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## THE NANDE'S CONCEPTION OF MAN'S GENESIS AND APOCALYPSE \*

It is easy to give a general description of African traditional beliefs because we have the disposal of a number of written documents about them. The description of specific tribal cultures, on the other hand, has so far hardly been elaborated, since oral tradition is the only source of information available. And it becomes more difficult when one has to tackle a mythological subject about which only very few myths exist. The Nande's conception of man's genesis and apocalypse is such a subject. In order to remain as faithful as possible to the Nande traditional beliefs, I shall first give an account of various tales relative to this subject; then I shall proceed to a description of the beliefs concerned, and finally I shall come to a (relative) conclusion on the subject.

### 1. TALES ABOUT MAN'S APPEARANCE ON EARTH HANDED DOWN ORALLY

#### 0.1. Man sprang out of the earth.

0.1.1. Ambwe, habere habya kiro kiguma, oko katwa k'eKitara hambutuka mulume muguma akalw'omokitaka. Aber'alw'omokitaka, amasung'omokihugo imune wundi mwami. Omwamy'oyo inawity'abakali n'abana, abambesa n'abatagana. Omulumy'oyo anamay'ew'omwami. Amaby'akamulimira n'eribya mwira wiwe. Omulumy'oyo aliye abyasy'obulime. Kyokyaleka omwami inamwanza kutsibutsibu. Omulumy'oyo abery'abilangira k'omwami amabiwanza kutsibutsibu, amamubuly'atingasyangamuh'omwana w'obuhuku inabya mukali w'iwe. Omukama amaliga neryo amamuh'oko bana biwe k'omuguma. Omulumy'oyo amasub'oko katata kiwe. Amabuta kw'abana boluhunda, abobukali n'abobulume. Kundi sihabya bandibakali na bandi balume, abana b'omulumy'oyo bamabya bakalunga n'eributabutan'aki. Erisung'omukali lya-bya likalire. Kyokyanaleka na balume ibabya bakayisinga amakule w'abakali. Ekyalekire kyekyo itwe bandnd'itwabya bulyagalyaga omokihugo kyetu kino.

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[Once upon a time, a man sprung from the earth and appeared on the hillock of Kitara. Once out of the earth, he found another chief in that world. That chief had wives and children, girls and boys. That man went to the chief. He started to work for him and finally became his friend. That man was an extremely skilful worker. That is why the chief became really fond of him. When he realized that the chief (already) liked him a great deal, he asked him whether he could give him his daughter to become his wife. The chief agreed and gave him one of his children. The man went back to his hillock. There, his wife gave birth to many children. As there were no other women nor men, those children began to marry and procreate among themselves. It was difficult to find a woman. That's why men always claimed women's pregnancies. That is why we men have become numerous in this world.]

### 0.1.2. Syambw'omundu alubuk'omokitaka mw'eyotwasirir'eyisiryyei.

[People say that man sprang from the earth in the region where we came from.]

0.1.3. [...] Omumbes'ati, "Unasy'ewetu kwé, iw'ukabug'uti wamasung'omukali?" Omulwan'ati, "N'omo yangabya hayi, ngandihikayo tû". Omumbes'ati, "Tami! ino ngwame". Bamagenda, bamagenda, bamagenda. Babere babihik'eyirahakuti, amalambo n'amalambo babilengago, omumbes'amimana, amabug'ati, „Enzira y'ewetu yeno. Ungwame". Nery'amatsuk'eringoberer'omokitaka, isihali na kyuna nibya. Omulwana amasweka amalebya bukutu. Omumbes'amongoberer'omokitaka kyamamuhiky'omobikya. Nery'amabwir'omulwan'ati, "Iman'okomutwe wage". Omulwan'amakw'obuba. Amakwam'omukaly'oyo, nery'ababiri bosi bamongoberer'omokitaka. Bamahikay'omo kihugo kyowenenga, n'omukali wiwe amabulirana. Abakali bomokihugw'ekyo ibasoseny'abosy'abosi, kandi ibobaneyo basa basa. Bamamykangy'omwerigo-tsera. Bwabere bwakya amahulukir'eyihya. Embukuli yamalanda land'oko-kugulu kwiwe. [...]

