STUDIES IN AFRICAN APPLIED

FOLKLORE

Sayyid H. Hurreiz

Published On The Occasion of The African Universities Congress
Concurrent with The African Union Summit
Khartoum 2006

IUA & U of K
Occasional Papers Series
Studies in African Applied Folklore

I. A. A. S
U. OF. K

Prepared by:
Meshkat Center for Computer Service
Tel: 0912987905 - 0912903244
The Publisher

THE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA (IUA) KHARTOUM is a private academic institution, aims to achieve excellence and diversity in academic, research and publication activities in Africa, as well as in other parts of the globe.

With a fairly satisfactory career in publication stemming back to the early seventies, and in concurrence with the AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES CONGRESS it planned to convene in Khartoum in honor of the 3rd AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT to be held in Sudan (Jan 2006), the IUA is Pleased to take the initiative of issuing this series of books mainly published for academic purposes under the motto (Interrelation and Interaction In Africa).

L’éditeur

L’université Internationale de l’Afrique est une institution académique privée, visant à la réalisation de l’excellence et de la diversité dans les activités scientifiques et académiques ainsi que celles de la publication et de la recherche en Afrique et dans l’ensemble du globe.

Prelude

The awareness of the people of Africa of the state of their continent, and the distinctiveness of its cultural heritage was instigated by their contact with the Western world, its civilization, and perception of the other. This translated itself into an emergent consciousness, self-actualization and aspirations towards the future. Since then, Africans have embarked on a journey of reflective thinking, contemplation and articulation of their struggle and hopes and, in the process, have brought to the fore their intellect, culture and desire to join the advancing progression of civilization.

At a time when the world is witnessing the emergence of regional and continental amalgamations to safeguard against the sweeping tide of globalization, Africans need to focus on their aims and determine their course. To achieve this, they must have a solid foundation from which they can take off, one that is fortified by constant interaction and integration, and strengthened by the common roots of their identity and shared cultural heritage.

In pursuance of these goals the International University of Africa (IUA) presents this series of publications on the occasion of the African Universities Congress in Khartoum under the slogan
"Interrelations and Interaction in Africa". These publications aim at highlighting specific aspects of Africa's cultures, languages and literature and at reflecting the endurance, struggle and aspirations of its people. It is hoped that the IUA could thus work together with Africa's intellectuals who are most concerned with the future of the continent and its people.

In this respect it gives me great pleasure to congratulate the writers whose works had been selected to be part of this collection as well as the translators and editors who have contributed to it. I also extend my thanks to the committee for the appreciable efforts they have made in order for this work to see light.

In closing, I sincerely hope that the IUA would continue to work along this path with the ultimate goal of attaining a profound awareness of African reality and identity and in hope of the realization of the dream of the "Great African Nation".

Professor Omar Al-Sammani Al-Sheikh Ibrahim
Vice-Chancellor
International University of Africa
January, 2006
Introduction:

This monograph on African applied folklore is based on data from several African countries, especially the Democratic Republic of the Sudan. It is not merely a collection of African folklore, nor a literary analysis of texts. Texts representing a variety of folklore genres are utilized. This should in no way be understood as an attempt to belittle textual studies or folklore compilations, no folklorist would advocate such a position, for the text has been, and remains, the basis and starting point of folklore studies. However the fact remains that compilation, whether adequately or inadequately annotated, have been a dominant feature of African folklore studies until recently, the works written by early anthropologists, some of which date from the beginning of this century, the remain more analytic and dynamic than some of the works by contemporary folklore scholars. In spite of the recent developments in folklore scholarship, Accordingly, there is a real need for scholarship that points out directions and objectives for folklore studies in Africa, and that discusses the interpretation and applications of folklore data. The work of these scholars will never be a substitute for the work of text compilers and analysts, nor can they function efficiently without the efforts of the latter.
The studies presented in this work take the applied folklore approach, a new development in folklore studies.

They also suggest additional topics to which the approach might be applied in Africa. The monograph falls into six chapters. The first chapter reviews and evaluates the debate on applied folklore. The second chapter discusses the state and relevance of folklore within the contemporary African setting. Focusing on urbanization and modernization in the Sudan this chapter highlights a number of studies pertaining to applications of folklore. The remaining chapters present studies dealing with the application of folklore data and scholarship in education, traditional medicine, development, history and politics.

In the chapter dealing with the debate on applied folklore I stressed on folklore studies in the U.S.A. where the debate on this issue has been continuous for the last fifty years. This does not mean that applied folklore was not conducted in Britain or Germany, or elsewhere. In Britain many folklorists and anthropologists have contributed greatly to applied folklore, but without being involved in any debate about whether folklore should become an applied discipline or remain a theoretical discipline. Works like Sir George Lawrence Gomme's Folklore as
an Historical Science or Sir James Frazer's Folklore in the Old Testament (to mention but two examples) are undisputed works of applied folklore.

The range of topics in this monograph is unavoidably diverse for a number of reasons. First, folklore is an interdisciplinary subject and so is "African Studies" as an area of specialization. Secondly, folklore is bound up with social and political processes and it is through those processes that the relevance of folklore is revealed and so is its application in everyday life. Some of the discussions. Inevitably bordered on other disciplines but I deliberately chose, whenever possible, a topic which indisputably belongs to the discipline of folklore, and tried to indicate how it can be applied.

Many colleagues and institutions have helped me realize this work. I have discussed some of the ideas presented here with the staff and numerous graduate students of the Folklore Department of the University of Khartoum. I am greatly indebted to all of them. I managed to finish this work while on sabbatical leave from the University of Khartoum. I am thankful to the University of Khartoum and to the colleagues who made it possible for me to take time off my teaching and administrative duties, especially.
Ahmad A. Nasr. The Folklore Institute and the African Studies program of Indiana University have hosted me during my stay in the U.S.A. and their staff helped me considerably. I am also grateful to the International University of Africa for sponsoring the publication of this edition.

