moral discourse, for example when they function to acquit a close relative from moral wrong. ("It was malaria, not mdulo.") People's gossip has moral overtones and are part of a process of reshaping a public sense of morality. But the scrutiny with teeth is that of the family, "the owners of the case". People who confess their misconducts on traditional lines place themselves under the authority and sanctions of the family. People who refuse to confess, place themselves outside. In the above cases, a known world of trust and belonging had fallen apart. Traditional beliefs were invoked as a moral certainty when the family itself was at stake and where people needed to once again affirm common rules (a dogma) for belonging.

Conclusion: church and family power

For more than a century, health, education, and church discipline have tried hard to debunk family dogma as false belief. But which other form of moral knowledge and ritual practice has replaced this powerful force that is able to reconstitute an extended family in times of crisis? On the one hand, the Christian faith came with meticulous moral and sexual standards in replacement for traditional beliefs. On the other hand, it belittled and bypassed the domestic self-regulating mechanisms that enforce morality ("family power"), because they were linked to traditional beliefs and labelled superstitious. The church was left with many rules but no solid grip for scrutiny within the family. From outside, the church could reject promiscuity, polygamy or divorce. But it had little to offer in terms of "productive power" (Vaughan) or "intuitive spirituality" (Hinfelaar) on the level of domestic life and the wider family. The Christian family was toothless for

implementing its own domestic ethics. Morality was fiercely preached in church and without too many consequences rather easily evaded at home. In contrast, tradition still kept a firm grip to scrutinise and sanction marital life in the Luangwa Valley – and in many other areas of Zambia too. Many people no longer hold traditional beliefs in a strong sense. But, "If something happens in my family, these points will be looked at." As long as "these points will be looked at", they continue to constitute a critical point of surveillance, a moral compass, through which a wider family reconstitutes itself in times of crisis.

Important beliefs in the traditional discourse are linked to indigenous biological models of causality that can be incompatible with modern biology and ignorant of established scientific insights. Hence, many view them as superstitions. But when people appeal to tradition, they don't only intend to give lessons in biology but also in morality and identity. They appeal to a mysterious dimension in life to which they have a specific connection because of their ancestors and history. We have seen that traditional beliefs are invoked as a response to crisis that is linked to relationships, and where people expect a binding consent. Hinfelaar respected the quest for a common moral life even when the explanatory biological schemes are no longer viable. He asked what the scrutiny and sanctions attached to beliefs try to protect. For him, they pointed to a sacred dimension of married life and family, in which he himself believed, that once was and could again become the springboard for a wider spiritual life. He wanted to link the Christian faith to daily domestic rituals in search for an intuitive family spirituality. In other words, to link Christian morality to "productive power" that helps to regulate family life from within. In the church, his quest has lost nothing of its relevance.

[1] Emilio version of the Trinity (or Quintity?) contains God the Ancestor (with the complimentary spirits of "*Shikulu"* and *"Mama"*), God the Son (with the complimentary spirits of "Tata" and "Mayo") and "the Spirit of all". The NaKabumba (Mary the mother of Jesus and senior to him) brings salvation to the Africans whom she loves in a very special way.

[2] Section 3 of the "Witchcraft Act" (Chapter 90 of the Laws of Zambia).

[3] See especially Rasing (2005) – focussing not on the (patrilineal) Tumbuka but on (matrilineal) Bemba *ifimbusa* practices, which have, nevertheless, many similarities. Also Mutale Mulenga Kaunda (2016), while pointing out incompatibilities of traditional *fimbusa* teachings with modern life and aspirations, believed in the possibility of making initiation rites compatible also with the ambitions of modern working women.

[4] See Hale's discussion (2008) on the controversy between John Mbiti and Okot p'Bitek.

[5] Hinfelaar's analysis concerned the early years of Lumpa that preceded the entrenchments, apocalyptic violence, and the exodus of the survivors to Mokambo.

[6] I conject that Hinfelaar's quest was not disconnected from reflections on his own faith (how it developed over time), and from his prolonged work with young, Catholic seminarians who saw themselves directly called by God into the ministry – but whose vocation could quickly evaporate if not sustained by a ritual and symbolic dimension in daily life.

[7] Obviously for Hinfelaar the spiritual world was real too, and not exclusively symbolic; such a position would be rather outlandish for a priest. Hinfelaar tried to link people's symbols to spiritual emotions – having in mind people well versed in the initiation rites and experienced in the dangers of defilements. Youth adherents may have given a different meaning to the new life offered by Lumpa than adult married women.

[8] Examples are the Morning star (*mulanga*), the New Moon, the light (*lubuto*), God building on the stone (*ilibwe*), the "crossing over" for those who are cleansed (*abasambwa*), the boatsman (*umulondo*), or the prohibition of turning back.

[9] The numbers of marriageable men and women start to diverge in a demographic pyramid when men tend to marry younger women. After divorce, chances for remarriage are much lower for women than for men.

[10] Biomedical concepts could reinforce traditional concepts (through overlapping symptoms) but also weaken them (the effectiveness of ARVs undermined the explanatory power of traditional models). Traditional healers used biomedical explanations to charge traditional notions with new meanings. In other circumstances, traditional and biomedical notions were clearly distinguished and coexisted side by side. See for example Wolf (2001).

[11] Forster (2004: chapter 1).

[12] Note that many people today translate "*chibinda wa ng'anda*" simply as "owner of the house" and give this title to the man, not the woman.

[13] Culture makes room for discussing marital and sexual issues in a special forum, but they should not be shared with outsiders. Here I only write about the points that are important for my argument and that have been part of academic discourse since the time of Audrey Richards.

[14] An old ritual (now largely defunct) for removing "hotness" is known in our area only for the time after a marriage has ended: a woman would be bathed in medicines (*phozo/ntembusha*) that "make cold" and thus enable the person to cook for her elderly relatives. A daily rite for removing hotness from a sexually active couple, as Richards and Hinfelaar alleged for the Bemba, is not known here. To prevent defilement, medicines are given to the elderly and vulnerable (the possible victims of defilement), not to the sexually active (the possible causes of defilement).

[15] See accounts about *mdulo* in Hodgson (1933: 129-131), Rangeley (1948: 34-44), Morris (1985), Van Breugel (2001), Phiri (2014), or Chondoka and Bota (2015: chapter 7).

[16] If the woman dies after childbirth "upon seeing her own blood", she herself (and not the husband) is guilty of adultery and has brought death upon herself.

[17] Also unmarried, promiscuous youth do not become "one blood" until a pregnancy is involved (though this point was heavily discussed).

[18] Unless he/she remarries within the same family. Today the cleansing is no longer performed through sexual intercourse as in the past, but simply by rubbing backs or shoulders with a sibling of the late spouse and a blessing with flour, performed on a mat.

[19] Note, however, that chisoni does not apply when a man legally marries as his second wife the sister of his first wife (for example in response to an offer by the family of the wife, not uncommon among the Senga and Tumbuka). Like the "mixing of blood", also chisoni knows legal marriages from illegitimate affairs.

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