

ESSENCE

Interdisciplinary - international Journal of Philosophy

PHILOSOPHY SCIENCE & SOCIETY

No 3

2006

**PHILOSOPHY
AND
AFRICAN MEDICINE**

*An Interdisciplinary, International Journal of
Concerned African Philosophers*



TRADITIONAL AFRICAN MEDICINE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS AND APOLOGETICS

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ABSTRACT

A discourse on the question of traditional medicine is bound to provoke wide range of reactions. This is definitely one of the aspects of African reality in which the African is invited to resolutely discountenance all vestiges of colonial intellectual imperialism, contradictions and deceit. This paper addresses the intellectual foundations, principles and practice in traditional medicine, as well as the grounds for its justification. It also addresses many issues that arise from its practice as an African phenomenon.

INTRODUCTION

Discussions on traditional African medicine is bound to elicit mixed reactions. Perhaps it remains a definitive aspect of the African Phenomena, which African philosophy must resolutely battle to rescue from western intellectual colonialism, prejudice, manipulations and subterfuge.

African traditional medicine remains a reality of African Westanschaung, it has stayed and will continue to stay with the Africans, whether accepted or rejected by Western science and technology. Traditional medicine is a vital issue to the African and it's utility and logic form part and parcel of intrinsic African reality.

It is the duty of the philosopher to liberate, elucidate the worldview of his people, to investigate the ultimate grounds of reality and to justify or unjustify them on the basis of reason. Traditional medical practices has been thrown into such a high level of confusion that it has become abundantly necessary that its philosophical underpinnings has to be unraveled for the benefit of the human race.

So this paper will explain and analyse the nature of African traditional medicine, explain its principles and logic. It will also address the very many criticisms against it and its practice, fare a critical look at the issue itself and prepare grounds for its defense and acceptability.

A. FOUNDATIONS OF TRADITIONAL AFRICAN MEDICINE

In his article "Health care Delivery System Among the traditional Igbo of Nigeria"¹. Madu exposed the whole gamut of the mechanics of traditional medicine. This includes investigations into the presuppositions, reasons and principles of traditional African medicine. In the search for this foundation, Madu like Ejizu² links traditional African medicine to the fundamental elements of African cosmology. In this vein, Ejizu observes that just as the daily life activities, values and attitudes are manifestations of the African dominant beliefs,

... the traditional Igbo cosmology is essentially a religious one. Religion provides the basic and unifying vision through which everything is perceived. It is therefore not surprising that the traditional value system and attitudinal orientations are prevalently religious³.

Religion therefore accounts for the reason as well as provide the principles on which traditional medicine is based. In this connection certain elements of this cosmology pertains to man since, "that traditional religion... is heavily anthropocentric because of the heavy accents which the traditional Igbo has on

human life, its enhancement and continuity"⁴.

The logic of Igbo cosmology as in any other African cosmology in respect of traditional medicine, derives its intrinsic meaning from its religious anthropocentricism. That is to say that all attitudes in respect of African practice of traditional medicine revolve around the religious sense of human life. Again, the ontological principle of the traditional African worldview traverses every aspect of existence and being. This network of connectivity among "forces" links every aspect of the cosmic order. In effect one cannot interpret or understand one phenomenon of life except within the context of this ontology. "There is an ontological link of the different sphere of the cosmic order, to the extent that what affects one sphere invariably will affect the other"⁵

Beings in the world are linked by a network of relationships. No being is an island, nor are beings juxtaposition of independent forces, each operating on its own. All creatures are found to be in relationship⁶.

This knowledge of ontological link also pertains to the understanding of the subject matter of traditional medicine. The African conception of health and life are linked up to this idea of the totality of African cosmology. From the exposition of these elements of African cosmology and ontology, which is predominantly religious, the African conception of both man, life, health, sickness, medicine and healing become holistic. This inevitably also affects the practice of medicine as an art of human health and well being.

Ohajuobodo⁷ in the treatment of related matters, advanced a deeper implications of the religious African world view for traditional medicine. In discussing the religious, cultural and social backgrounds of the phenomenon of healing ministries in Nigeria, he touched on the core philosophical basis of this phenomenon as a peculiar African traditional response to reality and in pursuit of wholesomeness of being. In the search for the African, religion occupies a pivotal position. Religion therefore, becomes "an attempt in terms of inquiring and response to attend to the human quest for meaning and integral wholeness"⁸.

The religious sense of the African gathers its relevance and force from the belief in a worldview according to which

... two conceptually distinguishable but in reality intrinsically interconnected, interfacing and interrelating worlds exist: the visible, perceptible human world, and the intangible spirit world⁹.

This religious conceptual framework of reality enables the African to read meaning in life affairs. The boundary between these two worlds is very fluid

There is no demarcation since both of them constitute a cosmic unity and are thought of not as two independent and opposing worlds but as two dimensions of one and the same reality¹⁰

The relationship between these two worlds is thought of as symbiotic, and there exist a marked relationship of reciprocity and interdependence between the inhabitants of the two worlds. For the African, nothing occurs in the physical that does not root itself in the spiritual. But the spiritual dimension of reality holds as the foundation of the physical world. To this extent, the African aspires to penetrate the knowledge of the spiritual reality for its obvious usefulness.

The inhabitants of the spirit world are thought to be manifestly more powerful than the inhabitants of the human world. Because of their superior knowledge, strength and might and depending on their disposition towards human beings, the inhabitants of the spirit world can bring about good or evil in human world, fosters human life or hinder it, give success or undermine and even sabotage human efforts¹¹

Though the relationship between the spirit and human world is arbitrary as some scholars have noted, in terms of a sure indication of exact ascertaining of the possibilities of the response of the spirit world, the African nevertheless, in the depth of his religiosity always aspires to know the minds of the spirit.

The African worldview envisages a human world that is essentially open and responsive to positive and negative influences coming from the spirit world. One of the primary functions of religion within this worldview is to help maintain cordial relationship between the inhabitants of both worlds and then foster a... primordial cosmic harmony that existed or rather should exist between them¹².

On account of this, occurrences and situations such as success, health, but also failure, sickness and even death are thought of not as events totally and adequately explainable alone on the strength of inner-worldly causality. Rather, they are seen, evaluated and judged within the content of the one world in its two dimensions. Thus sickness and other mishaps do not simply occur nor do they have only physical causes but are thought of in their origination and source as effects of a failed or disrupted relationship between the person concerned or relatives living or dead and

one or more inhabitants of the spirit world.