Abdullahi A. Ibrahim has given me considerable assistance and I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to him. Miss Nancy Michael is due many thanks for going patiently through the manuscript. Finally, I wish to thank my wife Asia Mahmoud for her encouragement and unfailing support.

Sayyid H. Hurreiz,

Khartoum, December, 2005
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prelude</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apopose</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter One</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Debate on Applied Folklore</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Two</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folklore, Urbanization &amp; Modernization</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Three</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folklore &amp; Traditional Education in Africa</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Four</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folklore &amp; the Cultural Premises of African Oral History</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Five</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folklore &amp; Development: A Challenging Paradox</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Six</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folklore &amp; Traditional Medicine</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter seven</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition as a basis for national resistance in Africa</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The studies presented in this work take the applied folklore approach, a new development in folklore studies.

They also suggest additional topics to which the approach might be applied in Africa. The monograph falls into six chapters. The first chapter reviews and evaluates the debate on applied folklore. The second chapter discusses the state and relevance of folklore within the contemporary African setting. Focusing on urbanization and modernization in the Sudan this chapter highlights a number of studies pertaining to applications of folklore. The remaining chapters present studies dealing with the application of folklore data and scholarship in education, traditional medicine, development, history and politics.

In the chapter dealing with the debate on applied folklore I stressed on folklore studies in the U.S.A. where the debate on this issue has been continuous for the last fifty years. This does not mean that applied folklore was not conducted in Britain or Germany, or elsewhere. In Britain many folklorists and anthropologists have contributed greatly to applied folklore, but without being involved in any debate about whether folklore should become an applied discipline or remain a theoretical discipline. Works like Sir George Lawrence Gomme's Folklore as
THE DEBATE ON APPLIED FOLKLORE

(Brief Review and Comments)

Introduction

Earlier folklore theories and approaches concerned themselves with the problems of origin, diffusion and meaning of folklore. A little later, folklorists, and scholars from other related disciplines, dealt with issues of classification, form, structure and function of folklore. Recently folklore scholars have become more and more concerned with the study of context and performance, with the social and behavioral aspects of folklore and with the place of folklore in the modern world and in the contemporary setting.

Although some recent approaches to the study of folklore, especially in the U.S.A., have addressed themselves to the relevance of folklore, nonetheless, work pertaining to the uses and applications of folklore still leaves much to be desired. This is in no way an attempt to belittle the above-mentioned theories and approaches which constitute a cherished treasure for every student of folklore. Admittedly, before the application of folklore - or more precisely the application of the findings resulting from the study of folklore - we need to understand and appreciate its origin, structure, social setting, meaning... etc.; matters that have
preoccupied the attention of folklore scholars since the early
days of the infancy of their discipline.

Applied folklore should always be based on solid
teachers, and accordingly, theory and application need not be
considered mutually exclusive. Moreover, theoretical studies
often hint at the potential areas and directions for meaningful
and safe application.

I intend to begin this study with examples of the
controversy over applied folklore. I shall then refer to similar
debates from the field of applied anthropology. My choice of
the field of anthropology has been dictated by two
considerations. First, folklore has been (and still is to a great
extent) closely associated with anthropology. Secondly, most
of the work in the field of African folklore has been done by
anthropologists, though more recently, scholars trained in
folklore have started to study African folklore. Finally, I shall
present a number of case studies of applied folklore in
different parts of Africa, drawn especially from my own
experience and the experience of the Folklore Department of
the University of Khartoum.

In the following studies the term "folklore" incorporates
the four sectors proposed by Richard Dorson, namely oral
literature, material culture, folk custom (and belief) &
performing folk arts (1) The term "Appliedd" is used in a
general sense meaning "to put to practical use", and in a
specific sense which means, "concerned with concrete problems rather than with fundamental principles". (2) My use of the term applied folklore, as described above, is in line with its use in applied psychology, applied anthropology and applied linguistics, to mention a few examples from the area of social and behavioral sciences.

A review of the history of the debate on the issue of applied folklore helps us to appreciate why numerous folklore scholars viewed the applied folklore movement with apprehension and accorded it low academic status. If most of our examples in this review come from the field of American folklore scholarship, this is only because folklore has developed considerably in the U.S.A. during the second half of the previous century. This does not mean that similar debates did not occur elsewhere.

In the U.S.A., the calculated use of folklore for specific purposes and in specific directions began in the 1930's and 1940's. (3) It is important to distinguish between application by the folk themselves as opposed to those made by individuals and associations other than the folk, whether, folklorists, activists, performers, parties or clubs.

Tradition has the potential of unifying and mobilizing the people who are bound by it, and social and political movements have often made use of this fact to gain internal unity and solidarity. In the 1930's and 1940's left-wing
social movements utilized the potential of folk traditions, especially music, in urban areas in order to inculcate communist ideologies such as class consciousness.

This phenomenon is described by R. Serge Denisoff in the following lines:

"As the history of the Amerivan left, especially the Communist party, indicates, popular music was rejected and "folk music style incorporated as primary propaganda vehicle to create Folk Consciousness.

Folk Consciousness is an awareness of folk music which leads to use of the music in an unnatural environment, such as the metropolis, in the framework of social, economic, or political activity. This concept is regarded as a gestalt in that it is a product of a number of variables such as ideological, tactical, organizational, and psychological variables. The affecting of rural clothing, the addition of ideological messages to folk tunes, and the use of rural jargon by middle-class dropouts and intellectuals are aspects of this Phenomenon. The genesis of Folk Consciousness was ideological and primarily manifest in the Communist Party (CPUSA) during the 1930's and 1940's.

R. Serge Denisoff also reminds us that the use of folk music by the CPUSA to promote communist
ideologies is in line with the manner in which Leninists used folk genres for the same purposes. Later, the association between folk music and communism became so close that certain administrative and security authorities assumed that the growing interest in folk music in some university campuses was indicative of the spread of communism (5).