[... The girl said, "Do you know our place, you who pretend to have found a wife?" The boy answered, "Wherever it is, I must arrive there at all costs." The girl said, "Really! then follow me." They walked and walked. After they had travelled very far and crossed mountains and valleys, the girl stopped and said, "This is the path that leads to our place. Follow me." She then began to disappear in the earth, though there was no hole. The boy was amazed; he stared silently. The girl kept slowly disappearing in the earth; it reached the level of her neck. Then she told the boy, "Stand on my head." Although the boy was frightened, he followed her and both of them disappeared in the bosom of the earth. They arrived in a very beautiful world and his wife disappeared. There were only women in that world, and they all resembled one another. They showed him a place to sleep. At dawn, he went outside. A mouse crawled on his leg ...]



## 0.2. Man exists eternally. Death is but temporary.

Ambwe, habya kiro kiguma, engoko yamabut'eriyo omo lugango lw'omwami. Eriyo eryo ryamakula nery'enzoka yamalwa muryo. Enzok'eyo y'amay'ewomwami neryo yamabuga yiti, "Mwami ngalyaki?" Omwami amkw'obuba. Amahayo chihuka hyosi hyosi ngokohiny'omokihugo kiwe. Enzok'eyo yamaly'ahyo neryo yamasubula. Bwamabya bwakya, kandi yamasa neryo yamabuly'omwami yiti, "Mwami ngalyaki?" Omwami amabugomo mutima, "Sihakiri-hihuka. Ngandihay'ehinyunyuyosi hyosi hyosi kyomokihugo kyage". Neryo amahay'ehinyunyuyosi hyosi hyosi hyomokihugo kiwe. Yamagenda kandi yamasubula. Yamamubulya yiti, "Mwami lyaki?" Omwami amabug'omomutim'ati, "Yikandinyitanda". Amahay'esyonyama esyosisyosi sy'emoli sy'omokihugo kiwe. Ymaly'asyo neryo yamasubula. Kandi yamasubula n'eribuly'omwami yiti, "Mwami ngalyaki?" Omwami amahayw'esyombene siwe syosi syosi n'esyonde siwe syosi syosi n'esyongoko siwe syosi syosi n'esyabasoki biwe bosi. Yamalya n'erisubula. Yamasa n'erimubulya yiti, "Mwami ngalyaki?" Omwami amayibula m'omutima. Neryo yamamutomera n'abandu biwe bosi.

Okobandu yalyabo, kwabya mukali muguma inimukule. Abery'alangira ngokoyikandisyaly'abandu, amayabisam'omoribwe. Amabutira muryo momwana wiwe. Amamukulirya n'amo. Omwana abery'abikula, amatsuk'eriby'akalenderer'eyihya. Eyabya akalenderer'eyo, amasungayo kindu kinenenene ekyabirilasa kwe kisaka n'ebisomerya. Kanamabwira mama wiwe. Mama wiwe amabwir'omwan'oyw'ati, "Kyangana bya ekekindu ekyatomenger'abandu n'esyombene n'esyonde n'esyonnyunyuyosi n'ehihuka. Ekisiwasyabya ukalenderer'eyihya netu kikasyatutaomengerà!" Omwana atayitsulire kindu amib'omuhamba w'oko koyo wiwe. Neryo amagenda amayasaranga sarang'ekindw'ekyo. Anasaranga handu ihalw'omundu. Inasarang'ahandi ihalw'engoko; inasar'ahandi ihalw'akahuka. Ebindu byosi ngoko kindw'ekyo kyanalyabyo mobyalwam'ukyo n'omwami n'omwami. Omwami simwagan'eritasyatabala amasigir'obwami bw'omwan'oyo.

Ekyalekire kyekeyo n'omusabuli akanabya munde muke.