In deed sickness and failure are often thought of as a disguised warning or even punishment for moral impropriety and culpable neglect of duties and responsibilities. Thus in critical situations of apparent human helplessness and aspiration, one looks beyond the factual and perceptible to the deeper and underlying mystic-spiritual net work of causes. It is assumed that the normalization or rather the rectification of the ruptured relationship especially at the vertical level is a precondition for regaining health...¹³

Religion for the African provides the rationale for the traditional medical practices. No one but the African appreciates the efficacy of this worldview. The logic of traditional medicine therefore fits into this African worldview and explains why magic has to be an integral aspect of traditional medical practice. The knowledge of and the ability to positively or negatively exploit the hidden spiritual powers to effect health related results demand an art of magic.

B. CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF RELATED TERMS OF DISCOURSE.

I. LIFE

From the analysis of African cosmology and ontology, it is obvious that the concept of life pertains to every aspect of the cosmic order. Everything that shares in the network of interaction of beings has life. There can be no inanimacy, everything is alive, one way or the other. They all influence man and are influenced by man. Man is capable of understanding and manipulating all these other forces for his own interests. Man aspires to maintain his life always trying to put all these other forces in cosmic and religious order. This is the basis of the high importance attached to human life and well being-hence the constant search for good health, continuous maintenance of life.

Life for the traditional African goes beyond the maintenance of the life of the individual person. It means, maintaining the cosmic order at the instance of man and community. So the whole idea and value of traditional medicine pertain to the whole of reality. But human life occupies a vital position in the whole of African reality. It is differentiated from other lives and other lives are at his own disposal. He maintains the cosmic equilibrium with other forces of nature for the sole end of sustaining his own. So human life is seen from the macro-cosmic perspective. As differentiated from other lives, Nwala gives two fold possible meanings of human life.

The dynamic quality of material and human existence.
"Ndu", is also existence itself and existence could

take various forms either materially/spiritually or pure spirit. Then even at death, which is the dissolution of the flesh, the spirit enters a separate existence maintaining "Ndu" of the individual in another sphere¹⁴.

So for the African, life encompasses both the material and the spiritual aspects human existence. It covers both bodily and spiritual well-being of the individual. Because the African subscribes to the reality of two interfacing worlds, life is reinforced from both the spiritual realm and material realm by means of religious practices. So in the same vein, disorder refers to any form of threat to the individual's material and spiritual well being. Thus any evil that threatens the material or spiritual well-being of man is feared, since this would diminish the dynamic quality of life with its cosmic perspective.

Among these orders that can threaten a person's dynamic existence are "illness" and "death". According to Madu, Shorter and Onunwa, "among the unfriendly agents that threaten life here on earth is illness. The other enemy which the Igbo hates is death itself"¹⁵.

Sickness for the African is a diminution of life, a threat posed to life, and healing is an activity second only to that of giving life. Petitions for healing is probably the most common subject of prayer¹⁶

From the above statement, the African understanding of life, and illness as a threat to life, brings out clearly the link between life and health practices in traditional African medicine. Illness threatens life and health is the restoration of life, seen from the perspective of African traditional ontologies. This sense is clearly expressed by Madu when he writes that:

Since health for the Igbo is a composite of the material and spiritual well-being then, for one to be alive, vis-à-vis healthy, both the spiritual and material aspects of man must be taken into consideration¹⁷

This simply implies that life and health for the African are two dimensional phenomena, which cover the bodily and spiritual. Bodily illness is always seen as a manifestation of spiritual disorder and its restoration must as well be referred to the spiritual roots. Perhaps this connectivity between the bodily and the spiritual in traditional medicine remains the basis of confusion for western science that understands health only in terms of the somatic disorders.

2. HEALTH AND SICKNESS

Traditional medicine is best seen and understood against the background of African conception of sickness and health. As an outcome of his worldview, the African understanding of sickness and health goes beyond the psycho-somatic disorder. In this view, Ohajuobodo notes that sickness is

...not simply as the effect of the disruption or cessation of one or the other organic function, but is also and in deed especially considered to be external signs or visible symptoms of the contravention of the natural order, the original harmony or what has been described the cosmic equilibrium¹⁸

As noted therefore, the notion of sickness, health and healing in the African context are rooted in African understanding of reality. It therefore becomes part and parcel of the explanative essence of African cosmology and ontology. According to Metuh, therefore, "Sickness is not simply a biological and physiological phenomenon. Healing in the African view is...making whole"¹⁹. It is not therefore limited to curing the diseased or malfunctioning part of the body, but putting the whole man back to form.

This involves restoring his physical, psychological, moral conditions, as well as establishing his social, spiritual and ontological relationships²⁰

Metuh explains these concepts from the concept of "the relationships of man in his worldview"²¹. According to him, "existence for the African is communion"²². A communion in which man maintains vital relationships with all there is, the totality of existence and reality. This communion involves relationships with,

God, the deities, the living dead, the tribe, the clan, the family and in deed the whole of nature. Man strives to be in harmony with God, the deities, his fellow men both living and dead. At the same time he feels himself in intimate rapport and tries to maintain harmonies with the animals, vegetable and other elements and phenomena in the universe²³

Harmony with nature is therefore the basis for understanding bodily health even as the idea of health itself transcends the mere bodily harmony. Consequently, sickness pertains to the opposite of harmony with reality.

A man's well being consists rather in keeping in harmony with the cosmic totality. When things go well

with him, he knows he is at peace with the scheme of things and there can be no greater good than that. If things go wrong, then, somewhere he has fallen out of step. He feels lost. The totality has become hostile, and if he has a run of bad luck, he falls prey to acute insecurity and anxiety. The whole system of divination exists to help him discover the point at which the harmony has been broken²⁴.

This is why Metuh opines that for the African, "the first evil is disintegration, for this would spell disaster both for himself and his immediate world"²⁵. The consequence of disintegration is cosmological disequilibrium, which signifies a state of chaos resulting in the ideas of sickness or illness. Onunwa has maintained that the idea of health and sickness for the African is far social than biological.