In September 1948, Thelma Jones attacked "applied folklore". She recognized that there are many people in the U.S.A. who are earning a living in applied folklore, but she condemned the use of folklore in political and social propaganda. According to Thelma Jones, the distressed and discontented are brought together under the guise of interest in the folk arts, and as being "the folk" in order to utter their protest and lamentation. What she condemned most was "party" intervention and the abuse of the arts, especially folk arts, for political purposes. Such condemnation is evident in the following statement:

"In the United States today, "the party " line" which has earlier ruined or deterred so many creative efforts and slanted so much art, literary, and musical criticism is intruding into the field of folklore. If successful, it can destroy the labors of countless collectors, archivists, editors, and scholars who have sought to make of their work a scientific discipline. But even more important, it
can foster divisive feelings that will destroy the "unity within a difference" which has been the strongest guarantee of the democratic process.\(^6\)

The issue of applied folklore was debated the U.S.A. before the First Session of the 87\(^{th}\) Congress in 1961. It was proposed that folklore would be excluded from fellowships given under the National Defense Education Act (NDE).

The Senate's rejection of the relevance of folklore and their contempt for it can be attributed to two factors.

Firstly, some senators were convinced that folklore has no utility. Secondly, folklore was considered nothing more than musical, artistic or theatrical performances, and was possibly confused with the amateurish and less serious performances of folklore perpetrated in the media.

Richard Dorson wrote to the Senate to convince them of the practical relevance to folklore. Although Dorson later appears to be opposed to applied folklore (for reasons which we understand and appreciate), he began this note by presenting his credentials as a serious academic scholar engaged in the practical application of folklore:

"I write as editor of the American Folklore Society, and chairman of the Folklore Program of Indiana University. Also I am under contract by the Department of Justice to prepare a research report and
testify on the validity of oral historical tradition, in connection with their Indian land "claims cases."(7)

Later he contrasts his own desirable applications of folklore in Indian land claims cases, against less desirable applications made in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. Here, despite his later position (which I shall refer to later), Dorson poses as an applied folklorist, but one who works from firm foundation of academic credentials & solid scholarship.

An important development in the history of applied folklore was the conference on this subject held in May 1970. Co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania Folklore Society, the Committee on Applied Folklore of the American Folklore Society, and the Point Park College. The conference attracted a lot of interest. The Conference participants presented arguments both for and against applied folklore, which shall be reviewed here.

Numerous participants indicated that applying folklore to contemporary realities of life was both feasible and desirable. Certain studies demonstrated how folklore could be applied to removing social barriers, in community action, to culture mapping, modern architecture, and modern medical therapy. K. Goldstein argued that folklore is political and is social oriented and can not be separated from social realities. Roger Abrahams stated that it is not feasible for the folklorist to separate himself from humanity. Richard
Bauman proposed a plan for a center of applied folklore. Others opposed to the idea of applied folklore were curious whether folklore theories were really meant to be applied to social problems. (8)

Another concern of the opponents of applied folklore was that folklorists might turn into reformers and patrons, and that folklore would be abused once again. On this issue, David Hufford, an advocate of applied folklore, stated that:

"It is not logical to assume that because something has been done very badly, it can not be done well. This is especially true when one considers that those bad things have by no means, been generally done by the most highly trained folklorists working under good conditions. The concept has not yet received a fair trial. Furthermore, non-folklorists and amateurs will almost certainly continue to apply folklore, often badly. Refusal of trained scholars to have a try will not prevent misapplication, whereas genuine efforts from this quarter might be expected to at least ameliorate the situation. (9)."

The opposition to applied folklore was led by Richard Dorson, who maintained this position during the rest of his academic life. However, we have seen that when folklore was attacked by members of Senate, Richard Dorson posed as an applied folklorist and pointed out the utility and
potential useful application of folklore. One might argue that Dorson was not opposed to applied folklore as a matter of principle, but he was critical of the manner in which previous applications were conducted, and worried about what future applications might bring about. At the 1970 Pennsylvania meeting, he states:

"Folklore studies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have done more than any other field of learning to bring attention to the culture of the overlooked sector of the population. No subject is more humanistic, more people-oriented than folklore."(40).

The opposition to applied folklore among folklorists, especially American folklorists can be attributed to the following factors:

1- Generally speaking folklorists were mindful of the abuses and misapplications of folklore carried out in such places as in Nazi Germany.

2- Most of the earlier applications were made by performers and amateurs; a matter which gave applied folklore a low status within serious academic circles.

3- Earlier action-oriented applications of folklore within the U. S. were associated with (the CPUSA).

4- Since folklore was a new discipline, a number of
serious folklorists concerned about the development and future of their discipline insisted on academic excellence and solid theoretical foundations, and thought that the applied folklore movement might open the door for those who do not have such qualifications.

The debate took a more academic turn during the 1970’s. The protagonists of applied folklore during this period were university professors and graduate students, although there were still some advocates of the activist politically-oriented approach that was prevalent during the 1930’s and 1940’s. In spite of the fact that applied folklore received more serious scholarly attention during the 1970’s, it remained experimental (as it is to this day). In 1976 Jan Harold Brunvand described applied folklore as a new concept which was:

"Still too new to be assessed, but it offers the possibility of going beyond analyzing folklore to actually putting the results of research to work improving people’s lives."\(^{(2)}\).

As an example of applied folklore, Brunvand suggests that public health officials and social workers might be more effective if they understood the traditions of the people they work with.\(^{(3)}\).

Barre Toelken presents a discussion on the applied
folklore issue in the form of a dialogue between students and their professors. The students are keen to know the use of studying folklore and its application to identifiable problems, whereas the professors (academics) are worried that linking up folklore to identifiable problems might restrict free theoretical speculation. Toelken points out three ways of applying folklore:

a) Intellectual applications such as in history, literary criticism and psychology.

b) Action-oriented applications, such as in ethnic relations, education and urban settlement.

c) Employment of folklorists (and eventually use of folklore) in the public sector \(^\text{(14)}\).