[Once upon a time, a hen laid an egg within the domain of a chief. That egg grew bigger and bigger. Finally a snake came out of it. That snake presented itself to the chief and said, "Chief, what shall I eat?" The chief was afraid. He gave it all the insects of his world. That snake ate them, then it left the next day, it came back and asked the chief, "Chief, what shall I eat?" The chief said to himself, "There are no insects left. I shall give it all the birds of my world." Then he gave it all the birds of his world. It went, then came back. It asked him, "Chief, what shall I eat?" The chief said to himself, "It will trouble me." He gave it all the wild beasts of his world. It ate and then left. It came back and asked the chief, "Chief, what shall I eat?" The chief gave it all his goats and cows and hens and those of all of his subjects. It ate and left. It came back once more and asked the chief, "Chief, what shall I eat?" The chief no longer knew what to do. Then it swallowed him and all his people.



Among the people it ate, there was a pregnant woman. When she sensed that it was going to eat people, she went to hide in a rocky cave. She gave birth to her child and raised him. When the child had already grown, it began to walk outside. In its whereabouts, it found a great thing on which leaves and trees had grown. It informed its mother. Its mother answered, "It might be the thing that swallowed all the human beings, goats, cows, birds and insects. You should not walk outside anymore, for I fear that it will eat us too." The boy who felt no guilt stole a knife from his mother; then he went to cut that thing up. Wherever he made incisions a man or a hen or an insect sprang. Every person the snake had eaten came out of it; even the chief. The chief refused to become chief once more. That is why a saviour can also be a child.]

### 0.3. Man is God's creature.

0.3.1. Ambu Nyamuhanga y'owahangik'abandu n'ebiti, n'ehindu hyosi hyosi kohiny'omo kihugo. Kyokilekire abandu ibabya bakamuhangir'embuli. Ambwe embuli ya Nyamuhanga kutse embuli y'emilimu yeyo.

[People say that Nyamuhanga has created human beings and leaves and everything that is in the world. That is why people used to raise a sheep for him. They usually called it God's sheep.]



Unlike some African tribes, the Nande tribe has no specific myths about the genesis or the apocalypse of the world. If any genesis myth exists, it can be known only by traditional chiefs precisely because a chief is invested with divine power on ascending the throne. Such myths could not become popular because it was strictly forbidden to mention God (Nyamuhanga) by his name. Most old people (from) whom I inquired about man's genesis simply declared that Nyamuhanga created every creature on earth and that man shows him acknowledgment by breeding him a sheep. Moreover, it is customary always to leave food and water in a hut before going to sleep for Nyamuhanga and all the other various spirits and ancestors of the world beyond. A more detailed analysis of these spirits and ancestors will be tackled later.

How do we explain the fact that in the different tales interpreting man's appearance as a springing from the earth there is no mention of God, considering that man is defined as a creature of God? Or do we simply have to consider the former as an alternative belief?

True, according to historians and to Nande forefathers, the Munande troglodytes came from Uganda and might have lived troglodytic age in the grottoes of Mount Elgon. This is what the tale 0.1.2. probably refers to in "Syambw'omundu asirira omo kitaka mw'eyotwasirir'eyisiry'eyi," literally,



"People say that man sprang from the ground in that place where we came from."

Lieven Bergmans comments in a footnote:

En trois endroits différents, des vieillards m'ont raconté qu'autrefois, longtemps avant d'habiter le royaume de Kitara, leurs ancêtres auraient vécu «sous la terre». Serait-ce une indication que, dans les temps préhistoriques, les ancêtres des Wanande auraient vécu en troglodytes dans les grottes du Mont Elgon au Kenya?<sup>1</sup>

A hillock in Kitara which occurs in the tale 0.1.1. is actually a correct reference. The Nande migration must have originated from Kitara, a place in the territory of Uganda. Part of the Nande tribe, the Bakondjo, still lives in Uganda. The Bakondjo speak the same language as the Banande except for some slight differences in suprasegmental features. The Nande elders are better equipped to understand their language.