Sickness can therefore result from the disturbance of this harmony or disruption of these relationships at any level. It could be at the physico-biological level, at the socio-moral level, at the spiritual level, or indeed at the ontological level...²⁶

Healing refers to the act of restoration of this cosmic equilibrium at the ontic and ontological levels. Therefore like sickness, health and healing pertain to the wholistic reality. These ideas including that of medicine are wholistic for the African. Every aspect of health is contend in this single aspect of reality, whether psychiatrically, community or personal health. It is therefore, worthy to note says Ohajuobodo that contrary to Euro-American idea of sickness and health,

...healing in African worldview is a process, not an instantaneous event. It is not enough that the sick person receives medication; the root cause of the illness has to be sought, identified, rectified and sanitized in religious acts. It becomes clear that the healing process is geared towards restoring the somatic-physical and psychic functionality of the sick person but primarily towards his restoration as a whole person and as an integral being in his corporeality and spiritualness as well as in his relationship²⁷.

A comprehensive understanding of human health includes the greatest possible of all man's forces and energies, the greatest possible spiritualization of

man's bodily aspects and finest embodiment in the spiritual. True health is revealed in the self-actualization of the person who had attained that freedom, which marshals all available energies for the fulfillment of his total vocation.

Thus limiting the diagnosis of any illness to or its cure to the physico-biological level alone is being naïve, since the physico-biological manifestation of any illness is only symptoms of deeper moral or magic causes²⁸.

In the same vein, the location of the causes of sickness is also referred to this same cosmological-ontic order. The causes of diseases are mystical. Under this backdrop, diseases in African world would also warrant some mystical treatments in African Medicare delivery. There is a communicational and religious dimensions to most sickness, and therefore any effective healing should cope with all these dimensions "Healing is making whole, involving re-establishing the harmony between man and the entire social, moral, spiritual and ontological orders"²⁹. To this extent therefore, the UNO definition of even though wholistic, does not integrate the idea of healing as part of aspiration for ontological wholeness. In its definition of health it states that

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity...²⁹.

3. MEDICINE

In comparative terms, the western idea of medicine and the traditional African conception differ in scope. In the traditional sense, it refers to a wholistic view of well being, while in the western sense it is strictly limited to bodily therapeutic purposes. Nze in his own comparative analysis of medicine underscores the peculiarly difference, which defines the traditional wholistic perception of medicine. Within that context, spirituality plays preponderance of role in the traditional epistemology in the use and application of medicine.

The "20th Century Chamber Dictionary defines medicine as "... any substance used for the treatment or prevention of diseases"³⁰. However, the "American Heritage Dictionary's" definition of medicine approximates more to the Igbo African idea of "Ogwu". It defines medicine as "...something believed to control natural or supernatural powers to serve as a prevention or remedy"³¹. An outline of this definition shows that medicine is the treatment or prevention of diseases or any damage to the body or mind by the use of some objects, which has the natural or supernatural powers to cure or prevent ailments.

In their analysis of "ogwu" as a linguistic equivalent of the English term in Igbo language, both Nze and Metuh uphold that the Igbo sense of medicine surpasses

in scope. According to Metuh, "the English term "medicine" does not adequately translate the terms used to designate traditional medicine in many African languages"³². In Igbo language for instance, the word "ogwu", is not limited to materials applied for strictly therapeutic purposes. Nze therefore notes that

"Ogwu in Igbo African tradition is not limited to objects applied for therapeutic purposes. It is inclusive of objects with the described powers of not only curing or preventing diseases but also possessing trajectory powers capable of harming somebody aimed at"³³.

Medicine includes besides, materials whose alleged efficacy goes beyond the treatment of ailment, or prevention of diseases "... medicine includes objects or materials, which exercise remote and miraculous effects on the efficacy of other object"³⁴

For Nwala as well as Metuh, the idea of "*Ogwu*" goes beyond the mere therapeutic. It includes the totality of the knowledge of the manipulation and application of the spiritual cosmic forces. Nwala on his own part avers that "there is a concept of the familiar or the usual and when an act or deed surpasses this, then, that act or deed is said to be accompanied by means of a higher power which is "*Ogwu*" "³⁵.

Just like any other phenomenon of the traditional African worldview, the idea of medicine tends at the restoration of the whole body equilibrium to be in tune with the cosmological ontological order. It refers to the restoration of the body within the context of the order of forces. Thus medicine in African belief can be used not only to heal or to kill, but also to "secure power, health, fertility, personality, wealth or moral reform, to make a bride patient and polite to her inlaws, a chief majestic or judge complaint"³⁶. Medicine therefore, covers the entire range of human activities and can be applied in their manipulations in the direction or wish of the agent.

This being the case however, medicine primarily pertains to the restoration of human body in the attainment of a wholesomeness of being. Mume in Madu, defines traditional medicine as

...an act, science, philosophy and practice following definite natural, biological, chemical, mental and spiritual laws for the restoration and maintenance of health and the correction of bodily disorders³⁷.

So as I have said above, medicine primarily refers to the restoration of body health, seen from the whole gamut of the knowledge of the operations and manipulations of natural law. Its knowledge is not limited to the material order of nature but incorporates some form of mystical understanding of that same nature.

This is why Mume says that

... the practitioner of traditional medicine himself with what constitutes good moral living learns to detect by spiritual diagnostic signs, how, when and where departure from the normal or natural has taken place and then applies his knowledge and skills, aided by the various kinds of traditional treatment to help bring back a return to the normal and natural³⁸

So medicine in the Africa sense can become a power that tends to bring nature back to its status in terms of the restoration of the bodily disorders of person or his disorder. It can therefore be applied positively or negatively in respect of the application of laws of nature.

In its structural analytic, medicine though cast in a material substance, always relates to its spiritual-magical foundations for completeness of efficacy and potency. It is therefore not exclusively a material substance, but most importantly a spiritual one. Medicine takes form only in a material form for its manifestation. However, the spiritual power of medicine is traceable to the activities of God in African trado-religious views. In this view, medicine becomes the same spiritual manifestation of the same invisible power of God through the application of material medical substances. Medicine therefore, differs from a "god" who can act without any material form. This structural analytic is very important for the over all important understanding and appreciation of the religious flavour of traditional medical dynamics.

Medicine will work for those who the recipe for tapping its powers, and have observed all the taboos for maintaining its efficacy. The essential ingredients of medicine are trees, plants or herbs, and sometimes animal matter are added. The power of a medicine derives from the processing and mixing of those ingredients³⁹.

These substances in addition to the spiritual rules of their processing make efficacious the divine medicative powers embedded in them. Thus in Africa tradimedicalists or medicine men or women are those who are knowledgeable in those applications. "Thus medicines are thought to tap the power put by God into some herbs and other substances which those who know the right formalar can tap and use for their own ends, good or bad"⁴⁰.