I believe that those three areas are not meant to be mutually exclusive. The folklorist employed in the public sector might find himself involved in intellectual applications, in action-oriented applications, or in both.

Toelken speaks very strongly in favour of applied folklore. He states:

"Such suspicion of practical application is not as prominent in other professional fields. A medical doctor is someone who applies the scientific knowledge of his field to problems among live people. While some doctors are lecturers and theorists, no one, I believe,
looks down upon the practicing physician as providing a substandard function in his field. If doctors stopped dealing with patients just because the common person lacks formal understanding, we would accuse them of a dangerous and unrealistic elitism. Similarly it would surely be ironic if a discipline like folklore, whose entire existence is based on the everyday person, ever became one in which the information were shared only among the elite, in which the theories became more important than the people. (5)

One may assume with a certain degree of conviction that this was the spirit and attitude of many folklorists during the 1970's.

Many of the graduate students of the early 1970's entered jobs related to applied folklore in one way or another. Those students and/or young scholars took up appointments as State Folklorists or Folk Arts co-coordinators at museums, community programs, various government and private agencies or elsewhere within the private sector. Among their major duties is the responsibility of exploring the role of folklore and its possible utility within the public sector. As a result of their work, applied folklore is likely to enjoy an improved status.

During the 1980's applied folklore continues to be discussed by both folklorists, and non-folklorists. At the
annual meetings of the American Folklore society, special panels are devoted to the discussion of this topic. State folklorists and folk arts co-coordinators, whose work involves the applications of folklore, have met and exchanged opinions. In 1984, a conference on "Folk and popular Health Systems" was organized by the Department of Behavioral Science of the Pennsylvania State College of Medicine. The previous year, the Smithsonian Inst intuition hosted an international conference on "Ethno-Astronomy: Indigenous Astronomical and Cosmological Traditions of the world." (6) Both activities dealt with folklore topics which are well suited to useful applications.

Let us leave the last word on the current position of applied folklore in the United States to Richard Dorson. In a review of the state of folkloristic in the United States in the 1980's he refers to "urban folklore", "ethnic folklore", "regional folklore" and "public folklore" and avoids the term "applied folklore." His final statement on the subject echoes his earlier position:

"Public folklore is only in its infancy, and we can merely speculate on its lasting power and effectiveness. It can lead into a new form of fake lore, or it can substantially enlarge the audience for the general values of folklore." (7)
**Applied Anthropology:**

**Relationship and Similarities to Folklore:**

Anthropology, in its infancy as a discipline, was applied to serve practical goals - namely colonialism. British colonial authorities made deliberate and sustained efforts to use anthropological findings in governing their colonies, particularly in Africa. As early as 1884 the Royal Anthropological Institute discussed the potential of using anthropology in government. In 1896, the British Association for the Advancement of Science called for the establishment of a "Bureau of Ethnology for Great Britain" to collect information about the "natives" of British colonies, which would facilitate the governing of these peoples.

Not only anthropological data but also anthropologists themselves were pressed into the service of British colonialism. In 1908, Sir Reginald Wingate, Governor General of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, requested Oxford and Cambridge universities to train candidates in anthropology for the civil service in the Sudan. C.G. Seligman and later E. Evans Pritchard and S.F. Nadel, were employed by the Sudan Government with the hope of utilizing their anthropological expertise in administration. Also in 1908 the position of "Government Anthropologist" was introduced in some African colonies. (18).
Folklore figures prominently in the work of these "applied" anthropologists. It was one of their major instruments in understanding and governing the local population. Thus, we can justifiably argue that folklore - or at least the data of African folklore - was being put to deliberate use to achieve specific ends since the beginning of this century. When we talk of applied folklore, it is important to remember that a lot of folklore materials have been put to different applications and uses within bordering disciplines in the humanities and social sciences such as anthropology, Psychology and linguistics.

Like applied folklore, applied anthropology also had a low status in comparison with theoretical work. (9) In both fields memories of the earlier applications have deterred people from further applied work. The close association between anthropology and colonial administration has made a number of scholars (including some who were directly or indirectly involved in the application of anthropological findings) less enthusiastic about applied anthropology. A number of scholars feel that by being involved in applied anthropology, the anthropologist changes his role, and compromises his academic respectability. In this connection, F. Evans Pritchard states:

"It may be held that it is laudable for an anthropologist to investigate practical problems. Possibly it is, but if he
does so he must realize that he is no longer acting within the anthropological field but in the non scientific field of administration. Of one thing I feel quite certain: that no one can devote himself wholeheartedly to both interests and I doubt whether anyone can investigate fundamental and practical problems at the same time." (20)

Writing about thirty five years later, Richard Dorson echoes Evans-Pritchard's sentiments. He reminds fellow folklorists that those who decide to follow the applied folklore movement, have chosen to become activists and social reformers rather than folklorists. (21) He expresses his doubt that such scholars will be either successful activists or good folklorists.

To come back to applied anthropology, Evans Pritchard's reservations are still found among the present generation of younger anthropologists. Writing about the Republic of the Sudan, Abd al Ghaffar Mohammed Ahmed states:

"because of the past use of anthropology in the colonial administration, the members of the university anthropology department declined to participate directly in research in those areas where national political issues were involved" (22)
Thus, there are some resemblances in attitudes towards the problem of application and practical use in the fields of folklore and anthropology. Similar soci-political factors have led to this resemblance in the genesis and development of the problem. Moreover, anthropology seems to have influenced folklore with respect to certain aspects of this problem, especially within Africa.

Comment on the debate:

No scholar would like to think that his academic pursuit is futile and without relevance or potential use.