In my view, the first tale is too simplistic in that it only explains the rapid increasing of the Nande population in a logical way (viz. by referring to their liking children and their claming pregnancies). It doesn't say anything about the way man appeared on earth. It only states that man sprang from it. If this tale (were) factual, then the Nande simply believe that man's government under the soil was the same as the existing one. It was by mere chance then that man came on earth. Actually the tale 0.1.3. describes women and a mouse very much like beings we daily encounter on earth (except for the fact) that those women are alike.

The Nande people also believe that the life beyond, which is the abode of all sorts of spirits<sup>2</sup> is located under the ground. If the spirits' world should be similar to man's then the first man could be interpreted as having been a spirit and, more precisely, an ancestor. In fact, spirits and ancestors, while living under the soil, still share man's life, notably through the names of human beings.

The spirits' world under the earth is mentioned in the third tale in which a human being follows a girl belonging to that world. Actually, it is normally forbidden, if not impossible for a human being to enter that world. The intervention of the girl is important here, in order to allow the man to have access to that world. Many dying people have already seen that world, but their vision depends very much on whether they believe in the Christian God or in the traditional Gods; Christians often describe it as a very beautiful world, very much like men's world but without its imperfections. It is inhabited by very beautiful beings and someone who has seen them would detect ugliness even in the most beautiful human beings. The non-Christian often tells of a world resembling ours, a world where the dying human being is first submitted to various ordeals and to a trial which decide upon his admission

<sup>1</sup> P.L. Bergmans, *L'Histoire des Baswaga*, Butembo 1970, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Omulimu (singular)/emilimu (plural) indicate the gods and the ancestors. Ekurimu (singular)/ebirimu (plural) indicate bad spirits. These two words have pejorative connotations.



to that world. M. Eliade's remark about this underworld pertains to the Nande beliefs.

Un rite de passage du profane au sacré; de l'éphémère et de l'illusoire à la réalité et à l'éternité; de la mort à la vie; de l'homme à la divinité.<sup>3</sup>

When the dying person is denied admission in that world, he recovers in the human world.

The tale about man's temporary disappearance in a snake's body apparently has no link with the first two beliefs, viz. man being God's creature and man having sprung from the earth. In my view, this tale is not representative of the Nande beliefs about man's genesis precisely because it is simply told to young children for mere entertainment. It can neither be considered a genesis myth nor an apocalyptic myth of the world, because it doesn't mention any gods. The purpose of the tale, as is shown by its conclusion, is to foster man's respect for the woman and the child. This tale is nevertheless interesting in one respect: how did the Nande conceive such a tale accounting for the temporary disappearance of man in the world? Or if they acquired it from other tribes, why has he perpetuated it through his oral tradition?

In fact it sheds a light on a third supposition, namely that man has always existed. It neither shows God's intervention in man's rescue nor does it explain the presence of that spirit as God's messenger. If this would be true, it would possibly explain the lack of genesis or apocalyptic myths in Nande oral tradition. It postulates the irrelevance of the genesis myth question. The Nande's belief in gods refutes this hypothesis.

Thus, of the three conceptions, only those two where man is viewed as God's creature and where man sprang from the earth are relevant to the study of man's genesis. Their strong hold on Nande's customs is worth analyzing to frame conclusive remarks on the belief in man's genesis and apocalypse.

Their elucidation will follow from my description of the Nande's conception of divination and the gods' manifestation among human beings. My aim being to account for beliefs, I shall not give any value judgements on phenomena that could easily baffle cartesian logic.

#### 1. THE NANDE'S CONCEPTION OF GOD

As I have previously written, Nyamuhanga is considered as the creator of everything. He is the high god. He is viewed like some of the high gods which Swanson describes in the following passage,

Following some of the high gods among the simpler peoples are known for the single act of producing reality. After creation they took no further interest in the natural or supernatural orders. Men commemorate them, but worship and sacrifice are not directed toward these distant, disinterested beings. Other supernaturals, brought into being by the high god, control the rain and winds and harvest, and guide the hunter to his prey and the fisherman to his catch. These later deities become the objects of human hope and fear, the determinants of events important to men.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> M. Eliade, *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour*, Poitiers 1969, p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> G.E. Swanson, *The Birth of the Gods*, Michigan 1968, p. 56.