Quoting Parrinder, Metuh opposes the Euro-America critique of the knowledge of traditional medicine as unscientific, superstitious, magical and fetish. In the view of Parrindi, traditional medical practices is deeply rooted in a science

and scientific method. The only problem is that its mode of scientific exposition confounds the western scientific model that dispenses with God. In fact, Parrinder equiparates traditional medicine men to scientists. A medicine man he says,

In fact... is a kind of scientist, in that he seeks to discover and use the laws of the universe, not only of inanimate nature, but also spiritual forces. He believes that there are powers that are hidden, secret that can be tapped, not necessarily that he can force those powers to a different purpose, but that there are laws, which may be set in motion by the knowledgeable⁴¹.

The specific nature of this science is rooted in religion. "At the same time traditional medicine is very closely linked with religion"⁴². The greatest contribution of traditional medicine to humanity remains this religious flavour and accounts for the poverty of western medicine.

C. PRINCIPLES OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

I. THE CHARM PRINCIPLES

Prof. C.B Nze Owan, J.N and Ikenga Metuh have in their respective works outlined the principles of traditional medicine. In his article "logic in African charm medicine"⁴², Nze presents the logic charm as the principles of traditional medicine. According to him to expose the logical content of charm medicine, presents a philosophical dimension in understanding of the meaning of traditional medicine.

Charm medicines are common features among African, but it seems that their logic content, that is, the logic in their contents has not yet being noticed⁴³

Charm therefore, constitutes the basis of meaning and reality in African medicine. This reality contrasts with its description as, i.e. (charm) as superstitious, savage and prelogical. Against this background, Nze maintains that charm as the logic of African medicine has the potency of presenting the intellectual fitness of the Africa. The problem with the early European Anthropologists and sociologists who studied African mode of reality was the confluence of the European mode of thought with the African thought categories.

For the Europeans and Americans, every pattern of reasoning must conform to Aristotle's syllogism, which expresses the laws of thought or the relation of ideas. The reasoning style of the so called primitive people are not logical thinking⁴⁴.

In the same way also to the African certain Euro-American ways not understood

by him are nothing but magic. However,

African logic or reasoning may not claim to stand on the same scientific pedestal as western logic in the sense that it is of a systematized logic of the elites but nevertheless, it is logic if by logic we mean some ordering of thought that warrants a conclusion to be drawn from given reason⁴⁵.

Charm therefore presents the content of the logic of traditional medicine. It also presents some framework of analysis of thought to warrant acceptance for the African and this also forms a legitimate epistemology that is anchored on the metaphysics of reality. These fundamentals of charm reasoning are presented in the entire corpus of African Cosmo-Ontology.

Elements of logic are perceivable in the thoughts of the Africans as encapsulated in his proverbs, and embellished in his socio-economic, political and religious life and activities⁴⁶.

Nze therefore uses this thought pattern to add to the reality of traditional medicine among traditional Africans.

According to Nze, the greatest problem militating against the western apparition of the sense of charm reasoning pertains to their racist interpretation of logic itself. To my mind, this confusion has been caused by the Aristotelian and Russellian logical categories, which limit existence as data of reasoning to the physical order. Just as Kant himself presented in the "critique of pure reason", scientific knowledge could not transcend the phenomenal. The noumenal realm does not therefore count as a possible horizon for intelligible discourse. The traditional African to the contrary, starts his reasoning from the noumenal as the "fons" and explanatory cause of every knowledge about the world and man.

When Aquinas defines logic as the "art which makes us proceed orderly and with ease and without error in the act of reasoning"⁴⁷, he emphasized the universally common characteristic of human rationality irrespective of race, colour or culture. For the African, it is the science of the forms of thought. "What is characteristic of reasoning, as may be inferred from the word itself, is that we produce reasons as evidence for a certain conclusion we wish to establish"⁴⁸. The reasons we provide allow us to infer a certain conclusion. For the African reason does not exclude the supernatural cause. It rather forms the principle of reason. This reasoning also applies in the case of traditional medicine.

For Nze, Charm, which is at the basis of the efficacy of medicine, is also its principle of action. This phenomenon of charm is very real for the African irrespective of what may be the interpretation, either as fetish or superstitious by

the westerners. It is the actuating fundamental principles of medicine. The tradimedicalist aspires to increase his knowledge of charm to meet the challenges posed by any new development in health in the community. However, the influence of charm is not limited to medicine, but is a phenomenon of the totality of the life of the African man. Western medicine is limited in outlook by its positivistic epistemology. They are therefore, prone to seeing the charm dimension as inexplicable. The phenomenon of charm also creates the possibility of the acceptance of miracle in the healing process. Christian spiritualist healers have successfully applied this method.

The "American Heritage Dictionary of English Language", defines charm as "... any action or formular thought to have magical power"⁴⁹. Nze bring out this charm-magic phenomenon clearly.

... charms have magical powers or effects. In effect, charms produce effects or control events or supposed as spells to govern certain natural or supernatural forces. Thus although charm and magic seem to have close relationship... one seems to be the effect or at least the mode of operation of the other. The ... African magician performs because of his superior knowledge of the powers of nature emboxed in his charm⁵⁰

As I said earlier, this aspect of charm magic is thoroughly rooted in the religious or spiritual experience of the traditional African. However, the knowledge of charm is not a common possession of everybody. Some inherited it while some learnt it through a very long process of tutelage. This admixture of the spiritual and practical experience in traditional medicine, accounts for the impoverishment of western medicine. Western medicine has no taboos, it is not rooted in religion or spirituality and this has resulted in the many moral crisis witnessed in the application of medical technology.

The reality of charm in African world cannot just be discarded as mere fetish or superstition. Its non-acceptance by the western science, clearly shows the limitation of their knowledge of reality in toto. Western science is limited by its materialism and positivism, which are aspects of their sceptisms. Nze has also defended the philosophical truism of charm in relation to the life activities of the African man. In his philosophical defense, he differs with David Hume, Quine and Wittgeinstan whose philosophies of language are circumspected by physicalism. In their thesis, words have no legitimate applications beyond the physical existence. It cannot refer to noumenal realities, if it does, such propositions becomes meaningless.