The applied folklore debate should be looked at as hinging on the best way that the folklorist should use his limited time: in fundamental theoretical work, in action oriented programs, or in social reform? It is misleading to look on this dialogue as a controversy between two opposing camps: one for and the other against applied folklore. There is no disagreement about the relevance and potential use of folklore, or about the role that it plays in different communities. The debate is on who should do what and how.

Experience has shown that folklore was deliberately used against the "folk". Ethnocentric and ideologically biased folklorists oriented folklore materials and studies to serve certain ideologies and groups to the exclusion of others. However, whether we are dealing with Nazi Germany,
Marxism in Soviet Russia, efforts to legalize a certain military regime or one-party system in Africa, state support has influenced only the work of certain folklorists, and not the "folk" themselves. The "folk" continued to express their genuine sentiments and exercise their creative faculties, quite often unnoticed.

One of the genuine problems associated with applied folklore is that the folklorist may act as a self-proclaimed patron, claiming to know what is best for the "folk"; and deciding important matters on their behalf. This is a general problem whether we are dealing with nuclear physics, social anthropology or folklore. However, the problem becomes more serious in the humanities and social sciences, because in such areas we are dealing with Man in a more direct manner.

In this connection we need to remember that scholars are human beings, before being scholars. All scholars bring a certain degree of subjectivity to their fields of study; in reality absolute objectivity is an impossibility. Scholars should always advocate and aim for scientific objectivity, but we should always admit that there is a vast difference between the ideal and the real, and that our human shortcomings often make our achievements a little short of our intentions. Because of this inherent and underlying subjectivity in all of us, the problem of applied folklore - and
indeed the application of knowledge in general - should be approached with utmost caution. If and when the folklorist becomes involved with issues of progress and development, then he may interpret progress and development according to his own terms and cultural preferences. The way out is not to give up on applied folklore entirely but to take our cues from the "folk" when we address ourselves to different aspects of this problem.

At the end of the review of the debate on applied folklore it should be mentioned that there are a number of theoretical questions that need to be adequately considered before the scholarly applications of folklore are attempted. The following are some of those questions: Who are the folk? What is their world-view and what is their vision of the realities around them? What is their position in a changing world dominated by modernization, urbanization and industrialization? And above all what is the state of their folklore within such conditions? A number of notable folklore scholars including those who do not pose as advocates of applied folklore have provided answers to the above question’s and consequently contributed indirectly to the field of applied folklore.

**African Applied Folklore:**

In the previous section, I tried to show how British anthropologists sought to utilize knowledge about African
folk cultures and traditions as early as the first decades of the present century. However “the African” folk have been and still are to a great extent - utilizing and applying their traditional knowledge in various spheres of their daily life from time immemorial. Most of this knowledge is in the form of folklore. In fact one is tempted to argue that most of it is in the form of applied folklore. This is not to deny African folklore of its purely aesthetic aspect, which is a fundamental pre-requisite for many folklore genres in general. Nonetheless, when we look closely at African folklore, including oral literature and the performing arts, which are capable of sustaining interest through their aesthetic nature alone, we find out that they are deliberately applied to serve specific goals.

In many Parts of Africa, especially in rural areas, folklore is still widely used in education, medicine, law, traditional technology, etc. moreover, in rural as well as urban and suburban areas it is still closely associated with religion, politics, administration, development, social and ethnic relations, indeed, the whole way of life of many Africans.

If we study folklore while taking our cues from the folk, then we must recognize beyond doubt that throughout the ages, the folk have put their folklore to specific applications, and they still do so in certain cases. I shall dwell
briefly on the areas of education and folk medicine to illustrate this phenomenon.

Traditional education, mainly in the form of folktales, riddles, tone-twisters, proverbs, local and historical legends, folk festivals, crafts and material culture (i.e. in the form of folklore), is the basic form of education and social conditioning in Africa. It exists in the absence of modern educational systems, and also side by side with than, even the primarily entertaining and aesthetic forms such as the performing arts are seldom without didactic lessons. African folklore provides basic general and vocational education for the layman, as well as specialized education for the traditional expert, whether he is a healer, an astrologer, an oracle priest, a distinguished bard or a blacksmith. It is education for life and through life. (23).

African folk medicine consists of the general knowledge which every individual is supposed to have, and the specialized expertise which is only accessible to the specialist. In simple matters, the layman can look after himself by using preventive and curative remedies. He or she may always have the assistance of an elder within the family. If further treatment is needed the village specialist or the more distinguished specialist in a neighboring village will be visited. The specialists are scattered throughout the African continent with different names, functions and curing abilities.
They include herbalists, bone-setters, blood letters, diviners, kujurs, fakis, malams' bore specialists, and zar specialists. They apply their traditional knowledge to physiological and psychiatric ailments with different degrees of success. Because Government - controlled modern medicine covers a limited percentage of the African population, and because the "folk" have more confidence in the curative abilities of traditional healers for certain ailments, folk medicine remains the most widely used method of medication in numerous African countries. Moreover, in areas such as herbalism, bone-setting, and treatment of psychiatric disturbances, folk medicine has already gained some recognition within modern medical circles in Africa. (24)
The Case of the Sudan:

In the Sudan and many other African countries, the contemporary folklorist has to be involved in applied folklore, and his studies must address themselves directly to every day realities and problems. There are two reasons for this situation. First, as I have tried to demonstrate, the folk have adopted a functional applied outlook toward their folk traditions throughout the ages. Secondly, like many African countries, Sudan is racing against time to erase illiteracy, to combat drought and to achieve progress and development, to mention but a few immediate challenges. Its limited resources are overstretched to meet numerous crying and immediate needs; and different ministries, communities, associations and university departments are competing for these limited resources. Since universities are still looked at as “ivory towers”, and disciplines like folklore are considered to be luxuries that the country cannot afford, the folklorist does not have much choice. Applied folklore becomes a necessity, not just another approach that the folklorist may take or leave.

