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Résumé
J. R. Manyoni — L’anthropologie et l’étude des schismes en Afrique : réexamen de quelques théories. L’approche ethnologique classique des mouvements religieux schismatiques en milieu colonial n’explique pas leur survie ou résurgence après les indépendances, probablement du fait qu’elle se concentre sur leurs aspects les moins permanents. L’auteur estime qu’au-delà de la variété d’aspects superficiels retenue par les études traditionnelles, tous ces mouvements peuvent être ramenés à une tendance unique, définie par une recherche du « soi » d’où découlent un retrait de l’univers du réel et un repli dans un cosmos idéal. L’objectif final est moins de changer le système environnant que de s’en dissocier en créant et en maintenant un réseau de fortes relations inter-personnelles — l’activité terrestre n’étant considérée que dans une perspective d’outre-monde.

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The purpose of this paper is to re-examine some of the conventional anthropological approaches to the study of the emergence, development, manifestation and function of schismatic religious movements in situations where indigenous societies have come into sustained contact with Western culture. While schismatic movements are a world-wide phenomenon, a case can be made for focusing the discussion primarily on Africa. The colonial situation in Africa offers a composite setting for a viable comparative analysis of a wide range of religious types within a single continuous geographic region. Hence the studies reviewed here and my own case study are drawn from research endeavours among African societies.

For several decades, anthropologists, sociologists and missiologists have theorized about, studied, analysed and debated the causal factors responsible for the emergence of peculiar types of religious movements in diverse parts of the colonized world as is evident from the voluminous literature on the subject. The consensus of opinion appears to be that these movements are a consequence of the impact of Western culture on indigenous societies, and that this impact produces conditions of stress which lead to frustrations, resentment and rebellion on the part of the indigenous people against the alien power. This phenomenon is closely linked to conditions of dominance as summed up by Herskovits (1948: 53):

'It is essentially out of contacts involving dominance of one people over another that contra-acculturative movements arise—those movements wherein a people come to stress the values in aboriginal ways of life, and to move aggressively, either actually or in fantasy, toward the restoration of those ways, even in the face of obvious evidence of their impotence to throw off the power that restricts them.'

Conceptualized in this manner, schismatic movements appear as revolutionary movements of collective indigenous effort to cast off foreign domination and escape from subordination to the alien power. The focus on protest and revolt has led most analysts to lay undue emphasis on the saliency of dominance in contact situations which, they suggest, lead indigenous people to seek 'independency' by founding religious


movements of this type. This approach is inadequate for it overlooks the dual impact of the impinging culture which not only defines a power relationship of dominance and subordination, but also prescribes a cultural ethos that is both secular (Western) and religious (Christian), and absolutely incongruous with the native culture. It is the simultaneous convergence of these components in the colonial situation which suggests an explanation of why indigenous reaction to the alien culture almost always takes on a religious form rather than a purely secular one as would be consonant with the notion of protest and revolt implicit in conditions of dominance. Closer attention to the combined effects of the religious and secular impact of Western culture on traditional African societies may lead to some useful insights into why 'contra-acculturative movements' always involve the syncretism of both secular and religious elements of the impinging culture. Schismatic movements, including those categorized as 'revivalistic nativism' and 'perpetuative nativism' (Linton 1943), never in practice discard or renounce all the elements of the 'alien culture' by which they have been influenced and against which they are supposed to be in revolt.

The rubric 'schismatic movements' has been selected specifically to avoid the possibility of confusing descriptive terminology with an explanation of the phenomenon which is the subject of this paper. Unlike the conventional terms generally applied to typologies of religious movements, this term does not imply or connote a priori classification, let alone explanation, of any sub-type of this phenomenon. Under 'schismatic' I subsume all those religious movements variously described in anthropological and sociological literature as separatist, messianic, millenarian, nativistic, prophetic, syncretic, revivalistic, sectarian, charismatic, revitalistic, ecstatic, neo-Christian, post-Christian, cargo cults, etc.2 The movements occur in widely separated geographic and cultural regions; some by diffusion (e.g. South, Central and East Africa) while others are the result of spontaneous indigenous development (Melanesia and North America).

For the purposes of this paper, the discussion will be limited to the manifestation of schismatic movements that have developed in Southern Africa primarily because all the sub-types of this phenomenon (with the exception of cargo cults) proliferate in this region, and secondly because my field of research was among South African movements. There are also ethnographic considerations for this delimitation of the field: apart from the extensive body of data on the subject from work done in this region,3 there has been a widespread diffusion of similar religious ideas.

2. I am aware that the term 'schismatic' does not encompass the relatively small category of religious movements which did not originate as breakaway groups from mission churches. Nonetheless, they should be included since the founders were invariably secessionist from mission churches.

among African people across this region due to the labour migration syndrome prevalent in Southern Africa. The resultant movements have been analysed under various typological labels assumed to distinguish one type from another and different reasons attributed for their development, but for the purpose of the present discussion they are all subsumed under the same rubric as schismatic movements. In this paper, schismatic movement will refer to primarily any discrete organized body of religionists that has been formed either by secession from a parent church, or has come into existence by a process of fission from a similar movement with or without a specific intention towards independency. In a second sense, it will also include such religious movements as have been founded by a prophetic figure of charismatic personality even if the membership had not seceded as a group from a parent church.

Theories and Typologies

The voluminous literature on schismatic movements in Africa attributes the emergence of the various types of movements to multiple causal factors with varying degrees of consistency. The causal factors range from socio-cultural through politico-economic to psycho-religious. These causal factors (sometimes erroneously deemed explanatory) include foreign domination, land hunger, urbanization, industrialization, fissiparous tendencies 'inherent' in tribal structure, desire to revive traditional or pagan practices (ancestor worship, polygamy, witchcraft, magic, religious ecstasy); the African's inability to understand the Christian revelation or the meaning of grace, and anti-European sentiments. Such assumptions may be sociologically tenable insofar as they are offered as exploratory premises, but when advanced as explanatory theories associating the phenomenon of schism peculiarly with its African manifestations, they are open to question.

The traditional emphasis in such theories derives from the assumption that schism in Africa can be explained in genetic terms as the result of the impact of a higher technological culture on relatively simple tribal societies. If the fundamental reason for emergence and persistence of schismatic movements in Africa is sought in a universalistic framework (as I shall argue below) and not merely in the 'clash of cultures' as such, but also in the institution of Christianity as a component of Western culture in contact situations, then schism in Africa ceases to be an 'extraordinary phenomenon unprecedented in history' (Barrett 1968: 3). Similarly, the search for causes in the 'African mentality' is likely to be sterile unless schism is viewed within a wider context of behavioural reaction to particular sets of conditions where normal cultural processes have been disturbed by the imposition not only of a new culture, but more significantly a new belief system. The apparent difficulties experienced by the Christian missionary enterprise to achieve the desired effects on
African converts cannot be solely ascribed to some mystic quality supposedly inherent in African cultural systems which render Africans incapable of understanding the ‘true meaning of Christianity’. Rather, attention should be focused on the universal problem of the impact of extraneous ideas on the thought patterns and actions of a people and their social system, and also on the relations between the carriers of the new culture and its recipients. We need to examine the effects of imposed ideas where the two cultural systems are marked by a high degree of incompatibility. The adaptive capacities of a given society are restrained by its own socio-psychological parameters and by its own structural framework within which any exogenous ideology must fit. The phenomenon of religious movements in the colonized world demonstrates the extraordinary capacity of indigenous cultural systems to adopt new and exogenous ideas and refashion them according to their own socio-cultural and cosmological mould.

The problem of typological classification of African religious movements has been raised occasionally in recent times by some scholars who feel the need for a re-assessment of current approaches to the study of these movements (Turner 1968; Fernandez 1964; Van Baal 1969). However, some researchers continue to adhere to the relatively unrefined typological classifications that have become a traditional (if not convenient) method of studying African manifestations of religious schism. The consequence of this approach is that the resultant movements are often treated as if they were a unique phenomenon.

Lucy Mair (1959: 113) has pointed out with good justification that ‘There is no reason to suppose that the movements of this kind which appear among non-European peoples subject to European rule form a class by themselves...’ (my emphasis; J. R. M.) In Mair’s view it is inappropriate to draw a sharp distinction between millenary cults and ‘movements which attest religious autonomy without promising the immediate coming of the millennium, or between them and cults which limit their activities to healing and the detection of witches’ (ibid.). If we are to regard all these movements as essentially similar in their ultimate goals whatever dissimilarities exist in their activities, then some justification for treating them as such must be advanced. Mair directs our attention not to taxonomic labels, but to the ‘common elements of miracle, revelation and ritual’ characteristic of all these movements as a critical clue towards their understanding (ibid.). Other scholars have drawn attention to similar developments in the history of pristine Christianity as a poignant reminder that this problem is neither new nor unique to Africa.