A sheep is usually raised for His honour. Strangely enough, this sheep is respected so much by the living creatures that even a wild animal, say a lion or a leopard, will not kill it. It will usually die of itself. If killed, only male people can eat its meat. The same holds for every animal sacrifice offered to gods. Such a sacrifice is usually offered in a little hut called "Omu-hima." Only men, and very often one single old woman who has already undergone many difficulties, are allowed to enter this hut. The animal, very often a fowl or a goat, will be cooked inside and cut into several small pieces. These pieces, called "Amatole" (literally the nut, several lumps of food), are placed in the walls and on the ground floor of the Muhima. The whole affair is evidently accompanied by prayers.

Men leave these "Amatole" at the disposal of the worshipped gods. As it happens, mice, wild animals or children usually eat them, but this does not obfuscate the offerers, because they consider them as media the gods act through. One will often hear people say, "Indi abana bo'abalimu," literally translated "Children are spirits or gods".

Such sacrifices are often offered if a plague breaks out or if the harvest is bad. Events such as these are indeed considered to be manifestations of the gods' anger. It often happens that the gods are calmed and the situation comes back to normal. Take for example the rituals introducing a farming season called "Ekirimo." The religious chief<sup>5</sup> offers a sacrifice in the "Omu-hima" and plants the first seed, thus symbolizing the beginning of the farming season. If the gods' anger has not been aroused during the whole farming season, the earth will yield much fruit. The god of harvesting is "Nyabingi", literally "Mother of much." Nyabingi is actually a goddess who often appears to human beings in the shape of an old woman. Once upon a time, she was reported to have appeared at Irungu (a low region at the feet of Mount Ruwenzori inhabited by Nande people) as a dirty old woman looking for shelter or for something to eat. Three times she was refused hospitality and when she was finally kindly received, she gave many presents to her host and to his friends before severely punishing the whole region by causing a destructive lood that covered all the plain of Irungu.

"Nyabandu," literally "Mother of people", is a goddess similar to and often confused with Nyabingi. She also appears to people in the shape of a woman with a white skin wearing red clothes and red shoes. She actually appeared to Mutima's younger sister and brother in a field. (Mutima, an informant, is an assistant at ISDR BUKAVU.) As he told me, two of his younger brothers and his sister, Marie, saw a white woman dressed in red, crossing their field. They immediately told their mother and their brother.

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<sup>5</sup> Chieftaincy at the Nande people is exerted by three people. The elder son of a chief is the religious chief whose name is "Omukulu." The second one is the political chief called "Omwa-mi." The third one is the military chief called "Engabwe."



But those two people did not see her. Later they asked a witch of their village for an explanation of this vision. This witch told them that they had seen Nyabandu and that one of them would become a seer. Marie, Mutima's sister, has indeed become a seer.

The Nande also believe in other gods such as Mulemberi, Kalisya, Mulekya, Musavuli, Mbolu, the roles of whom are often ill-defined. "Mulemberi" literally means a "guardian"; "Mulekya" means a person who separates two fighting people or tribes. He also intervenes in giving back life to a dying baby. People implore him by uttering these words: "Mulekaye, mulekaye, niki melukaye," literally "Leave him, leave him, leave him please." If the child recovers, this means that the god or spirit Mulekya has left him and Musabuli, another god, has saved him. Musabuli often intervenes by saving children and their mothers from pregnancy difficulties. Kalisya means a little keeper of animals. Kalisya is actually the god of hunters and of the cattle. When cows behave foolishly, the Nande immediately think, "Syamahika k'omulima wa Kalisya," that is "The spirit or god of Kalisya troubles them." Mbolu is considered as Nyamuhanga's wife whereas Muhima is often conceived as the synonym of Nyamuhanga. The name of Nyamuhanga is revered so much that it is practically forbidden to utter it. Any reference to him is mediated through the name of Muhima.