In African philosophical perspective, words are the same part and parcel of the expression of the cosmo-ontic cum religious elements of African culture. Words are as real as the realities they express. Words are also as efficacious as the

potency of the realities they express. Words have inner contents and with words, the African can effect and affect his environments. It therefore, has a veritable place in traditional medicine. Jesus Christ healed by the power of words or by communicating healing powers into some material substances. The book of gospel of St. John makes this reality abundantly clear. "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. Through him everything was created..."⁵¹. It therefore, will amount to philosophical obstinacy to disregard the power in words. Words are not just physical things; they represent realities that are active. The African tradimedicalists apply this reality in practice.

According to Nze, "the word occupies a prominent position in African philosophy. The Africans believe in the power of words, and the logic in charm is based on their notion of 'words', 'causes' and 'effects'"⁵². Just as spirits, man, animals, plants are forces; words have great force and are very efficacious. Nze goes further to propose and conclude that,

For the African, there is an ontological relationship between words and other beings including their inherent forces or natural endowments. It is the force of words that activates and empowers other forces. With words, other forces are invoked, aroused and led to action. Words therefore, order and charge all other forces. Man is a talking being and willing being. Because man can speak and will, he controls the beings in the universe by the use of his world power⁵³.

For Nze therefore, "African charms medicine finds its logical basis in the ontological relationship existing between man, his words and things within the environment. The reasoning of the African is that the intention of the charm medicine, man and materials he uses have cause and effect or logical relation where logical relation is understood as "a relation made solely by the mind and placed by the mind between entities"⁵⁴.

2. THE MAGIC PRINCIPLE

Owan Chris in discussing the reality of magic as a constitutive element of traditional medicine, makes effort to ascertain the essential nature of magic. The art of magic has always existed with man, but happens unfortunately to one human phenomenon without a universal understanding. Its meaning has most often been condoned to the negative. However, it continues to be a means of unraveling the hidden secret powers of nature, which man can diversely apply for various motives.

But the question must be answered whether magic connote a sense of negativity? What is its real essence? How do we differentiate good magic from evil one? What role does it play for man? All these questions are necessary in order to place the so called "black magic" or "Africa magic" in correct perspective. How do

we differentiate magic from other accepted practices like prophecy or miracle? There is no doubt that magic is a reality, however, much remains to be determined about its moral status vis-à-vis the African experience of it.

The "Merriam Websters Collegiate Dictionary"⁵⁵ defines magic thus, "the use of means believed to have supernatural power over natural forces", "an extraordinary power or influence seemingly from a supernatural source". One thing to be stressed from the definition is that magic pertains to man's relationship with divine, the invisible supernatural powers. The specific nature of this relationship is utilitarian in which man expresses mastership of the power of the supernatural for his own purposes. But at the same time, this invisible supernatural dimension of the art of magic remains its greatest problematic. But must diabolism be associated with every magical unexplainable phenomenon? Why must this frame of mind be associated with magic in general and African magic in particular? Then how do we distinguish other realms of the supernatural phenomena that are not magic and are accepted?

Etymologically, the term magic comes from the Greek "magike" with the noun "techne" usually implied. "This gives the complete sense of magical art, which incidentally occurs in the deuteronomical, pseudo-solomon (Deut 17:7)⁵⁶." In the work just quoted, pseudo-solomon "laughs at the failure of the magical art in the face of the overwhelming power and wisdom of Yahweh acting through the instrumentality of Moses and Aaron in the plagues on Egypt..."⁵⁷

The above expression gives the impression that magic could issue from both a genuine and deceitful supernatural source. Moses and Aaron were servants of God known in the life of the people of Israel and as such, it was not difficult to associate their magic with the manifestation of God's power. The magical power was therefore, not demonic. But when such powers emanate from the unfamiliar supernatural force or forces, their manifestations become demonic. It is in this connection that some demonologists seen even divination as "a specie of magic employed as a means of securing secret and illegitimate knowledge"⁵⁸. Be that as it may, magic has and will continue to have relevance in the life of man. Its authenticity is determined from the cultural milieu. It is therefore, not true that

Magic brings special powers into play with its sources traced to the diabolical or the satanic. Whereas true prophecy, enlists special knowledge with its divine source and true miracles issue also from God directly...⁵⁹

3. RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE

African traditional worldview is preponderantly religious. Religion is at the basis of all reality. However, this religious outlook unlike Kant's critique of pure reason or Analytic philosophy does not limit science either to the physical world. The same religious reasoning permeates both the physical and spiritual realms in traditional African thought. Religion makes the two realms real and science is not limited to the phenomenal. In fact in traditional African thought, religion provides the logic for the intelligibility of all ends. Science and religion do not form distinctive categories for understanding reality. Metuh corroborates this position when he observes that;

Generally, African religious thought does not make any clear distinction between the material and the spiritual or the sacred and profane spheres of life hence it does not clearly distinguish between the scientific and the religio-ritual aspect of medicine⁶⁰

In African traditional medicine, knowledge of medicine does not stop with the knowledge of the mixture of herbs and other material objects in the right proportion. It extends beyond the exercise of mere physical mixture of substances into the realm of the religion. It also involves "appropriate invocations, sacrifices and other forms of rituals"⁶¹.

In every case, some form of invocation is necessary because there is a general belief that the medical or the magical herbal mixture by themselves are ineffective without the invocation⁶².

This power of invocation is made possible by hierarchy of spiritual forces at the disposal of the medicine man, which he religiously applies. According to Metuh, "access to this power is hierarchically ordered. God has the most and the most absolute control over it, the deities and the living dead have portions of it, and some fortunate human beings have learnt how to tap, manipulate and use some of it"⁶³.

In African traditional medicine, God is given his rightful place of honour and man recognizes his dependency on the divine for the efficacy of his medicine. It is because of this pervading religious tone of African reality that it becomes very difficult the scientific, from the magical or religious in African medicine.

Some psychological and spiritual cures are not subject to empirical analysis. It is perhaps in the areas of psychological and spiritual healing that African traditional medicine has an edge over western medicine.

THE MORAL ISSUES IN TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

Perhaps the moral character of traditional medicine is made manifest in the

two-fold categorization of medicine by the African. There are two principles of actions to which traditional medicine can be applied. These principles form the fundamental basis of his traditional morality, the principle of good and the principle of evil. These principles define human and social dimensions of traditional medicine. This is the reason why Metuh echos that

Most Africans do make distinctions between good and bad medicine. Good medicines are socially approved medicine and used for socially approved goals, usually to cure diseases, to attract some fortune or to ward off some misfortunes. Bas medicines on the other hand are socially disapproved medicines or medicines used for socially disapproved goals.⁶⁴

It has to be observed from the above categorizations that evil or bad medicines are ingredients for both individual and group social disintegration. Medicine in traditional African view therefore has a vision, the promotion of human and social happiness. It is only within this context that one can clearly see the properly moral context of traditional medicine; the moral codes that regulates its practice.