In Africa the study of schismatic movements is further complicated by the apparent intrusion of subjective if not ethnocentric factors into the way in which some analysts view and treat these movements in the literature. Anthropologists, by and large, tend to view schismatic movements in Africa from a cultural perspective which assumes African
social structures and behaviour to be given premise for the explanation of the proclivity to sectarianism. I suggest that the structure of African societies is itself a datum, not an independent variable in schism; it is not, and cannot be a causal factor for schism. What apparently African structural features do, is to provide appropriate channels for response to the impact of exogenous forces on the society. As Ruth Benedict (1935: 81) has observed, 'Most human beings take the channel that is ready made in their culture. If they can take this channel, they are provided with adequate means of expression. If they cannot, they have all the problems of the aberrant everywhere.' This is far from suggesting that cultural disposition is a causal factor; it only suggests the possible manner of response. The difficulty with an approach that assumes African 'tribal' structure as both a causal and explanatory factor for the prevalence of schism is its failure to demonstrate empirically that there is a significant correlation between the proclivity to fission and tribal structure. Evidence ought to be adduced from the extensive ethnographic data as to whether, say, segmentary societies evince a greater tendency to schism than non-segmentary or centralized types. Anthropological literature on African social structures, and the vast literature on sectarianism in Africa, do not appear to lend credence to such an assumption. Barrett's schema (1968: 47, 59-61) which attempts to correlate proneness to schism with tribal structure more than reveals the difficulties of this approach.4

Theologians and missiologists for their part tend to adopt an ethnocentric Christian-Western view which appears not to recognize that African schismatic movements are part of a world-wide transcultural phenomenon. Rather, the view taken by missiologists is one that strongly implies that African schism is aberrant, regressive, anti-Christian, even anti-White, and that it derives from a fundamental misunderstanding of the Christian message (Sundkler 1961; Oosthuizen 1968; LaRoche 1968). Both Sundkler and Oosthuizen, excellent as their studies may be, appear to confuse form with content, and manifestation (of the movements) with culture, as evidenced by their choice of terms which imply an identification of this phenomenon with 'Africanism' (read 'nativism'). They draw too much close correspondence between certain features of African cultures and belief systems with the manifestations of the phenomena they describe as 'nativistic movements', 'tribal churches' and 'post-Christian' movements. While Sundkler (1961: 102) views the African independent churches as merely an extension of tribal organization, Oosthuizen (1968: 120) sees 'the misunderstanding of the Holy Spirit' among 'the nativistic movements' as due not 'only to the African's strong sense of the supernatural world, but also because of his essentially suprarational and suprahistorical disposition'. Once having adopted this view of the religious phenomenon under study, it is perhaps

4. By contrast see WELBOURN (1961: 168): 'One is tempted to ask whether division in the Church is not just one aspect of fissiparous tendencies common to human society as a whole... '(my emphasis).
least surprising that the authors refrain from describing the ‘ritual ceremonies’ of these movements in cognate terms to the ‘church service’ of Christian worship.

The consequence of this approach to the study of schism in Africa is the prevalence of value-judgements based on a distorted view of the nature and role of symbolism in the ritual of any religious service. Oosthuizen, quoting Tylor (1891, II: 201)\(^5\) on African ‘manes-worship’ (and without critical comment), misinterprets the symbolic reference of certain objects used in the services of some African sects. ‘We have seen’, he asserts, ‘how grave water, rings and special crosses and photographs [. . .] have magical power. In the same way baptism can be magical in character when the rite has a specific influence on account of the water used, which has been “prayed over” or “prayed for”’ (Oosthuizen 1968: 208).

This interpretation of symbolism in religious acts evokes problematic questions about the transculturation of symbols as religious representations and their employment in what Durkheim dichotomized as the sacred and the profane spheres of human behaviour. These questions cannot be taken up here, but suffice it to recall Durkheim’s unambiguous definition (1915: 37) of this duality as distinguished by ‘the virtues and powers which are attributed to those representations which express the nature of sacred things’ (my emphasis). These representations as Durkheim emphasized may be any object, word, gesture, etc., for ‘anything can be sacred’ so long as it is imbued with that quality. Durkheim was not of course advocating a Humpty Dumpty meaning of things; the attribution of sacredness to objects, etc., is dependent upon their being part of a system of religious rites, and it is this context that gives them their special quality. Empirical evidence from practices of other religious systems including Christianity testify to the arbitrary nature of symbolic manipulation for ritual purposes.

Apart from misinterpretation of ritual symbolism, the denominational names of the African religious movements are sometimes taken as diacritical indicators of their orientation. It is no less than ‘ethnocentric ecclesiology’ to suggest that the name a movement adopts ‘denotes the nativistic tendencies which necessarily enter an independent church when it is sufficiently distant from the influence of sound Bible teaching’ (Sundkler 1961: 45). By the same logic, are we to assume that a religious group merely by attaching to itself a ‘Christian’ name such as ‘Apostolic Church of God in Christ’ is thereby to be regarded as eschatological whatever its doctrine or ritual practices? Serious analysis of schismatic movements that would lead to a more profound understanding of their role and meaning in situations of social change can only be impeded

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5. Oosthuizen does not even mention that the concept animism (from which manes-worship is derived) was actually coined by Tylor in 1886 to support his own theory of ‘primitive religion’. The practices Tylor cites from Africa were second-hand information wrenched from various cultures by the scissors-and-paste method fashionable in his day.
by such terminal approaches. Sundkler’s conclusion (1961: 55) that ‘churches of this kind in the end become the bridge over which Africans are brought back to the old heathenism from whence they once came’, invites the suspicion that he allows his vocation to interfere with his critical judgement.

To suggest that the symbolism observed in the practices of schismatic movements in Africa is resurgence of heathenism is to overlook the patently obvious syncretism that is so characteristic of these movements. Both Christian elements and indigenous traditional beliefs provide the organizational and operational framework within which these movements express their religion. As a coalescence of different religious systems—the African and the Christian-Western—these movements are syncretic, and ‘to regard them as essentially a manifestation of counter-acculturation, an “offensive” return to traditional values, leads to a completely inadequate evaluation’ (Balandier 1970: 479). The context in which these movements occur is invariably one of socio-cultural change with the inevitable juxtaposition of elements from the impinging cultures. This framework is a sine qua non for an adequate analysis of the resultant schismatic movements precisely because the various elements cannot be sorted out from the intermixture, and there can be ‘no invoicing back to a previous culture as an element of reality’ (Malinowski 1945: 24). Rather, we should view the (contact) situation as one in which either the institutions of traditional life are put to new uses, or institutions of modernity are adopted to serve traditional needs, albeit with modifications. It seems to me that a sociologically more fruitful approach would be to regard (crisis) situations, rather than tribal structure, as the independent variable in the emergence, development, manifestation and orientation of the kinds of movements we are discussing in this paper. It is the similarity of situations (rather than differences or similarities in tribal structures) that appear to be the persistent and constant theme in all ethnographic areas where these movements have occurred.

These movements tend not only to be alternative forms of protest against intolerable socio-economic situations where other avenues do not exist, they are also adaptive ‘voluntary institutions’. Disadvantaged people resort to them because they promise to adherents some hope of escape from a debilitating social order they otherwise cannot control or alter. As Van Baal (1969: 75) correctly describes them, ‘Escapist movements arise among people who have given up the hope that in this world they will enjoy the good life [...] some of them give the faithful the opportunity to take refuge in a wholly imaginary world.’ The ‘world’ they create may be purely symbolic and ephemeral (such as weekly congregations of the faithful), or it may exist in fact such as an exclusive theocratic community physically demarcated from the environing society. Within the spiritual community they create for themselves, members can enjoy ‘the certainty of belonging to that all-important world of mysterious powers’ and thus psychologically and sometimes in
The motivation behind escapism depends on the religious group's image of their present ‘world’ and of their ideal ‘world’. Their idea of redemption is influenced by their particular perception of the present and the future; as Balandier (1970: 502-503) puts it, ‘the prophet-founder is seen as a guide, planning an escape from the present which is nevertheless accepted as a step towards the golden age.’ In so doing the ‘prophet’ may utilize the channel that is already available for the realization of this goal—hence the widespread syncretism among such movements.