At least once every year, folklorists have to defend and justify their programs in budget sessions. Sometimes broad conventional justifications like "rescuing and studying the nation's cultural heritage" may be acceptable, but quite often they are deemed inadequate. The folklorist who manages to
link his program to issues of current national concern such as literacy, drought, development, or medical services becomes more convincing and his program is looked at more seriously and favorably. By showing educationists, development planners, architects, and medical doctors what they have in common with folklore, and how folklore can be of immense service to them, the folklorist renders a great service to his own discipline. This does not mean that folklorists make their field of study merely a servicing discipline, or that they should wait for others to indicate their needs and ask for assistance. Instead, folklorists should take the initiative in exploring ways of applying folklore on a solid theoretical and academic basis, and in line with the intuitive directives and aspirations of the concerned group.

It is against this background that the work of the Folklore Department of the University of Khartoum (the only folklore department in an African university), should be viewed. Being aware of the above-mentioned challenges and constraints, the department has paid considerable attention to demonstrating the relevance and possible applications of folklore to the immediate needs of contemporary Sudan. In the academic year 1977-1978, the department introduced a course on applied folklore, and encouraged its graduate students, who come from various fields of specialization, to write their dissertations on topics in this area. Some of the
teaching staff and assistants also showed interest in the field of applied folklore.

Dissertations prepared within the department during the last few years have dealt with such problems as: folklore and African politics, folklore and rural development, folklore and urbanization in the Khartoum metropolitan area, oral tradition and history, folklore and traditional technology (blacksmiths, pottery-making, boat-building), and folklore and traditional education. The writers of these studies demonstrated the use and application of both the subject matter and theories of folklore in the various fields. Another indication of the department's concern with this approach is the fact that the first symposium organized by the department was devoted to exploring the thane of "Folklore & Development.

Recently, a number of non-folklorists from the humanities and the natural, and social sciences have used folklore data in their fields, some of them drawing upon data studied and/or collected by the folklore department.

In his Dictionary of Sudanese colloquial Arabic, which is in fact the first and only dictionary of Sudanese Arabic, Awn El Sharif Qasim draws heavily and discreetly upon folklore texts to illustrate the different usages and meanings of Sudanese Arabic. The second example is provided by the notable Sudanese historian, Mohammed Ibrahim
Abu Salim's study on the waterwheel, which describes how the waterwheel is built, operated, and maintained, as well as its historical development and geographical distribution. The author of that book collected data for his study from library and archival information and from informants. His study can be considered as a treatise in material culture, especially folk crafts and traditional technology. Our third example is by a botanist. Hassan Mustafa Hassan's Study on Sudanese Environment draws heavily upon the materials of Sudanese folklore, especially folk poetry, in arriving at local names of botanical plants, their characteristics, usages, and distribution within the country. Using the same sources, the author also studied Sudanese place names based on botanical plants. (26).

In recent years two national bodies were instituted, both of which hopefully will do positive work in the area of applied folklore. The Institute of Traditional Medicine was established in 1983. The National Council for Folk Crafts, set up by the former president in May 1984, includes among its member both cabinet ministers and a number of folklorists. (27).

Conclusion:

The major role of the folklorist in the process of use and application of folklore data is to explicate the implicit. In this matter, his duty is similar to that of the linguist. No linguist teaches anybody how to speak his mother tongue:

27
children and adults alike intuitively know how to speak their mother tongues. However, through deliberate and scholarly efforts, the linguist tries to systematize and articulate the underlying rules and processes which govern speech. He can also be very useful in developing linguistic skills. In the same way, the "folk" implicitly know who to utilize their folk traditions in order to serve practical purposes and daily needs. Without imposing himself upon the "folk" and their folklore, the applied folklorist is expected to explicate this knowledge, to reveal and describe the dynamic processes underlying it, and to assist in its development.

Within the framework of the above perspective, I present the following studies which are related to the problem of applied folklore. This work does not propose any theory of applied folklore: it simply provides a number of case studies. Indeed, theories can and should be anchored on case studies, but folklorists have barely scratched the surface of applied folklore, let alone theorizing about it. Further studies and more thorough analysis are required before we get to that stage. Folklorists have to accept the challenge, address themselves to it academically, and make sure not to abuse folklore or be abused by others.
NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. Richard M. Dorson, *Folklore and Folk Life: An Introduction* (Chicago, 1972), pp. 2-5. I am adding here folk beliefs, because it is often difficult to separate customs from underlying beliefs. In many instances it is the beliefs that give rise to customs as well as maintain their persistence in the tradition.


4. Ibid. p.52.

5. Ibid. p.63.


10. See Richard Dorson's Comments in R. sweterlitsch. *op. cit*


24. In certain countries like Nigeria and the Sudan, work on medical herbs is gaining more recognition within academic medical circles.

25. For a detailed account of the titles of dissertations and publications of the folklore Department of.


27. The Council for Folk Crafts has been inactive since its establishment. Whether the Council resumes its activities and manages to fulfill its objectives remains to be seen.
Chapter Two

FOLKLORE, URBANIZATION
AND MODERNIZATION
FOLKLORE, URBANIZATION AND MODERNIZATION

The problems of urbanization and modernization, and their impact on folklore, have only recently started to attract serious attention in international folklore scholarship. In fact scholars are still arguing whether they have managed to introduce any new ideas or devices into the study of folklore in modern terms, or whether they are still following the footsteps of their predecessors the discredited survivalists.\(^1\)

If we take into consideration the tendency for new ideas and modern techniques to move from Europe and America to the "Third World", we realize that this new direction in folklore studies will take a long time to reach Africa.

In this age of technological innovations and far-reaching mass media, many people in very remote corners of Africa are able to enjoy World Football Competition live on T.V. nevertheless, many African folklorists both African nationals and foreigners still hold firmly to rather outmoded concepts of folklore. For such folklorists folklore in Africa means a grandmother telling stories, preferably fictitious stories, to her grandsons at night, and they are disappointed when they do not find this situation. Meanwhile plenty of folklore lies unnoticed under the nose of many an African folklorist. In this state of affairs, we are justified in saying that the "folk" are much ahead of the folklorists.
This article will discuss the problems of urbanization and modernization and their impact on folklore, with specific reference to the Republic of the Sudan. Since the events in the Sudan are not unique to that country, they throw some light on the situation in other African countries.