For some people, all these different gods are only manifestations of Nyamuhanga. No sacrifice is offered directly to Nyamuhanga. The reader understands why a genesis myth citing the name of Nyamuhanga cannot exist. There are myths in which other gods intervene, especially myths about Nyabingi, who seems to be much more popular and closer to human beings.

All these gods can be qualified as good in that they forsake man's well-being (goodness) if he fulfills their requirements. Their anger causes calamity in the world. Next to these gods exist evil gods (ebirimu). They are: Ndioka and Lusenge. Lusenge is most dangerous to pregnant women because he causes their own or their children's death if they meet him. He is also called Muhumbuli (literally a killer). P.L. Bergmans writes this,

Dans l'esprit des gens, Muhumbuli, cet esprit malfaisant s'appelle normalement Lusenge. Parfois on appelle les deux esprits frères et soeurs.<sup>6</sup>

He is reported to live in water and in the air we breathe. Ndioka often appears in the shape of a sheep, usually at a spring where a rainbow ends. As the belief runs, someone who goes to a spring where a rainbow is "drinking" will meet a little sheep and, back home, he may die or fall seriously ill. This spirit also lives in water. I was told that it takes the shape of a swimming human body. When it thus appears, it normally wants to get food and drink. People say that it actually drinks "kasikisi" (a local alcoholic drink) when it is presented with some. Many families also keep it for their personal

<sup>6</sup> P.L. Bergmans, *Les Wanandes*. T. III: *Une Peuplade aux pieds des Monts de la Lune*, Butembo 1970, p. 26.



protection. In Kinande, they say, "Bakahang'endioka," literally "People link Ndioka," when someone attaches an animal to a tree. When it is thus raised, it procreates whenever there is a newborn in the family, so that every member of the family has his Ndioka. A girl-friend of mine told me that she once entered her girl-friend's house to pour water in a cooking-pot. She found a black snake near the fire and noticed all the pans of water were empty. Later she was told that that family bred an "endioka" and that she had seen its manifestation. It had actually drunk the water in the house and it would vomit it back for the normal use of that family.

## 2. THE NANDE'S WORSHIP OF THE ANCESTORS

The life of human beings is closely controlled by the ancestors. They sometimes express their will in claiming the names of children. In fact, how can one explain the fact that a newborn will often cry beyond measure until it is given the name of a deceased ancestor? Some people even foretell their death after being warned in dreams by their forefathers.

Ancestors mostly communicate their will to people the lineage of whom includes hunters, blacksmiths, seers and witches. Forging and hunting have been privileged arts among the Nande people and their practitioners have often formed special castes. Negligence of these arts in a family belonging to such castes often arouses the ancestors' anger. I was told the story of a schoolboy who was ill-treated by his ancestor because he had abandoned his forefather's forge. He was later obliged to go back to the village to utilize that forge. In a previous paragraph, I have already shown how a person may become a seer. Actually, there exist families of seers who inherited that power from their forefathers.

Some skilful witches are very much helped by their ancestors. I heard of a witch (omukumu) who was brought a child nearing its death. On the brink of death, wild leaves suddenly appeared in its hand. It was treated with these medicinal leaves and soon recovered. My mother-in-law's illness is also revealing in connection with the witches' power. She was taken seriously ill and was brought to a nearby dispensary of Kisunga for nearly one month. As she did not recover, she was brought to another dispensary in Bunyuka where European medicine was prescribed for her. Her inability to recover led my father-in-law to bring her to several witches who did nothing for her recovery. She no longer ate and everybody thought her death was certain. She was finally advised to go to a renowned witch living in Isale, another Nande village near Bunyuka. After her arrival at that witch's house, she immediately began to eat with great relish and recovered after two days. Such manifestations really prove the ancestor's power.