It is analytically tenable to recognize the manifestation of some peculiarly local features in the development and process of schism in Africa, but to offer explanations predicated on ontological/teleological interpretations of an assumed African psycho-cultural system is to fly in the face of accumulated evidence from other parts of the world where similar phenomena have occurred. The ‘millenarism’ of the ‘cargo cults’ of recent years in Melanesia (Worsley 1957), and the ‘millenarianism [sic] that flourished among the rootless poor of Western Europe’ (Cohn 1957), have much in common with the schismatic movements that developed in Africa under colonialism. They were all products of social change. Cohn explicitly notes (for the European movements) that ‘the social situations in which outbreaks of revolutionary millenarianism occurred were in fact remarkably uniform . . .’ (ibid.: 53). Worsley (1957: 44) emphasizes a similar influence of prevailing conditions for the emergence of cargo cults and feels impelled to point out that ‘the form of these movements in Melanesia [. . .] can in no way be attributed to any inherent mysticism or religiosity of the Melanesians themselves’ (my emphasis). In Africa as elsewhere in the colonized world, a more realistic approach to the search for an adequate understanding of schism is one that takes full account of the manner in which Christianity was introduced to Africans, that is, as a package deal inseparable from education, ‘civilization’, materialism and other appurtenances of Western culture.

Everywhere in Africa, the missionary enterprise, as an agent of acculturation, was a ‘total situation’ in the sense that mission enclaves were proto-communities serving as models for civilized living in contrast to the ‘barbaric’, ‘heathen’ or ‘pagan’ indigenous lifeways. Education (literary and vocational) was both a means to ‘civilization’ and a reward for conversion to Christianity. Mission control of schools gave the churches almost exclusive powers to determine who received education and to what extent, hence acceptance of Christianity was a pre-condition for schooling privileges.6 Missionary enterprise in Africa, besides being

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6. John Taylor's brief comment (1958: 91) on the Church's view of its role in the education of Africans as gleaned from missionary records is indicative of prevailing attitudes in most of Africa: 'In 1900 Miss Tanner started a class in English for pupils approved by the Ngongwe Church Council, "As we do not want to be teaching disreputable people English".'
an active agent of socio-cultural change, was also a disintegrative factor among the indigenous communities to which it was introduced, for it brought with it new elements of differentiation and antagonism not only within the same community but also within same families. To be categorized as ‘school people’ implied more than an attribution of literacy; it was synonymous with being Christian, civilized and Westernized. The dichotomous division of a community into ‘Christians’ and pagans went further than a mere distinction between believers and non-believers; it meant a total commitment to one or the other of two incompatible value systems. The dichotomy implied both structural and normative orders, that is, spatial separation and exclusive commitment to a different ethical and value system quite incompatible with that prevailing in the other. Missionary conception of the all-or-nothing commitment on the part of the converts was evidently at odds with that held by the latter who probably did not interpret their conversion as an irrevocable step towards a total negation of indigenous culture. The incompatibility of these views inevitably led to schism.

Once the contact situation is perceived in this way, the role of schismatic movements can be interpreted as one of synthesis of these otherwise incompatible structural arrangements and value systems rather than as a bridge towards nativism. The uncompromising stance of Christianity in its repression of indigenous beliefs and practices, and the substitution of a Western-Christian ethos for the former, had much to do with the subsequent antagonism towards missionary enterprise. In many cases this antagonism remained latent until some powerful figure ventilated the collective resentment and thus generated a breakaway movement. Missionary culture in its colonial manifestation was thus inextricably intertwined with the emergence of schismatic movements, thus a search for causes in a presumed fissiparous tendency inherent in the structure of African societies is less than satisfactory (see Diagram 1).

There is increasing evidence that in retrospect missiologists have not always been unaware of their own shortcomings in their approach to the christianization of African societies. The role of the Christian missions which had traditionally been taken for granted is now being treated as an important datum in the study of schism in Africa. There is a growing awareness among analysts that these movements are not just ‘a massive reaction to the foreign missionary enterprise’ (Barrett 1968: 7); they are also due to ‘the failure of the early missionaries to be aware of [the close identification between religion and culture], and the inability of their successors […] to disentangle it […]’ (Welbourn 1961: 177-178). It is worthy of note that the aroused consciousness of contemporary missiologists in respect to some shortcomings of the Christian enterprise

7. In respect to syncretism, Balandier (1970: 421) draws our attention to the ‘functional use that was made of borrowings from Christianity’ which became models for the organization of these movements, but ‘for the satisfaction of specifically (indigenous) needs’.

14
in Africa has not always been accompanied by enlightened judgement, let alone understanding of their African converts. Only ethnocentric ecclesiology would lead a missionary of liberated self-consciousness to still write: ‘When the Africans manage to leave their egoistic paganism, rigid as it is and without regard for the stranger, and when they start to love one another, then we have the final proof: we have succeeded in “converting” them’ (Tempels 1949: 6). To describe African traditional beliefs as ‘egoistic paganism’ is far from an enlightened appreciation of African religion as a system in its own right.

**Typologies as Influential Factor in Research**

Closely associated with the study of schismatic movements in Africa is the proliferation of taxonomic labels which purport to typify the various kinds of movements. Attention is now drawn to the influence
such typologies (and the attendant terminology) exert on research and analysis of schism in the African context. Classification of phenomena, an essential ingredient in scientific research, ought not to be confused with analysis of phenomena by substituting typology for analysis. To cite a few examples: the terms nativistic, messianic, millenarian, charismatic, are no more than taxonomic labels but they have now assumed the status of axioms in the manner in which they are sometimes used in the literature on schism.

Some students of these movements have not uncritically accepted these typologies; they have recognized that ‘none of these efforts have been very successful’ and prefer to search for a more practical solution in ‘a typology based on the most prominent features and overt aims of these movements’ (Van Baal 1969: 69). Turner’s comprehensive and very persuasive argument on the problem of constructing viable typologies which would encompass all African religious movements is an instructive caveat against the utilization of convenient but imprecise typologies out of usage. Turner shows how a number of traditionally accepted terms for classifying religious movements are so inadequate as to reduce some to tautologies, for example, ‘African church movement’, ‘sect-church’, ‘syncretic-church’, ‘non-separatist church’, etc. Turner (1968: 11) rejects the a priori ‘theological or religious distinction between “churches” and “sects” in Africa’ on the ground that ‘whether the achievement or the actual religious life of the group that claims to be a church substantiates the claim can be decided only by detailed investigation’. We are then faced with a taxonomic problem when dealing with religious movements which ‘may have important marks of the church in their life’ (ibid.: II-12).

The cause for Turner’s censure, I think, can be traced back to Linton’s (1943) basic but influential typology suggested more than three decades ago. It is instructive to note Linton’s rationale (ibid.: 230) for the employment and retention of the term ‘nativistic’ to typify certain manifestations of religious movements: ‘Its definition [...] is one based upon common denominators of the meanings which have come to be attached to the term through usage’ (my emphasis). To plead as Linton does that usage justifies the retention of a taxonomic label is to perpetuate its unwarranted employment to differentiate phenomena that may otherwise belong to the same genre simply for the convenience of tradition. Contrariwise, different phenomena may be conveniently but improperly lumped together by being described by the same term. Writers who have accepted Linton’s dictum have tended to equate ‘nativism’ with what they term ‘tribal church/sect’ or ‘cult community’. Fernandez (1964: 535) has qualified Linton’s basic typology by suggesting

8. For example Sundkler 1961; Oosthuizen 1968; see also Barrett (1968 : 47, 51), particularly his difficulty in extricating himself from the analytically slippery position of taking ‘tribe’ as a causal variable for ‘independency’ (59-61). For a contrary position see Wishlade (1965: 27-31) and Daneel (1971: 459) who eschew the former approach.
that emphasis ought to be placed on Linton's own minor thesis that '... in all nativistic movements [. . .] current or remembered elements of culture are selected for emphasis and given symbolic value.' Given this qualification, Fernandez (ibid.: 537) then proposes a quadri-polar paradigm involving (i) an Instrumental-Expressive continuum bisected by (ii) a Traditional-Acculturated continuum along which various types of religious movements may be distributed. According to Fernandez (ibid.: 535), we would thus find, by way of this paradigm, 'a continuum or continuous series of gradual stages between movements which exploit primarily their own tradition, and movements which are largely committed by acculturation to symbols of the contact culture'. A careful scrutiny of ethnographic data would show that all religious movements so far studied in Africa (and elsewhere) can basically be reduced to this paradigm and ought not to be treated as rigid and closed categories.

Linton's typologies subsumed under 'nativism' (e.g. revivalistic-nativism, perpetuative-nativism) have misled Oosthuizen into uncritically accepting this theoretical view in his analysis of certain South African religious movements. His conclusion that 'the nativistic movements could hardly be called reformation movements' (Oosthuizen 1968: 73), goes counter to empirical facts. A careful perusal of the literature on schismatic movements of the type categorized 'nativistic' indicates that they are reformative in the sense that they are anti-status quo; their protest is against what they regard as a moribund present order—religious, political or social. To achieve their goals, they may even encourage removal of their members from the envirioning social order which they condemn. Wallace (1956: 265) uses the term 'revitalization' by which he attempts to provide a dynamic definition of the notion of reformation. 'Revitalization is thus from a cultural standpoint, a special kind of culture change phenomenon: the persons involved in the process of revitalization must perceive their culture [. . .] as a system [. . .]; they must feel that this system is unsatisfactory; and that they must innovate not merely discrete items but a new cultural system.' In practice however, because these movements cannot revitalize the total cultural system of which they are a part, they confine their reformatory efforts to that section of the 'world' they have created for themselves. Similarly Fernandez (1969a, 1969b) whose researches encompass the very movements termed 'nativistic' or 'prophetic', suggests a shift in focus from mere protest against the external order to 'the changes they bring about [. . .] in the individual and within the religious cosmos in which he and his fellows are expected to dwell ...'. Fernandez (1969b: 6) emphasizes that 'they do not aim at change in the larger economic, technological or political-judicial order' of the envirioning society.