The analysis of the roles of the medicine men in traditional medicine, shows traditional medicine as an art that is completely immersed in pro-life commitment. It deserves to maximize human happiness in its totality by promoting a scheme of wholistic well-being. In Igbo African perspective for instance, medicine men are called "Ozo Igbo Ndu", i.e. those who preserve the lives of the community. There is no doubt then that their profession is masterminded by universal benevolence. Life therefore, not disintegration or corruption forms the essence, the basis of traditional Medicare. Practices that are anti-life or seem to promote the cause of evil are aberrations and are not defended or rationalized in traditional medicine.

Because the traditional medicine man also aspires to re-establish the ontological equilibrium of nature via medicine, he no less is also concerned with justice. Justice, which the Igbo African sees as the enjoyment of blissful harmony with reality, is the first installment in good health. The activities of the medicine man therefore, go beyond the restoration of bodily health to that of the social spiritual and moral framework for happiness.

It is therefore hypocritical for the haters of traditional medicine to call traditional medicine man "witch doctors", in the realization of the immense beneficence to which their actions are directed. Metuh debunks this position thus:

... it must be pointed out that he is not a witch doctor, nor is witch haunting his main concern. His main concern is with sickness, diseases and misfortunes generally⁶⁵.

The medicine man comes into play at many points in an individual's and community life. He not only prepares curative medicine, but also can provide protective medicine for any form of misfortune. In short his work is to make people whole.

THE APOLOGETICS

1. THE THEOLOGICAL APOLOGY

Owan Chris in his submission in an article entitled "African traditional wisdom, magic and medicine" attempts an effort at correcting the erroneous negative attitudes directed against certain religious practices of African wisdom, magic and medicine. He therefore, "attempts to examine modes of understanding of African magic and medicine as instantiation of the creative, sustaining and redemptive wisdom of God given to the world through Christ, the true wisdom of God"⁶⁶.

He cautioned against the attitudes of the Old Testament, which earlier had associated traditional wisdom, magic and medicine with the Satanic and the demonic. This condemnatory position stands as recorded in Exodus 22:18, Lev. 19:26, Lev. 20:27, Deut. 18: 10-11, also represents the positions of the "Sacred congregation for the Doctrine of the faith". The congregation expresses this condemnation as a reaffirmation of the teaching of the magisterium on issues of Christian faith in relation to the devil and the Satanic.

The churches firmness with regard to superstition finds an early explanation in the severity of the Mosaic Law even though the later was not formally motivated by the connection of superstition with demons. Thus Exodus 22:18 condemned the sorcerer to death without explanation. Lev. 19:26 and 31 prohibited magic, astrology, necromancy and divination. Lev. 20:27 added the calling up of spirits. Deut. 18:10-11 summed this up by proscribing soothsayers, astrologers, sorcerers, charmers, those who consulted the dead⁶⁷.

In the light of the current theological turn of events in African mission, in the area of inculturation, it has become obvious that this extreme theological position can no longer be sustained, even from the perspective of the New Testament theology and the "communio sanctorum" i.e. communion of saints, a practice of religion also strongly averred to in traditional African religion. It is no longer fashionable and tolerable in the face of deep research concerning traditional people and castigates their cultural modes as such. Owan therefore in a theological apology for "African traditional wisdom, magic and medicine" cautions that

The current interest in African inculturation theology

is not for its own sake but rather for the contemporary emphasis on the mutual transformation of culture and the salvific understanding of the basic gospel message⁶⁸.

From the point of view inculturation and mutual de-alienation, the African theologian is therefore invited to defend the truth in African cultural mode, especially pertaining to the condemnation of the aspects of magic and charm as being essentially antithetical to the Gospel message. He is also encouraged to reflect over, and accord more attention to holistic salvation of cultures without an accompanying fear of syncretism.

Perhaps it will be very apposite for us to emphasize with Owan, the racist theological mentality, which even contradicts the very Euro-American world view itself, denigrates the African sensibilities, and has become a cause of injustice in their intellectual dishonesty and insincerity in according African world views its rightful place. Owan points out that certain religion practices of the Euro-American experiences are satanicable, demonizing and cultic as well. African wisdom, magic and medicine must therefore be studied and appreciated by non African theologians on its own merit; since this forms part and parcel of peoples experience of God and reality as such.

Through out the world, blacks and Africans in particular have been associated with what ever is black both in the physical and metaphysical order. They are thus linked directly or indirectly with magic, the satanic, the diabolical, the anti-social, and the negative in life. When the "black magic is not seen immediately as witchcraft and sorcery, it is seen as pagan, primitive and based on juju and superstition. This view is sustained universally despite the apparent internal logic and wisdom of the art itself⁶⁹.

But what is essentially negative about the so called "black magic and medicine? Where does it differ with and from its western and American "magic counterpart? What moral status does the spiritualities of these magic have to warrant the negativization of the African model? There is I suppose no reason except sheer theological racism and intimidation of the African cultural model.

For instance, Owan rather identifies the negative, the cultic and the diabolical in the Euro-American magic. The realization of the element of spiritual negativity in the western model "magic, reveals a moral weakness to courageously appropriate

the rich and positive elements of the African wisdom by the racist. On the internal contradiction by Euro-American position, it must be pointed out rather that

This view of black wisdom by Euro-American cultures is fostered even when there is no consistency between such a view and some beliefs and practices of the same Euro-American and Anglo-Saxon cultures, including the Christians and non-Christian populations of the culture. In these societies, there is evidence of visible shift toward what is referred to as alternative medicine, which in fact is a form of occult practice⁷⁰.

It is these practices involving the Satanic and demonic rituals and indulged in by Christian that the "congregation of Doctrine of Faith" rather failed to address as the concern of the Vatican. The global phenomenon of occultism.

This global phenomenon of occultism and demonism held attraction for the Euro-American and involved such practices as voodoo, juju, magic and witchcraft. Christian's found succour in these practices involving Satanic and demonic rituals. However, the real satanic nature of these practices stem from the fact that they contradict the essence of the western Christian culture. They are not found as an integral expressive of the inner logic of the Christian religious culture. They are therefore originated from the demonic. Yet people of these cultures indulged in them.