The discussion will be divided into two parts. The first part deals with the establishment of urban elite culture in the early decades of the nineteenth century, which heralded the introduction of urbanization and modernization. There will also be a discussion of the attitude of the African urban elite to folklore, and its influence on folklore scholarship in Africa. The second Part of the discussion draws upon the modest experience of the Department of Folklore at the University of Khartoum to describe the impact of urbanization and modernization on some folklore genres.

**Colonialism and the Rise of Urban Elite Culture:**

During the Turkish colonial period (1821-1885) there emerged in the Sudan an urban culture characterized by social and technological innovation. This culture included innovations in education, dress, floodways, and entertainment. New materials, mainly foreign goods, became available, as did new facilities and domestic conveniences. Most important of all was the appearance of a new social class associated with a new urban style of life.

This new class, the *afandiyaa* (the administrative
officials and assistants under the 'Turkish Government' had close ties to the colonial administration, and tended to accept and enjoy the foreign style of living brought about by colonialism. Members of this group were receptive to foreign influences and disseminated them throughout the community. Other groups in the Sudanese community looked up to this elite group for social and cultural leadership, and they, in turn, looked to their colonial employers for cultural innovation and tended to copy them.

It is significant that the word used by the Sudanese "folk" to refer to members of this urban elite class the afandiyya - is a loan word from the Turkish language. This is an indication that the Sudanese "folk" were aware of the alienation of this class and its culture. The tendency of the urban elite class to copy (and sometimes try to emulate) the life style of foreign colonial culture attracted ridicule from the "folk" as in the following proverb, which means in board English translation.

"Al turki wa-la al mittorik" A real Turk is better than the one (Sudanese) who acts like a Turk.

A lot of folklore in the form of songs and jokes arose expressing the tensions between the rural "folk" and the urban elite. This folklore also expressed the rejection of this semi-colonial urban culture, dominated by foreign tendencies, by the bulk of the Sudanese community.
The afandiyya were basically an occupational group with their own folklore in the form of anecdotes, jokes, memorats, songs and practices. In accordance with accepted concepts and definitions in the field of folkloristics, they can justifiably be regarded as a "folk". In this connection I refer to Alan Dundes's definition:

"The term 'folk' can refer to any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor is - it could be a common occupation, language or religion - but what is important is that a group formed for whatever reason will have some traditions which it calls its own." (1)

The culture propagated by this group, however, was urban elite: it was outward-looking and somewhat separated from the rural folk culture which indentifies the majority of the Sudanese peoples.

The Urban Elite and Negative Attitudes to Folklore:

Similar urban elite cultures have emerged in most African countries. The basis of such cultures was the class of educated government employees who served as administrative assistants to the colonial officials. After Independence, the ministers, political leaders, policy makers and responsible officials in African national governments often came from this class. As mentioned earlier, members of these urban elite groups were known for their readiness
to accept foreign colonial influences. They were subjected to a process of indoctrination which resulted in cultural alienation. Such alienation is clearly visible in their emulation of foreign colonial (often European) culture, and implicit rejection of African local cultures in the form of African folklore and languages. The attitudes of members of the urban elites are important to the state of folklore scholarship and the official position of folklore within African states.

A number of responsible African officials had (and still have) negative attitudes towards folklore. Some view folklore in a romantic nostalgic manner others think of it as trivial, but harmless, entertainment. Such attitudes are not surprising, since the African elite directed their eyes towards foreign urban centers, rather than rural districts in their own countries. Accordingly, folklore was relegated to a minor position, and its functions and relevance in life were ignored. In official circles in some African States today, folklore does not mean more than folk dance troupes that can be mobilized at airports to welcome national and international leaders and state guests.

One of the repercussions of this negative attitude is the lack of serious attention to folklore. In many African states activities aiming at the collection, analysis and study of folklore are very meager, and leave much to be desired. This
lack of serious attention is reflected in the fact that in all the African universities there is only one fully-fledged Folklore Department. (4) The attitudes mentioned above influence both the state of folklore and its applications.

The Impact of Urbanization and Modernization on Folklore Genres:

The second half of the present century has witnessed drastic processes of urbanization and modernization in Sudan caused by population movement, development and modern mass media. Unlike the socio-political changes which accompanied colonialism in the early nineteenth century, that led to the emergence of an urban elite culture, the present processes are more far-reaching, and go deep to the grass roots. They have affected both rural population, and their impact on folklore has already been felt.

There are two main ways in which urbanization, & modernization have spread over the country, and affected its folklore. First, the movement of the rural population into urban centers, particularly the national capital, Khartoum, has disrupted their traditional life and subjected them to intensive modernization. Secondly, modernization has encroached upon rural areas, especially in connection with development schemes, with considerable impact on traditional life and folklore. The above processes will be discussed with illustrations from the work of the staff and students of
the Folklore department of the University of Khartoum.

(a) Rural-urban Migration:

The Miserivva (Humr) are a rural group that has migrated to Khartoum. The Humr are pastoral nomadic cattle owning people from western Sudan. Sizeable numbers of them were attracted by job opportunities in the industrial district of Khartoum north in the 1960's. They first settled in big numbers in a shanty town around the industrial district. At the beginning of the 1970’s, plots of land were allotted to them, and gradually a new sub-urban village Hajj Yusuf - was established north of Khartoum. The majority of the migrants were young men who came without their families, although some of them brought their immediate families later. Naturally, they brought neither their cattle nor their horses with them. From pastoral nomads, they became factory workers and the factory environment had a major impact on their lives. It influenced their dress, food habits, social relations, mode of entertainment, division of the day and likewise their folklore.