The most outstanding feature of all these movements in whatever label they are presented is their syncretism—the simultaneous indigenization of elements of Christian religion with the Christianization of elements of indigenous beliefs and practices. If it is accepted, as empir-
ical evidence indicates it should, that even ‘nativistic’ movements of an extreme type are syncretic, it is untenable to adopt what amounts to an onion-peeling technique to discover what is new and what is old in the practices of these movements and to classify them on the basis of the aspects arbitrarily selected.9 For Oosthuizen (1968: 74-75), ‘the magical structure of the old is often being used in the nativistic movements to manipulate the supernatural forces in order to restore the golden era or to create it.’ One experiences some difficulty here in understanding what is meant by the concept ‘magical structure’ as the author does not define his usage of this concept. If by magic he means symbolic acts in reference to the ‘ideal world’ sought by means of ritual performances, then it is erroneous to attribute this behaviour only to ‘nativistic’ movements since much of the Christian service constitutes a symbolic act in reference to the world beyond. Oosthuizen’s discussion (ibid.: 76) leaves the impression that he regards all types of schismatic movements in Africa to be shrouded in magical practices. ‘Out of a magically oriented Christian sect could develop [...] a magically oriented nativistic movement, which again could become messianic.’

This assumed retrogressive sequence of schismatic movements appears too simplistic as a predictive model for schism since the generalization lacks the empirical basis that would lend it credence. Catch-all phrases such as ‘magically oriented Christian sect’ and ‘magically oriented nativistic movement’ do not shed light on the nature, organization, aims, practices and ultimate fate of a given movement or types of religious movements. Mair (1959) suggests a more sociologically plausible view of the comparative development of schismatic movements than the reversionary proposition advanced by Oosthuizen. Mair (ibid.: 128) proposes that: ‘The African churches represent a stage in development beyond that at which an immediate solution to the question what happens to millenary movements when they fail [...] to come to expectations.’

Studies of schismatic movements, if they are to shed new light and lead to new insights, need to go beyond conventional approaches which view schism in Africa as an exotic mystical phenomenon to be interpreted largely if not solely on the basis of African cultural manifestations. We need a more penetrating look focused on the internal processes of these movements; we need to view them from a much wider perspective than most current approaches appear to be doing. Observations of ritual process in these movements, their catechism, testimonies, confessions, sermons and practices reveal a striking consistency in their strong denunciation of witchcraft practices (or magical acts) even among the so-called nativistic types. They devote a great deal of their ritual activity to

9. Oosthuizen (1968: xii) prefers a less pungent metaphor for this process: ‘When the outer crust is scratched off from the immediate political and social issues put forward to justify the existence of these nativistic movements the undercurrent of the traditional religion and culture will be discovered as their main attraction. . .’ (my emphasis).
rooting out 'evil spirits' which are deemed to influence the suspect practitioners—hence confessions play a central role in the services of the movements. Their obsession with 'purification' and 'cleansing' ceremonies involves the destruction of witchcraft charms and related paraphernalia. Purity of body (symbolically expressed in ablution) and of spirit (symbolized by confession, prayer and triune immersion in 'living' water) is a state constantly to be induced, sought after and achieved through participation in sect activity. 'Holy Spirit' is the focal symbolic element in the cycle of activities for most of these movements, and together with biblical personalities, provide the appropriate model for 'righteousness'. They do not rely 'on the magic of moralism' as Oosthuizen (1968: 72-73) asserts, nor do they 'through their acts [. . .] consciously and unconsciously' try to influence the supernatural, which is the very basis of magic. To be sure, virtually all these religious movements do emphasize moralism in their doctrines as ideal Christian behaviour, but this has nothing to do with magic. Moralism is a state achieved by practical, rational means, that is, by leading a life that is consonant with a particular set of principles of behaviour, not mystical acts. I have been unable to find evidence in ethnographic accounts, and from my own field work, of any religious group which believes that moral behaviour in itself has any mystical property that is likely to influence the supernatural. On the contrary, the faithful are exhorted to observe religious precepts as propounded by the founder or leader. They recognize that moralism alone will not get them to the New Jerusalem, and (Zionists in particular) often cite the biblical story of the Pharisees who believed (wrongly, Zionists point out) that moralism alone could ensure their redemption.

Serious analyses of the internal dynamics of religious movements should not be vitiated by mistaking form for content through the use of ill-defined concepts which are erroneously imbued with the power of analytical precision. Welbourn (1968: 131-132) has rightly questioned the utilization of existing or 'rehatched' terminology simply for convenience: ' . . . I want to ask whether any terminology—indeed, any study—of independency is adequate which confines the phenomena to Africa', and he expresses dissatisfaction 'with a schematization which omits the early schisms in the Church, the millenarian movements [...] and the contemporary multiplication of sects in England and America—let alone the rest of the "undeveloped" world'. Welbourn is not alone in his unhappiness with the state of the subject. The situation is not alleviated nor improved by the continued use of particularistic terminology which links 'African nativistic religious movements' with regressive tendencies. It is open to question whether, as Oosthuizen (1968: 83, xiii) asserts, 'the Spirit becomes for them the source of vital force and numinous power, which the ancestors had and conveyed . . . .' (my emphasis). Such an assertion is obviously the result of an analytic posture that assumes atavism in respect of African religious movements, rather than
an attempt to establish relationships among different types of this phenomenon. One is led to suspect that the author may be confusing subjective judgment with analytical exposition, and thus regards these movements as aberrant. By way of contrast, it is illuminating to note the diametrically opposite conclusion of a contemporary analyst derived from a detailed study of schismatic movements of the Congo region. Balandier suggests that these movements cannot be regarded as an abnormal phenomenon, and demonstrates that placing ‘Ba-Kongo Messianism’ in a wider context helps to ‘show that neither geographically nor historically is it in any sense an isolated phenomenon . . .’ Balandier’s view (1970: 471-472) is ‘that situations of the same kind, even in societies with very different cultures, produce comparable reactions and lead to very similar use being made of cultural material imposed from without’.

**Schism Orientation: Nativism or Independence?**

The socio-cultural and political conditions under which the types of movements discussed in this paper arise have been shown to be the causal factor in the emergence of schism. It has also been indicated that there appears to be far more consensus on this point among analysts than there is on the direction of goals of the movements, in short, their orientation once they come into being. One trend of thought stresses ‘nativism’ with connotations of atavism and regression; another emphasizes ‘independency’ with implications of freedom from foreign missionary dominance and secular control. Yet another focuses on the movements’ own dynamics—their internal relations and processes—for new insights and broader understanding of schism. I shall take the liberty of calling the third category the ‘micro-cosmogony approach’.

James W. Fernandez, perhaps the most consistent protagonist of the ‘micro-cosmogony’ trend of thought, speaks for most of those who share this view when he writes of ‘African religious movements’ as ‘phenomena of such dynamic variety as to provide experience on almost any problem of society and culture to those whose interest in human behaviour is not sectarian but universal’ (1969a: 28-29; my emphasis). I have already pointed out how ‘sectarian’ approaches to the study of schismatic movements in Africa have tended to distort perception and impede understanding of their orientation. To illustrate the ‘micro-cosmos’ approach I borrow liberally from Fernandez (1969b) where his seminal ideas appear in crystallized form. Fernandez suggests (following Wallace 1956) that the several phases of adaptation, vision, communication, organization, transformation and routinization through which these movements pass, should be broken down into ‘phases that have to do primarily with the movement’s relation to the external world’, and ‘phases that have to do primarily with operations [. . .] of the religious system itself’, that is,
the manner in which the movement fulfills itself internally' (Fernandez 1969b: 4-5).