But African "Magic" could be explained fully from the background of the totality of African culture. It is not an aberration of that culture. Its rationality is justified within a cultural context. The African tends to get satisfactory explanations of the "cause-effect" relation on the basis of the applications of the wisdom provided by his culture, and "magic", is an acceptable manner in which the African man reaches a rapport with nature. This magic therefore forms a rationale for traditional medicine.

The appeal to demonism and the glamour which the evil and the devil holds for the Euro-American elite, is a testimony of the weakness of their culture as a binding force for the totality of their experiences. In a sense, their culture lacks an indepth spirituality capable of giving satisfaction to man's yearning for meaning. It is a clear case of an absolute dependence on materialism, the foundation of confusion and crisis.

Several reasons have been adduced for this lure of the invisible. The explanations include issues of confusion and despondency in high and low places, and in sacred and secular spheres. There is manifest crave for some satisfying religion. This is apparently provided by cults, sects and some new religious movement, which poses strong attractions and lure...⁷¹

So the practice of demonism is maturated by a search for a false sense of security and satisfaction. It's an indication of a failure of a culture to give a sense of being. It therefore employs magic outside of its natural realm, i.e. outside a certain cultural context. This shows that demonism is an aberration. This being the case, there is no need of linking African magic with the demonic, since it is an integral explanative process of our cultural reality. This explains the high level of peace and satisfaction, which the African derives of its practice as an act in accord with nature.

So African culture forms the basis for African magic and medicine. To this extent, they are socially oriented. They are integral parts of that African practice of communalism and brotherhood. African magic is devoted to a universal beneficence sanctioned and promulgated by traditional religion as an imperative of morality. This however, is not the case with western magic that is found to be rooted in demonism, as an act that is counter-cultural. It also addresses the question of being in the negative, in the alienation. It is divisive and destructive.

The practice of occultism in the form of witchcraft magic and Satanism is such that members do not frequently adopt a critical attitude to their rituals. They actually develop a certain internal cohesion such that they do not seem to boarder about the mainstream society⁷².

This aberration of the act of magic by western demonism is pathetically expressed as total failure of western Christian culture by an Indian protestant minister. "When the depths are starved, the hungry person reaches out in every direction. Emotions of wonder and awe, transcendence and mystery are deep in each person. If the west does not offer what one needs, one turns to the east"⁷³.

The inability of the western man to imbibe the true inner message of Christianity as a result of materialism, has forced him to look for an alternative spirituality, which goes contrary to a Christian worldview. So demonism, which employs satanic wisdom and magic cannot be said to be truly a spirituality of any culture, not of Christianity nor traditional religion. These explanations are necessary to put our idea of African magic and medicine in the right perspective as a feature of peoples experience of God in a culture. If any magic fails to be rooted in a culture, it become nothing but satanic.

I think the greatest problem to the development of the benefits of African magic and medicine for humanity has been the occasion of synicism towards the art both from some African "healers and delivers". Who have tended to emphasis the overwhelming power of the devil and his penchant for wreaking havoc and suffering on God's children "The non- African scholars usually tend to de-emphasize the beliefs in magic and as espoused by the African scholars and healers"⁷⁴.

2. AFRICAN MAGIC AND MEDICINE

Numerous forms of magic are known to exist and are practiced by different cultures differently. Among these various forms are black magic, mental suggestion, magical mesmerism... when any of these forms enlists the powers of the demonic, they are seen as authentic forms of magic. In the absence of such occult powers, such displays... would not belong to the field of magic⁷⁵.

This erroneous impression is the conviction of a wrong understanding of real magic. The occult practice does not nor the demonic form the basis of authentic magic. Authentic magic is rooted in the spiritual-religious dimensions of a culture and obeys the cosmo-ontogenic ethical rules of the culture. It is on the basis of this misconception that a lot of aspersions have been cast on African medicine and magic by the Euro-American intellectualism. These people therefore, start the analysis of magic from the wrong notion. This is why Owan cautions that,

The African general practice of magic and use of medicine have been seen by many non Africans as basically masked in the one cocoon of secrecy and the occult, or the other, so much so that outsiders are perpetually left in uncertainty as to how best to view this brand of the wisdom of the underdeveloped peoples of the world and of the black race in particular. The African mysterious powers are thus viewed as superstitious that comes from the puerile and primitive mentality...⁷⁶

The negative and perjorative picture of African magic and medicine is always presented by non-Africans. This to them, remains an aspect of the manifestation of their irrationality and prelogicality. It is on the account of this conception that magic is reduced to the destructive and harmful medium or instrumentality.

An exclusive conception of magic is not haboured by the African perspective of the art. As I said before, the moral and religious imperative first and foremost assigns to it the positive. It is therefore essentially not demonic and negative. African belief in magic and medicine is very closely linked to the belief in and their dependence on the spirit world and the part the latter plays in the affairs of the terrestrial and material order. For the African, the unseen world is dominated by invisible powers whose existence undergirds and effectively controls the phenomenon of nature, the suprasensible and the physical world. Africans believe that man can establish contact

with the unseen powers and obtain favours from them in two ways. There alternative ways define the positive and the negative elements in African magic and medicine. This brings out the close relationship between religion and magic in the African context. As an appeal to the supernatural,

Their relationship is so close, it would seem...that magic and religion are not really two separate realities. The main difference lies in the different methods adopted by the respective agents of magic and medicine in linking with the supernatural order ⁷⁷.

Whatever the method adopted, authentic African magic and medicine subscribes to a position and good action. This is not however, to say that there is no aberration in African magic and medicine. Such exists as the diabolical and inauthentic mode. It would amount to foolishness to deny magic of positive character as some scholars are inclined to. Some would see no true religion as having anything to do with the magical. This position is unfounded since; mystery is part and parcel of the religious experience. Magic is thus, part and parcel of the experience and the African has no difficulty in understanding this. The African has thus, a functional understanding of religion as "the belief in spiritual beings and a conciliation of these powers that are superior to man which man are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life"⁷⁸.