## 3. THE NANDE'S BELIEF IN BAD SPIRITS

The Nande world also abounds with bad spirits called "Ebirimu." As I have written, these spirits should not be confused with good spirits called



"Emilimu," plural of "Omulimu" or ancestor. Bad spirits are also deceased people who have committed many evils on earth. They often met with wandering among people because, as they say, "Sitwatahika" that is "We have not arrived." In fact, as I have previously written, man after his death is judged by a tribunal of the beyond which decides on his being admitted to the ancestors' life. As Werner writes,

They haunt woods and waste places [...] they are evil spirits and are supposed to be the disembodied relics of people who have killed their neighbours by the help of black magic [...] God has banished them to the woods, where they wander about without anyone to care for them by sacrificing to them.<sup>7</sup>

A sudden encounter with such spirits at night, usually near graveyards, is always dangerous and may cause one's death. That's why it's forbidden to call persons by their names at night. The Nande believe that a spirit may hear it and use it to call that person, which would cause his death.

Some other types of spirits which are not necessarily bad, are those who belong to newly deceased people. Before beginning their long journey to the world beyond, they first visit every place they had passed by and, especially, their field. The Munande often foretells an old relative's death by meeting him outside in his field or at a spring, clad in his best clothes. Such spirits usually do not answer if spoken to. It is also believed that one can see a dead person's spirit if he looks at its corpse through a glass. People are afraid to experiment with this belief because if one is caught by the dead person's look, he will surely die. Dead people's spirits also clearly express their opinion if they departed before paying people's debts. Very often, they will clearly indicate the specific places where their children will find that money. They also complain if they were not prepared careful funerals.

Closely associated to the life of bad spirits is the power of sorcerers. There are two kinds of sorcerers, "Omuloyi" (singular) "Abaloyi" (plural), who are mostly male and "Abakali" (plural of "Omukali") or "Abali" (plural of "Omuli") who are female. The male sorcerers, who are essentially evil-doers, are capable of displaying much supernatural power. Without using poison, these people are able to make someone ill or to cause his death, merely by pronouncing evil words on the target person. Swanson seems to be describing the Munande sorcerer when saying.

Exuvial magic employs products of man's body to control his behaviour. The sorcerer collects nail parings, excrement, spittle, blood, hair, semen, or bits of skin from the man he wants to influence.<sup>8</sup>

Strangely enough, the power of these sorcerers is most efficient on people they are able to identify and to call by name. A stranger is rarely affected. This is another reason why it is dangerous to call someone by his name at

<sup>7</sup> A. Werner, *Myths and Legends of the Bantu*, Birmingham 1968, p. 177.

<sup>8</sup> Swanson, *op. cit.*, p. 122.



night. One of the numerous processes to bewitch a person is, as I was once told, the following: the sorcerer takes a seed of bean and plants it on a rock. He pronounces the name of the person he wants to bewitch, and tells the seed to grow and it grows. Then he tells it to yield leaves and it does so. He tells it to blossom and to produce beans and it does so. Finally he orders it to dry up. The different stages of the growing of the bean correspond to the degree of his targetperson's suffering. According to his whims, his patient's suffering may last for several days. The final stage, the drying up of the bean corresponds to his target person's death. Male sorcerers have also got a special way to deter a corpse. It seems that they pour a substance on the grave, which causes the corpse to disappear.

Actually the following day the grave becomes empty without any sign of having been opened. Speaking, about the Yahos, Werner also accounts for a similar case,

The earth the grave heaves and "boils", and the corpse emerges without any visible passage having been made.<sup>9</sup>

Female sorcerers on the contrary are like biblical demons troubling their patients. Only their spirits are reported to trouble people. They either walk in the shape of cows, lions, leopards, etc., or use their own voices while "embodying" themselves into their patients. Curiously enough, if one puts money or any other object they ask in the hands of the patient, that money or that object disappears. In the view of the Nande people, those women really take it. The following story is also revealing in connection with their metaphysical actions. Two teachers of Beni once met a bird on the road around midnight. This bird flew as if it were frightened, not expecting any arrival of human beings at such a late hour. Soon after this, a black man, dressed in black, very very tall, appeared behind them. The teachers were, of course, afraid. When he was about to reach them, they fled into the bush. They were later told that the bird acted as a sentry for those "Abakali" (Women), warning them for every human arrival. These women are reported to eat people: "Bakaly'abandu." Actually, they do not eat them physically because the people they kill have corpses. They are supposed to eat their soul. Their eating remains mysterious. Quite possibly some women are cannibals. As a matter of fact some old women in Beni were once caught with human limbs.