Fernandez then takes up the notion of protest and shows how the same term connotes different meanings when the focus is on external dimensions (protest against the larger situation), and on internal dimensions (protest, i.e. self-affirmation). Adopting this two dimensional view of the movements leads to a better understanding of their meaning for their members. This is where the notion of microcosmogony enters the analytical process: the members 'are interested primarily in microcosmogony—constructing a universe of their own in which to dwell—and not in changing the universe to which they are reacting' (ibid.: 5). Balandier (1970: 503), in a similar line of thought, sees the voluntary withdrawal (symbolically or factually) of these movements as 'an attempt to create a new society: a theocracy based upon a politico-religious hierarchy and a sacral organization of the land...'. It is this endocentric dimension of schismatic movements that is so pitifully neglected in other studies due to, one suspects, the traditional view that these movements are essentially protest movements—hence the stress on nativistic tendencies and independency.

A number of recent studies in East and Central Africa more than make it clear that schism is not a prelude to 'nativism' or complete 'independency' even where strong political overtones were present at the initial break from the parent church body. A strong sense of independency is often mixed with positive efforts to maintain a working relationship with the mission churches. Although these efforts were often rebuffed, evidence is lacking that the breakaway movements necessarily took on a 'nativistic' orientation. The indigenously-oriented Jamaa movement of Katanga recently studied by Fabian (1971) shows uncharacteristically stronger Christian leanings than its orientation would lead one to expect. Its culture hero is a White Catholic priest—Placide Tempels! Similarly the Kitawa movement in Malawi (off-shoot of Jehovah's Witnesses), although later identified with John Chilembwe's 1915 uprising, its orientation is still very much in the tradition of the White-led Watch Tower organization. Kitawa shares the manifestly strong anti-establishment attitudes of the White-led organization, yet the former has been misinterpreted by some analysts as anti-White (Fabian 1971: 193).

The influence of opposition exerted on a movement by the 'establishment' (both Church and State) which led to persecution, incarceration, banishment and sometimes death of the leaders cannot be treated as a residuum in any adequate consideration of a movement's orientation. A review of the careers of most of the so-called nativistic movements and their leaders in Central and Southern Africa indicates that the crucial stage in the movement's 'nativistic' orientation corresponds to the degree of 'establishment' pressure exerted on it. Anti-White feeling is not essentially an integral component of schismatic movements. Some of the most radical 'nativistic' movements in the former French and Belgian...
Congos—those of André Matswa, Simon Kimbangu, Simon Mpadi—were primarily concerned with their members' welfare until the authorities—Church and State—began to persecute them and thus sparked off anti-'establishment' feelings. There exists a sufficiently large body of empirical evidence that attests to the view that schismatic religious movements which developed under colonial conditions were not essentially anti-White or even anti-mission churches at all until driven to a position of antagonism by local events. Van Baal (1969: 74), citing documentary evidence from many government and court records relating to Melanesian movements, clearly demonstrates that while 'anti-white feelings were evident [...] nevertheless the leaders repeatedly applied to government for moral support'. He further points out that even 'where they are anti-government they rarely fail to look to other white people for support'. From his review of contemporary ethnographic data, Van Baal unambiguously concludes that 'many movements were not anti-white at all in the initial stage; they became anti-white when support they had hoped the white people would give them was withheld' (ibid.). Numerous cases could be cited supporting the view that the secessionist leaders of religious movements genuinely sought the cooperation and support of the missionaries and other Whites in their efforts to establish their own churches (see e.g. Barber 1941; Welbourn 1961; Fabian 1971).

The view presented in this paper argues primarily against the conventional approach which tends to associate schismatic movements essentially with protest against colonialism, alien culture, Christianity, White domination, and socio-economic conditions. These movements have been shown to occur under conditions created by a combination of some or all of these factors, but we need to look further than the fact of origin. 'It is not enough', as Balandier (1970: 502) rightly points out, '... merely to show that the phenomenon of Messianism is due to the combination of conditions just referred to; it has to be seen as a global and ambiguous response to an ambiguous situation globally perceived'. The persistence, in contemporary Africa, of the very types of religious movements which derive their origin from the colonial situation attests to the shortcomings of the conventional approach discussed above. Careful examination of ethnographic evidence from different regions suggests that these movements are not essentially belligerent towards Whites, Christian churches, or other organizations, and to view them as essentially rebellious movements does not provide a sociologically adequate explanation of their internal dynamics and ultimate aims.

My view inclines towards agreement with Peter Worsley's instructive observation (1957: xxix) that: 'The relationship of religious beliefs, let alone movements and organizations, to the established power-systems [...] varies, and is not a matter for metaphysical pronouncement disguised.

10. Note, for example, Balandier's comment (1970: 421) on the Kimbangu movement in the Congo: '... the fact of the matter is that it was the organized repression of the Belgian authorities that really put the new church on its feet.'
as sociological generalization.' The Rev. F. B. Welbourn (1968: 133) echoes much the same warning when he says that 'we must have a formula which does not suggest that independency as such is a product of colonialism'. The case of the Lumpa Church in Zambia and of the Religion of Jehova and Michael in Tanzania in recent years comes to mind to prove the point since both are manifestations of post-colonial situations in two different areas of Africa. Colonialism, insofar as it involves a situation of dominance and subjection, can at best be regarded as a catalyst for the emergence of schismatic movements. The causal factors are multifarious and are not reducible to any single source. This leads to the second point of my argument—whether 'tribalism' and 'nativism' are adequate explanatory factors for African schism.

Argument has already been advanced against the view that regards tribalism as an efficient cause if not necessary condition for the prevalence of schismatic tendencies among African religious movements. The unreliability of this approach to schism has been pointed out. Related to the tribalism argument is the notion that 'nativistic tendencies' inhere in African movements due to their tribal origin. The 'picturesque' appellations by which 'Ethiopian Churches' and 'Zionist sects' identify themselves are taken as a signal clue to the orientation of the movements. The rejection of certain Western-Christian practices or the adoption of some traditional practices in their services is interpreted as further evidence of regression and nativism.11 Sundkler (1961) and Oosthuizen (1967, 1968) have portrayed the Shembe or Nazareth movement as a prototype for nativism by linking it to the concept 'tribe'. An appellation implying ethnic affiliation is not an explanation of a movement's orientation. Some observers have perceptively noted, once a religious movement has emerged, 'the character of the whole movement changes from tribal to universal; tribal differentia recede in importance; membership is extended to other tribes [and] the appeal becomes universal' (Turner 1969: 47). Contrary to the interpretation of syncretism as implying nativism, a careful analysis of case studies would reveal that for a great many African movements the rejection of selected Western values or some Christian precepts and practices may not necessarily imply a corresponding commitment to a return to the traditional indigenous lifeways.12

To illustrate the point being made here, attention is drawn to a recent analysis of some religious movements among the Kikuyu in East Africa

11. Note the contrary observation by Balandier (1970: 434) on Congolese 'nativistic' movements: 'the church they created . . . was more concerned with progress than with a return to traditional values and attitudes' (my emphasis).

12. Balandier (1970: 501) has shown how the Ba-Kongo, as a result of acculturation 'found themselves pulled in two opposite directions, return to an idealized past on the one hand and, to the other, total access to a modern civilization that could provide them with material prosperity they longed for; they were therefore confronted by a twofold impossibility'. The solution was a synthesis of possibilities from the two cultures in the form of a Messianic movement.
which demonstrates many of the weaknesses of the conventional approaches to the study of these movements. Murray (1973: 199) writes that these movements

'... must indeed be viewed in their social and political setting, products of a certain period of history, and they must also be looked at in the light of traditional [...] history and religious modes. To call them "syncretic" or to search for religious survivals is less than sufficient; we shall see that their leaders strongly repudiated traditional beliefs and customs, consciously striving for a new code of conduct; but they inevitably used the old concepts in order to grasp the new, and the doctrines they have developed should be understood not as syncretism but as the outcome of a dialectical relationship between Biblical and traditional Kikuyu religious ideas.'

One does not necessarily have to agree with all that is implied in Murray’s position expressed in the foregoing passage in order to recognize the fruitfulness of the direction to which her arguments leads.

At this point I am constrained to make my own position clear in view of the criticisms that have been expressed earlier on. While the taxonomic value of typologies of religious movements is readily acknowledged, their heuristic value is seriously questioned for the reasons already stated. Rather, the situational approach (i.e. the context in which particular movements develop and their dynamics) is suggested as the most sociologically fruitful heuristic method for the analysis of these movements. When stripped of their typological labels, and when their

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Diagram 21: Flow chart showing ultimate orientation of all types of schismatic religious movements, and their various 'expressive means' reduced to ultimate ends.
internal dynamics are examined it will be discovered that all schismatic movements have basically similar ultimate ends—the transformation of the uncongenial present social order into a utopian (theocratic) order in which the redeemed will enjoy a peaceful and untrammelled existence. It is in their methods for achieving this Utopia that the movements differ. The gist of the preceding argument is graphically embodied in Diagram 2 herein. As the diagram indicates, all types of religious movements function as a mediating point between two incompatible ‘worlds’ (Columns 2A and B, 1B, 3B), and their activities of disorientation (Column 1A) are largely concerned with the expression (Column 2C) of dissociation (Column 1C) from the unredeemed world towards association (Column 3C) with the redeemed world which is their ultimate orientation (Column 3A).