Experience also shows that nature and human life can be controlled according to the nature of the supernatural spirit involved. Thus according to the scriptures,

There are fallen and unfallen angels, known as powers and principalities. Unfallen angels as powers belong to the realm of the good supernaturalism in the positive order, presided over by one true God who is creator and redeemer of all humankind. Fallen powers on other hand belong to the realm of evil supernaturalism presided over by Satan...⁷⁹

Africans understand magic and medicine to be influenced from the two positive and negative supernaturalisms. If this is so, it becomes baffling that Unger⁸⁰ should assign demonism as the essence of traditional religion, magic and medicine. He also belongs to the camp of racist theologians. According to him,

Among the Aborigens and other primitive cultures, religion is closely aligned to magic, superstition and worship of evil spirits and malevolent demons.⁸¹

Against this background, Africans uphold magic, medicine and religion as

being naturally linked together in a special way. "This link must not be seen as demonic, for it is not the case even when the religious in question is patently polytheistic"⁸².

However, close as the concepts of African magic and medicine may be, there still exist some differences between the two realities. "While both work on the principle that the suprasensible world has powers that can be controlled by man"⁸³, both tend to operate on different platforms and ware length.

Magic can be both positive and negative, protective in the helpful and harmful sense, and destructive in the offensive and destructive sense⁸⁴.

Medicine on the other hand is purely curative and preventive in such a way that the miracle aspects of its result remain less spectacular or dramatic.

Regarding the question of the scientific status of traditional medicine, "...to what extent is this knowledge of traditional medicine empirically sound and skill rationally employed"⁸⁵, Metuh replies that "this classifications is made purely to determine the scientific validity of traditional medicine"⁸⁶. This doubt as expressed by Nadel is necessary, because, "several of the therapeutic medicines require the accompaniment of invocation or sacrifices, or otherwise exhibit admixture of mystical intent"⁸⁷

Metuh has answered to this objection that "knowledge of the scientific validity of traditional medicine is useful... but not sufficient"⁸⁸, for a reappraisal of traditional medicine. This synicism further goes to expose the poverty of the western conception of both reality and medicine. However, we empirically know that:

Some psychological and spiritual cures are not subject to empirical analysis. It is perhaps in the areas of psychological and spiritual healing that African traditional medicine has an edge over western medicine⁸⁹.

In African sense, science does not preclude spiritualism or mysticism or call it magic. The tradimedicalist therefore, employs both scientific and magical methods of healing.

D. PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF TRADITIONAL HEALING

1. PROBLEMS

Madu has noted the opinions of scholars with regard to the problems of traditional medical practice. According to Ejiofor the first problem takes the form of recognition.

Six major reasons account for the failure of

tradimendicalist to win official respect and recognition. These reasons include illiteracy, lack of urbanization, some shady practices by members, secrecy of operation or a closed shop system, ignorance on the part of the makers, shady practices by members, secrecy of operation or a closed shop system, ignorance on the part of the makers, shady image, and religious differences between officialdom and tradimendicalism⁹⁰.

While we can observe for instance, that some of those handicaps no longer exist today as such, for instance many tradimendicalists now are highly educated persons, but however, such practice of secrecy associated with traditional medicine remain as a major strength of security to the practitioners. They do not place their knowledge at the disposal of the public to perpetuate communal ignorance.

The second problem follows logically from the first. Because the practice is shrouded in secrecy, without objective diagnostic standard, the problem of deceit arises. Patients are left to the manipulations of the tradimendicalist, who may claim overall competence over all manners of diseases. This obviously raises serious moral question on the attitude of the tradimendicalist and the patient who have been denied access to the correct information. This is a case of the abuse of confidentiality.

...many of the tradimendicalists claim to cure all disease and therefore dispense the same medicine for different ailments⁹¹.

Madu also notes some other fundamental problems with traditionalist medical practice as follows:

Lack of dosage of traditional medicines...in some cases, the hygienic conditions under which some concoctions are made are very deplorable that one wonders whether such medicines might not be the source of illness. In some liquid concoctions there may not be preservation agents to prevent the medicine from decaying⁹².

These are some of the factors that can endanger life or...make it vulnerable in the process of its preservation through tradition. Again some spiritualist healers adopt methods that degrade the dignity of the human body.

2. PROSPECTS

In the introduction to his article, Rev. Fr. Ikenga Metuh enthusiastically underscores the prospects of traditional medicine despite more than a century and

half campaign of calumny against it by missionary Christianity and western intellectualism. This enthusiasm is borne out of the persistent appeal to traditional medicine by Africans despite all that western orthodox medicine can afford. The reasons for this is obvious and constitute the basis of his recommendation to both the government agencies and the Christian churches in Africa to support and promote traditional medical practices in the positive. Traditional medicine in his view is more comprehensive in approach to man unlike western medical model.

...traditional healing... aims at healing the whole man, a point which brings it closer to the Christian concept of healing, i.e. "making whole" in contrast to western medicine which emphasizes the restoration of bodily health⁹³.

The philosophical basis of this approach is highly commendable and he cautions both government and church as a matter of moral and pastoral responsibility to be deeply involved in any movement for according recognition to and modernization of traditional medicine.

...traditional medicine in Africa is essentially linked with religion so the involvement of the church is necessary to clarify the religious and magical aspects of tradi-medicine⁹⁴.

Against the backdrop of the colonial government and missionary Christianity that "...traditional medicine was no more has a medley of superstitious and magical practices, and their practitioners... witch doctors and fetish priest"⁹⁵, developments in the efficacy and practice of traditional medicine have brought a change in its perception.

In government circles, this prejudice is slowly dying down. Many post-independence African governments, are beginning to have a more positive approach to traditional medicine and healing. Proven talented and skilful herbalists and traditional healers have been given licenses of recognition to serve the public. In response to government encouragement, some literate people have joined the profession and many herbalists now prepare their drugs under better hygienic conditions⁹⁶.

These are positive signs on the prospect of traditional medicine, which challenges the criticisms of its detractors. In addition as recorded by Metuh, some countries have gone further and founded some colleges and research institutes for the study of

traditional medicine.

There are the Nswawani institute of traditional medicine in Ghana and the Join College of Natural Therapeutics in Bendel State, Nigeria⁹⁷.

These colleges and research centers offer opportunities for the study of the various aspects of traditional medicine.

CONCLUSION: REASON IN TRADITION

Tradition as a specific culture, pertains to man's adaptive initiative in the utilization of the possibilities of the various aspects of his environments for his preservation and meaning. For the African man religion forms an integral synthesis of all experiences. Traditional medicine as a phenomenon relies heavily on religion. Traditional medicine therefore has meaning within this context. Its logical justification is predicated on the Africa wholistic epistemology of being and existence. The conclusions of traditional medicine therefore perfectly fit into the Africa sense of reality. To undermine this specific African culture innovation on the basis presented, amounts to intellectual dishonesty and naturalistic fallacy.

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