Very probably the power of these sorcerers immediately derives from their communication with supernatural forces. As Swanson also writes,

He [the witch] may seek knowledge of black magic for evil uses or he may have such knowledge thrust upon him through inheritance or by the action of such spirits.<sup>10</sup>

Their acts do not always lend to logical explanations.

<sup>9</sup> Werner, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

<sup>10</sup> Swanson, *op. cit.*, p. 137.



## 4. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS ON MAN'S GENESIS AND APOCALYPSE

After being presented with the Nande's various beliefs on the supernatural forces, one understands why he could only conceive Nyamuhanga as his creator. Nyamuhanga is invested with so many supernatural powers that man is simply in awe of him. He only deals with inferior gods, ancestors and bad spirits in most of his activities. His entire life is moulded in these beliefs so much that the only end he hopes for after his death is to become either an ancestor or a bad spirit. Any idea of an apocalypse is thus removed. Life on earth is simply a passage to the eternal life in the beyond. The Nande believe that one only perpetuates one's ancestors' life. This is also M. Eliade's conclusion about such African beliefs, "Sa vie est la répétition interrompue des gestes inaugurés par d'autres."<sup>11</sup>

Actually, where to situate this beyond and this eternal world? From what people say one can conclude the Nande situate it both on and under the ground. This world is however immaterial in that perforation of the soil cannot disclose it. The name of ancestors and a Nande insult are revealing about their living place.

The expression is, "Mobule kakusi k'ikulimu"; it means: "dead person living under the ground." The word "kulimu" here means 'under the ground.' The word "Mulimu" next to meaning god or ancestor also has the root *-limu*, the same as in "kulimu." Writing about the spirits' living place, A. Werner comments,

The dead are supposed to go on living for an indefinite time underground, very much as they have done on the upper earth.<sup>12</sup>

Since the spirits' life is closely associated with the activities of human beings and the wandering of the bad spirits near graveyards people are propelled to locate their living place in both places.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Eliade, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> Werner, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

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GENEZA LUDZKOŚCI I APOKALIPSA W POJĘCIACH KULTURY  
NANDA

## STRESZCZENIE

Nieobecność mitu w pełni genezyjskiego i apokaliptycznego o charakterze kosmogonicznym kręgu Benanda (plemię przeważnie pasterskie i kupieckie w Kiwu, wschodni Zair) jest następstwem braku zrozumienia dla tego wszystkiego, co mogłoby mówić o budowie wszechświata, lecz wynika raczej z pozostawania pod presją tego, co świadczy o jakości tego świata. Według tych mniemań transcendentalna istota świata, bytująca gdzieś daleko poza bóstwem, tkwi w uwikłaniach budzących głęboki lęk. Logicznym następstwem tego rodzaju postawy jest rozumienie ludzkiego bytu poprzez pragmatyczne doświadczanie świata. Zaznaczyło się to w szeroko rozkrzewionym kulcie przodków. Idea narodzin i zniszczenia została przesunięta na plan dalszy, podczas gdy ludzkość stała się nie kończącym się ciągiem wcieleń praojców, kontynuującym w obecnym świecie idee przodków. Obraz tego świata to przede wszystkim ziemia, wieś. Jednakże w sferze mitów zjawiska fizyczne, materialne ujawniają również treści negatywne występujące w postaci anomalii, jak choroby, śmierć, przerażenie; tu również rozgrywa się podstawowy konflikt między siłami duchowymi, dobrem i złem, gdzie aktorami są duchy, bóstwa, upiory, czarownice. Przy tym wszystkim kosmos nie jest dualistyczny; w samej swej istocie jest on produktem nieustannie zachodzącej transformacji zjawisk nadnaturalnych.

Przełożył Jan Trzynadłowski