Taxonomic labels aside, a cursory reading of the following paradigm at once indicates that the salient feature of these movements is their instrumentality as a bridge between the polarized worlds—one from which to escape and the other to strive for. The movements vary only in their expressive means, that is, the routes toward salvation or Utopia—hence they could well be termed redemptive since most of their energies are essentially directed toward the physical and, ultimately, spiritual redemption of the faithful.

**Ethnographic Case Study**

My research was carried out among two types of religious movements—Zionist sects and an ancestral cult. In structure, organization and ritual process these two types differ considerably—the Zionists consist of small discrete groups, have no church buildings or permanent places of worship, are urban based, fissiparous, given to ‘spirit possession’, baptism by triune immersion, and lean towards biblical moralism. The other type which defines itself as an ancestral cult (e.Makhehleni—place of Old Men, ancestors) is a large community organization, rural-based, in a village setting, has a ‘church’ building, is close-knit, stresses animal (blood) sacrifice and leans heavily towards observation of traditional indigenous rules of morality. Yet there is a point of convergence between the two types of movements. Both are endocentric and pay very little attention to the external socio-political system of which they are a part. Both are syncretic and differ only in degree. In the Makhehleni cult biblical personalities are recognized side by side with culture heroes and the prophet-founder of the movement. Catholic saints are given place beside ancestral spirits. Both types of movements pursue a peaceful doctrine toward the environing power structure, and the Zionists in particular seek accommodation with it through official recognition. The Makhehleni cult does not reject materialism (a symbol of Western culture) or financial wealth. Both movements are simultaneously therapeutic and redemptive, in short, they are curative organizations for both body
and soul. Dreams play a great part in the diagnosis of both physical and spiritual disorders in the ritual processes of these movements.13

The Zionists are primarily a Pentecostal sect; the ‘spirit’ plays a central role in their beliefs and rituals. Collectively they call themselves ‘spirit churches’ and individually the sects are identified by the names of their prophet-founders. The belief in ‘spirit’ or Holy Ghost is acted out physically and symbolically during service. It is closely associated with healing and the phenomenon of ‘possession’ or trance. Healing is effected by the laying of hands and uttering of incantations. The spirit is acted out by excessive howling, dancing, clapping of hands, drumming and by high-speed circular movements. The whirling movement around a circle is said to emulate the cyclonic force of spirit which at a certain point enters the members (‘possession’). Spirit-possession is evidenced by the incumbent being visibly shaken, jerking, speaking in tongues and whirling uncontrollably until lying prostrate on the ground. Confession (called purification or cleansing of the soul) constitutes a major part of the Zionist service and is a prelude to spirit-possession. Dreams and testimonies complement the members’ full integration into the life of the sect.

The rituals of the Zionist sects are both symbolic and syncretic embracing Christian elements and indigenous practices. Syncretic symbolism is expressed in both material and behavioural forms, e.g. multi-coloured uniforms, banners, lithewood croziers and crosses, sashes, girdle ropes and drums. Behavioural symbolism takes the form of hymn singing accompanied by dancing, clapping, induced bodily spasms, and laying of hands on initiates and the indisposed. All ritual acts in the Zionist service revolve round the idea of spirit; faith without spirit-possession is useless. Spirit-possession must be evident to other members and hence its manifestation is so standardized as to be comprehensible to any member. For the prophet-founder, spirit is his charter of office, and for the members it symbolizes their apartness from the unredeemed. Spirit is to be constantly cleansed or purified through confession and by triune immersion in ‘living water’, that is, river, pool or sea. The most outstanding feature of Zionist sects is their complete introversion and endocentrism. The sect exists for the members and provides a redemptive sanctuary for mind, body and spirit; and sect activity has little concern with the external system of the environing society. Zionist homilies are primarily concerned with the sect members’ well being and their relations with the movement’s ultimate purpose—the incapsulation of the members from ‘this-worldly’ behaviour. Zionists are chiliastic and preach a messianic doctrine that suggests that their present community structures are prototypes for the ultimate society of the redeemed.

The physical setting of the Zionist religious service is an integral

13. In this paper only the Zionist sects will be considered. The Makhehleni will not be discussed as this group is a subject of another paper.
part of their belief system, particularly with regard to their claim of being the upholders of the apostolic tradition or the prophetic tradition. Zionist services are, as a rule, held in the open air—in public parks, vacant public lots, alongside a highway, or wherever they decide to meet. As many as a dozen groups may hold services within a few yards of each other, but each group uses the same spot it has staked for itself for every meeting. These territorial claims are scrupulously respected by all groups. Individual meeting spots are denoted by the group's banner implanted nearby for the duration of the service.

The physical setting is often utilized in the sermons as a symbolic referent for some theme the pastor wishes to emphasize. The pastors of several Zionist groups have been observed to make impromptu but effective referential utilization of the physical setting, though in oblique manner as the following cases illustrate. Pastor Petros Mngadi of the Apostolic Church in Zion whose group worshipped at a spot adjacent to a military hangar was delivering a sermon on Christian vigilance while observing the armed sentinels guarding the hangar, 'I see some of you are ashamed to carry your croziers. The crozier offers protection to a Christian should anything untoward befalls a Christian.' At this point an armed sentinel appeared at the hangar fence and the pastor continued without paying attention to the soldier: 'You should be like soldiers and take up your arms.' Everyone turned to look at the sentinel and the point was made. The members at once intoned a song 'Take up your Arms' (*Hlonani izikhali*) while the pastor began a circle run with a bundle of croziers and each member joining to take their own.

Another group, the Damaseku Christian Zion Church, worshipped beside a fly-over bridge and this physical structure became a thematic symbol for the pastor's sermons. 'Beloved, you cannot reach that [promised] land unless you cross by the bridge. When you come to the River Jordan, who shall be there to lead you across?' Yet at no point in the sermon was the physical structure directly referred to. The congregants responded with a song 'Zion is my Hope' (*iZion lithemba lami*). The skilful use of imagery that can immediately be grasped by the speaker's audience helps to graphically project the thematic concerns the preacher wishes to convey through his sermon.

Egocentric subjective oratory among Zionist leaders is a well developed mechanism for the constant projection of the pastor's personal role as the nexus of the religious group under his charge. For the membership as a whole, their sect is inseparable from the personality of the leader-founder with whose name (rather than the proclaimed one) the sect is often identified, and thus his 'individual powers furnish the principal drive toward any outer organization the [sect] under his charge may achieve' (Herskovits 1958: 542). This image of the Zionist leader as mediator between the sect members and the Divine is given confirmation

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14. Zionists refer to croziers as 'arms' or 'weapons' (*izikhali*).
by subtle and often ambiguous use of biblical quotations which tend to link him with such role. The following text from a Zionist sermon (Golden Zion Church of God in Christ), although containing no biblical quotations, nevertheless transmits the same message:

‘If I may suddenly die you people will be stranded because you have made no effort to assimilate the Holy Spirit from me while I am alive. You should strive to assimilate the Holy Spirit from me while I am still here. God’s spirit resides in me and gets transmitted through my hands like electric current so that when I lay my hands on anyone this power is transmitted to the recipient. I am teaching you these things so that when I die you will know how to do them.’

Consciously or unconsciously, Zionist pastors have developed effective ways of drawing attention to their role as spiritual leaders and mediators. The pastor of the Bantu Tabernacle Apostolic Church of South Africa, a rather pious man not given to excessive histrionics, was delivering a sermon on the importance of faith when he suddenly directed attention to himself: ‘I love Zion. It is my desire that I be the light to show you the way to heaven. This [pastoral] staff cannot stand here if I have not the truth. We must walk according to the truth’ (and here he actually walks towards the staff and banner implanted in the circle), ‘we must not wander aimlessly’. The symbolic message was not lost on the audience that *he* is their guide, the light, to show the way towards redemption.

Typically, a Zionist place of worship is a circular spot marked out in the ground around which members stand, sit, and perform their ritual run. The inner spot formed by the circular path where the members run is the ‘pulpit’ of the pastor and the arena\textsuperscript{15} for all important rituals. Neophytes are admitted into the sect by being invited to kneel on this inner spot to receive their new robes and to be prayed for. It is also the arena for confessions and spiritual healing by the laying of hands on their shoulders by the pastor. At the beginning of each service, the arena is ‘purified’ by the pastor sprinkling ‘holy water’ over it from a bottle containing sea water or previously sanctified water. Zionists explain that this rite is to drive away evil spirits which may have contaminated the arena.\textsuperscript{16} After the purification rite members hand in the croziers which are placed on the centre spot and the service begins with a song ‘Take up your Weapons’ amid fervent drumming and running around.

The religious sect as an organization provides a sanctuary for the faithful; it gives them a sense of belonging and a feeling of amelioration of their deprivation. It is in this context that the role of the founder-leader (not always a prophetic figure) in a Zionist movement assumes considerable significance for the members. He becomes ‘the way and

\textsuperscript{15} The Zionists call this spot *inkundla*, lit. ‘arena’.

\textsuperscript{16} It may be noted that Roman Catholics when compelled to share a multi-purpose hall for worship also perform a similar rite prior to their service.
the gate’ to the ‘new Jerusalem’. Zionist leaders are particularly adept at cultivating this image among their followers. They occasionally intersperse their sermons or homilies with references to themselves as the embodiment of their congregation: ‘I go to prepare a place for you’; ‘I am the light’; ‘I am the key’ are phrases often deliberately used ambiguously. They imply serious thematic concerns for the movement as a whole due to the constant threat of fission among Zionists. These verbal images are sometimes buttressed by some palpable and visible symbol of the status claimed. Some of the material symbols manipulated include a bunch of keys, a gold sash, a brass rod or shepherd’s crook and knotted ropes. Validation of leadership claims is often a crucial problem among Zionist pastors in their competition for followers and for prestige as ritual manipulations. The psychological battles for the control of the membership’s allegiance are fought with great ingenuity. A leader of a group that was threatened with depletion of membership as a result of the defection of a ritually adept assistant, devised a strategy for preventing further ‘poaching’ of his members. During sermons, touching a bunch of keys at his girdle, he would claim that, like Peter, he had the authority to lock out any one challenging his authority. The message was not lost to the members. Another pastor was in the habit of carrying a knotted rope during service and would weave the theme of his sermon around biblical phrases such as ‘What you bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven’, or some reference to ‘Gabriel binding Satan and his hosts’.

A study of Zionist sermons, songs, and homilies clearly indicates that their orientation is futuristic and essentially religious. In the present life the sects are concerned primarily with the welfare of their members who are in most cases dislocated, illiterate migrant labourers in a culturally alien urban environment. As with many similar movements in Africa, the therapeutic role of the Zionist sects fulfils an essential physical need for a people caught between two cultural modes. Their rejection of Western medicine is often erroneously interpreted as a rejection of European values and culture (hence a sign of nativism). Yet the fact that they also equally eschew indigenous medication is often overlooked. Their practice of substituting ‘sanctified water’ or sea water for normal medication against certain kinds of ailments is again interpreted as a sign of a magically oriented mind. It may be pointed out that Zionists did not invent the idea of holy water, ashes or incense, nor the belief in the efficacy of prayer and the prophylactic and therapeutic laying of hands on the sick. Zionists like any transitional people, are trapped in a cultural vortex that creates for them what Balandier aptly terms an ‘ambiguous situation’ that can only be resolved by a compromise. While Zionists eschew European and indigenous medicines and opt for their own version of medication for manageable infirmities, they nonetheless resort to hospitalization in cases of serious sickness. Groups of Zionists have been observed visiting their hospitalized members to offer prayers and lay hands on the patients to supplement medications.
Throughout this paper I have stressed the need to focus on the internal dynamics of the religious movements with which we are concerned if we are to provide a more plausible explanation of their orientation than is generally the case at present. It is suggested that a careful study of the sermons, prayers, songs, exhortations, verbal responses to questions, and the behaviour of participants will reveal that the orientation of these movements may have little to do with many of the explanatory theories traditionally advanced about schismatic movements in Africa. To begin with, Zionism is not a revolutionary or even a protest movement directed against the political order of the environing system, harsh as it undoubtedly is. Nor is it concerned with nationalism or independence in the secular sense. Among the sects I studied, Zionists were acutely sensitive about maintaining peaceful stable relations with the authorities as evidenced by the keen desire expressed by their respective leaders to be ‘in the right book’, that is, registered and recognized as ‘churches’. Their apparent lack of concern with challenging the political realities of their social surroundings is one of the most striking features of the orientation of these sects. The ‘evil world’ they denounce tends to be unspecified and undifferentiated as regards to whether it is the alien or indigenous; the dichotomy they recognize is one between the redeemed (themselves) and the unsaved (the non-Zionists). They are primarily pro-self rather than anti-any particular segment of the environing society. Zionists have adopted a realistic attitude towards the dominant social order; they prudently recognize the inevitability and benefits of cooperation with it, at least for their material and physical needs. The renunciation of ‘things of this world’ in their sermons and homilies is not a total rejection of worldly goods but a religious posture that emphasizes the transient nature of the present life and enhances the value of the hoped-for ‘new world’ which is symbolized, in their constant reference in song, sermon and prayer, by the ‘new Jerusalem’, the city of peace, the city of joy, etc.

Secondly, to attribute anti-White motives to Zionism would be a gross distortion of the real nature of the movement. The absence of a ‘racial/ethnic’ ideology that relates to their real surroundings is a significant factor. The leadership is largely apolitical, semi-literate, transient and parochial. None of the leaders of the Zionist sects investigated for this study had any knowledge of the historical development of Zionism and its relationship with mission churches except for the most recent fissions of contemporary groups. Significantly, most contemporary fissions have been taking place not from denominational White-controlled churches but from among the Zionist movement itself. A great many Zionists genuinely believe that their religious organizations did not originate from any mission church, and that Zionism is a creation of their own efforts and therefore truly indigenous.

Some revealing clues to the Zionists’ conception of their movement is deduced from the spontaneous responses of the membership to the rhetorical question often put to them by their pastors during service: ‘What
does Zionism mean to me? The members respond either by song or some standardized refrain: ‘Zion is my saviour, // Zion is my strength, // Zion heals my ills, // Zion cleanses my soul, // Zion soothes my wounds.’ Implicit in these responses are both the redemptive and therapeutic components of Zionist orientation. The ‘ills’ and ‘wounds’ referred to are actual as well as symbolic for they relate both to physical and spiritual suffering which Zionists experience daily as members of a deprived minority in their contact with the reality of their environing ‘world’. Consequently, the leaders promise their followers a futuristic peaceful life that is often contrasted with the harsh reality of the present which they attribute to its sinful nature (not, it should be noted, to any particular group).

Zionist services are sometimes portrayed in ethnographies as being devoid of structure or ordered sequence of activities, and the pastors as incapable of drawing clear distinctions between sermon and testimony. Observation of various Zionist groups, and analysis of their ceremonies as recorded during field work do not confirm this image. Probably due to the very unusual nature of Zionist services, some analysts may have confused informality with lack of structure and orderly sequence. Carefully considered, a Zionist service is not without latent or ‘submerged’ structure and a manifest sequence of activities. What it lacks is the formality of a conventional church service. There are clearly defined roles and actors, and the sequence of various events is not as haphazard as may appear from casual observation. From initiation to termination a series of activities takes place within a more or less perceptible ceremonial structure. Variations occur from group to group but within a discernible general framework.

Typically, the service begins with a song, prayer and confessions, and this corresponds to a purificatory stage. Readings from the Bible followed by a sermon, often thematically related to the scriptural text, lead to ‘faith healing’ (laying of hands), spirit possession, and glossolalia; and these activities correspond to a consecration stage. These activities are interspersed with much singing, clapping, drumming and dancing. The homiletic and final stage consists in exhortations, testimonies, supplications, donations, with more singing and prayer. Songs generally give some clues to what is going on at certain points in the service, and may be intoned at any point of the proceedings. The Zionists’ own conception of what constitutes a ‘church service’ provides a further clue to the underlying meaning of its conduct and the behaviour of the participants. By their own admission, Zionists do not regard service as setting for solemn religious devotion as generally conceived in orthodox denominations. For the Zionists, it is an arena for unbridled emotional expression of their faith and full participation in a common socio-religious performance, a total situation totally expressed. This Zionist conception of the religious event is summed up in their popular portrayal of the service as a place ‘to release the soul to find its own way’.
Some Zionist pastors are aware that even their own members may tend to confuse the nature of the ceremonial activities. Following are two illustrative cases, one a text recorded directly from a service and the other from an interview. In the first, the pastor of the Golden Zion Church of God in Christ was addressing his congregation during a sacramental service: ‘The text we are going to read is not the basis of our sermon tonight, it is to elucidate the power of the spirit and how it works.’ When it was time for the sermon, the pastor was specific about the text he had read: ‘The service is not made wholesome simply by your good deeds. It is made wholesome by the sermon. The sermon is a very important part of the service.’

In response to an interview about the conduct of the Zionist ‘church’ service, the pastor of the Bantu Tabernacle Zion Apostolic Church of South Africa had no difficulty in distinguishing between sermon and testimony, the latter he described as a means of ‘letting out emotions and purifying the spirit. It is the opportunity for self-expression by every member of the church’. While in practice, Zionists tend to mix preaching with testimony due to their lack of formal preparation for the sermon, this cannot be taken as an indication of a failure to recognize the difference between the two modes. The premature retreat from sermon to testimony, self-adulation and glossolalia are in conformity with their own conception of the religious service as an arena for free self expression.

Zionists beliefs and religious behaviour are most clearly manifested in ritual symbolism of their service which gives point and meaning for the adherents to the faith. Symbols are continually invented or adapted to meet changing situations, and old methods of dealing with traditional physical and spiritual problems undergo necessary changes or are replaced by more relevant means. The transformation of symbolism is particularly acute under urban conditions due to the influence of the environing culture. Acculturated symbolism prevades all their activites, from their use of material apparatus—lithewood croziers, girdle ropes, sashes, multi-coloured robes, down to their ritual behaviour—dancing, confessions, speaking in tongues, laying of hands, triune immersion, abstention and wandering ministration. All these symbolic manifestations constitute the essence of Zionist beliefs.

A salient feature of schismatic movements is the high probability of further schism within the secessionist groups. Constant fission (among Zionist sects in particular) results in the prevalence of fragmentary, analogous religious groups, and this leads to innovative efforts designed to emphasize distinctiveness by expressive means—ritualistic or ideological. As stated earlier in this section, these apparently diverse manifestations of what is essentially a similar phenomenon have led to the supposition that the differences in typology imply differences in objectives. It is the thesis of this paper that the fundamental objectives of all schismatic movements whatever the typological labels attributed to them are in the final analysis reducible to a common orientation in terms of ulti-
mate ends. When viewed from the conventional approach these movements appear to evince varying degrees of sectarian independency and different orientations with suggestions of ‘nativism’ as their common feature. However, when the investigation is focused on their internal dynamics as inferred from their activities, pronouncements, and behaviour, we find that their preoccupation, and ultimately their orientation are largely concerned with self-affirmation within their own symbolically created universe which is expressed in temporary withdrawal from ‘this worldly’ behaviour. The fulfilment of their well being within the organizational structures they have constructed constitutes their ideal cosmos. The social order outside this cosmos is already ‘condemned’ to destruction—hence it is of minor concern to the membership. A recurrent theme in the ceremonies of these movements is that of dissociation from the values of the world.

Their orientation is ‘other-worldly’ and the focus is on the internal relationships among their own respective members within their own organizations rather than on attempts to change the environing system. Putting their own house in order, as it were, is the pervasive theme in the activities of the movements. Their principal concern is the maintenance of their exclusiveness from the unsaved, and the members are always distinguishable from outsiders by their expressive symbolic dissociation. Their ‘goals are in large part super-terrestrial’ and they see ‘their earthly activity as an interim operation’ towards the realization of their goals (Wilson 1967: 9).

The maintenance of apartness, the self-isolation from the secular value system, the intense introspection of the movements, their persistence long after the purported causal conditions have changed, suggest the necessity for a shift in focus toward a more intense examination of the internal ‘system’ of the movements as a realistic way of understanding both contemporary and probable future schisms. Incredible as it may sound, studies of schismatic movements have traditionally concentrated on the ‘then-and-now’ status of a given movement, in point of time, and paid less attention to the futuristic orientation of all the movements including those termed ‘nativistic’. The point I am making is that the present (i.e. the now) is of far less importance to these movements than the past or future (the past is their charter for the future). They could be best described in the apt phrases of W.H.G. Armytage as oriented towards either ‘Yesterdays, Tomorrows’ or ‘Heavens Below’—the former characterizing ‘revivalistic/nativistic’ types, and the latter, chiliastic/millenarian types. A constant theme among the Zionist sects in their sermons and songs is the projection of the past to the future, the present being always ignored or attenuated. References are always made to a new Jerusalem, a new Zion, a new home, a paradise across the

river or some other symbolic territory of the redeemed. Significantly the route to these heavens or tomorrows is by way of scrupulously observing the customs (biblical or traditional) of the past. Nothing good seems to be associated with the present (which is the point of reference for most analyst!). At the risk of emphasizing the obvious, I suggest that whatever the typology, all schismatic religious movements so far analysed in literature are syncretistic in varying degrees and none is not syncretic. Furthermore, they are all forward-looking and consider the present as a transient episode in their lives towards a new cosmogony.

Earlier in this paper attention was drawn to the distortion of empirical facts due to the tendency among some analysts to treat African manifestations of religious movements as peculiarly a product of African sociocultural organization or disposition—the tribalism/animism/magic-orientation theory (Barrett 1968; Sundkler 1961; Oosthuizen 1968). The difficulty with such theoretical posture is that when practices of a similar kind are found among religious movements outside Africa, e.g. the Watchtower sect, the Children of Jesus, and scores of ecstatic or faith healing sects in North America, the cultural explanation breaks down. Similarly, it seems erroneous to apply the logic of rationality to religious behaviour and practices which by definition are based on belief underpinned by faith. Members of religious movements perform mystical rites not because their minds are enslaved by their cultures, but because they believe in the efficacy of these rites according to the dictates of their religious system. We might well recall Pareto’s instructive observation (1935: 569) about religious behaviour in general: ‘Logically one ought first to believe in a given religion and then in the efficacy of its rites, the efficacy, logically, being the consequence of belief.’ Religious experience cannot be subjected to the cold logic of rationality since it is possessed of a logic of its own and ought to be analysed accordingly. We are not likely to advance our investigation and understanding of religious movements if we continue to impose, upon empirical facts, categories and notions that are not germane to them and then treat the observed phenomena as if they were explained by the labels attributed to them. The relevant answers we seek to know about schismatic movements have to do primarily with the activities and orientation of the participants, that is, what they do, how they do it, why they do it, what they say, write or publish about themselves and their organization. Answers to these seemingly basic questions are not a matter of sociological speculation disguised as analytical revelations; they are empirical facts that must not only be inferred from observation but must be elicited from the participants themselves.

Sociologically fruitful analyses are more likely to emerge from an objective utilization of the subjective verbal, written, and published texts of a religious movement than from any theoretical assumptions about it. A strong case can be made that such subjective textual data apart from providing reliable and valid sources for illuminating analyses of dogma,
doctrine, practices and orientations of a movement, also serve as a useful aid for the interpretation of observed facts (MacGaffey 1969; Fernández 1970; Becken 1968—though descriptive rather than analytical). This is no attempt to revive the emic/etic debate in field methods; it is a caveat instigated by a genuine concern about the unsatisfactory level of some analyses and the apparently terminal direction to which research efforts appear to be headed. Looking at the present state of our field one is impelled to agree with Lévi-Strauss (1969: 24) that, ‘A transition from static analysis to dynamic synthesis is the only path remaining open.’

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This paper has attempted to draw attention to the inadequacy of current anthropological theories conventionally used in studies and analyses of schismatic religious movements in Africa. While cognizance is taken of their utility as exploratory premises, the attempts to advance such premises as explanatory theories for the complex phenomenon of schism is questioned. The utilization of theoretical frameworks which limit the consideration of schism to the African context has been shown to suffer from an in-built weakness for it leaves out of the picture a wide range of similar phenomena elsewhere. The conventional approach to the study of schism has also been criticized for its concentration on the movements' relations with the external system which misses the important dimension of the internal dynamics of the movements themselves.

The colonial framework within which most analyses have hitherto been made is inadequate as a total explanation of schism. The persistence of pre-independence religious movements and the emergence of new ones in post-colonial Africa attest to the inadequacy of this framework. This factor calls for a re-examination of the culture-contact/contra-acculturative theory of schism.

The notion of ‘tribal church’, or the concept of ‘nativism’ as a necessary consequence of secession from mission churches, and the theory of African ‘religiosity’ and ‘suprarationality’ are severely questioned for their lack of empirical evidence. What is needed is a thorough, objective anthropological study of these movements not as deviant versions of orthodox Christianity, but as sui generis—neither indigenous nor Western, rather as a synthesis of both—as new religious forms in their own right.
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J. R. MANYONI — L’anthropologie et l’étude des schismes en Afrique : réexamen de quelques théories. L’approche ethnologique classique des mouvements religieux schimatiques en milieu colonial n’explique pas leur survie ou résurgence après les indépendances, probablement du fait qu’elle se concentre sur leurs aspects les moins permanents. L’auteur estime qu’au-delà de la variété d’aspects superficiels retenue par les études traditionnelles, tous ces mouvements peuvent être ramenés à une tendance unique, définie par une recherche du « soi » d’où découlent un retrait de l’univers du réel et un repli dans un cosmos idéal. L’objectif final est moins de changer le système environnant que de s’en dissocier en créant et en maintenant un réseau de fortes relations inter-personnelles — l’activité terrestre n’étant considérée que dans une perspective d’outre-monde.