A folklore study conducted about fifteen years after the migration of the Humr to Khartoum reveals that traditional folktales have become far less prevalent in the urban setting.\(^5\) From thirty-two informants interviewed in Hajj Yusuf, only one work reported witnessing and participating in storytelling during her stay in the suburb. The rest of the
informants stated that they had neither heard nor told any stories or riddles ever since they came to Khartoum or Hajj Yusuf. (6).

The reasons for the absence of storytelling in the urban setting are not hard to find. Traditionally among the Humr, stories were told by grandmothers to their grand children. The extended family system, in which grandmother and grand children lived together in the same compound, encouraged storytelling of this kind. In Khartoum, however most of the immigrants were without their families. Although some of them brought their immediate families later, the traditional extended family system could not be established in the new urban setting. Thus, both the traditional performers and audiences of folktales were absent.

The same factors influenced riddling, because they are closely associated with storytelling. Both genres were performed in the same session. In fact among a number of Sudanese groups, riddles are referred to as "short folktales."

'The grinding stone song (ghunal-E-Murhaka) was a genre of Humr Folklore which disappeared totally in the urban environment. Grinding stone songs are work songs which accompany the manual grinding of millet by women in order to prepare local bread. In the city, ready-made wheat bread has largely replaced the local millet bread or porridge. For those who still prefer millet bread or porridge, millet is
ground by electrically-operated mills, which are available in cities. In the face of these welcome changes which eliminated manual drudgery, the grinding stone has disappeared an (with it the grinding stone songs).

Another important development which influenced all folklore in the urban environment is that the division of time (the day) in the rural setting is quite different from that in the urban environment. In the rural setting, after people return from their grazing rounds and take their evening meal", they usually devote part of their time to folklore and communal social interaction. In contrast, the urban factory workers are expected to work during any hour of the day or night since the factory operates for twenty-four hours a day, on a three-shift system. The workers who are off duty join the functional literacy programs organized by some factories or go to evening schools. They are keen to improve their educational standards, in order to strengthen their chances for promotion.

The above factors have disrupted the communal nature of the migrant society, and diminished the chances for folklore performances on a daily basis. Weekly and national holidays as well as festivals and social ceremonial gatherings, such as circumcision and weddings, have become the major occasions for the exchange and performance of folklore. Thus, a number of folklore genres which are in the
form of a daily practice in the rural setting have become in the urban environment an occasional practice.

While the urban factory environment has robbed folklore of some of its traditional genres and performance occasions, another study has demonstrated that the same urban setting has provided folklore with new genres and new occasions for exchange and performance. Scheduled breaks during and between the shifts, and unscheduled breaks, such as power cuts, are opportune occasions for the performance of different folklore genres amongst the ethnically heterogeneous factory workers. Story telling sessions both inside the factory courtyard, and at the workers' residential quarters, indicate that the folklore repertoire of different ethnic groups included a number of narratives which were created in the urban setting, and in response to the pressures and socio economic conditions in the new home.

Most of these newly created narratives mainly belong to the legend category, though there are also some anecdotes. Such development seems expected since as pointed out by Linda Degh, "the legend, above all, is more local than the tale, more likely to develop local patterns in spite of its tendency to migrate and spread cross-culturally." Among the common legends widely circulated within the factory community, is a legend about the migrant labourer.
According to M.E. Bushra's study of Sudanese factory folklore, variants of this legend often have a fixed form. (9) The first set of episodes is devoted to the temptation to undertake the journey, and the glamour of city life. Then a number of episodes are devoted to the journey from the homeland to the metropolis, Khartoum. The last episodes deal with the early days of life in the city, the loneliness of the migrant, his difficulties and frustrations in establishing a new home, and ends with the successful acquisition of a plot of land when the migrant becomes permanently settled. Within some ethnic groups, such as the Miseriyya, these legends are associated with particular individuals who were among the first migrants to Khartoum, and played a remarkable role in the acquisition of land for the settlement of members of their ethnic group. In the eyes of their people, they became culture heroes. Therefore, it is not surprising that the form of these narratives is similar to the pattern of the hero of tradition.

(b) The Spread of Modernization &

Urbanization into Rural Areas:

The bulk of the Sudanese population remained in their traditional homeland, where development projects and the mass media brought the focus of modernization to them. A number of studies have demonstrated that modern innovations have influenced not only the life style but also
the folklore of rural communities.

In a study related to rural development, M.A. Ibrahim examined the introduction of modern water supply among the nomadic Hamar of Western Kordofan, its impact on Hamar settlement and life, and its reflection in oral tradition. Hamar folklore expressed both positive and negative responses to the process of modernization, represented by the new means of water supply. Initially there was some apprehension, possibly arising from unfamiliarity with the forthcoming change, but later there arose a sense of prosperity and satisfaction associated with the introduction of modern technology.

Details of the installation of the modern water supply, and the socio-economic changes resulting from it, appeared in Hamar folk poetry. Poems depicted the digging of deep wells, the operation of the engines and the pumping of water "which flooded like the sea". The poems described how availability of water produced abundant crops. Trucks were loaded with millet, sesame and gum Arabic, and people were busy washing, bleaching and ironing their clothes. A sense of happiness and thriving prosperity caused by modernization became evident in the subject matter of the folklore of the Hamar community. Teirab A. Al Nagi has documented an example of a traditional genre of folk poetry reflecting details of modern life - in this case the modern
administrative system. The example concerns the *zanig*, sub-genre of folk praise poetry among the Bani Halba of Darfur. Al Nagi describes the genre in these terms:

"The *zanig* is tea-praise. It is composed and chanted by both men and women and is associated with one of the most popular practices in the Bani Halba Community i.e. drinking tea... This is a gallantry association of youth concerned with the norms of polite behaviour, handsome attire, courteous behaviour towards women, and most important of all the rules a regulations for drinking tea."(2)

Our example is a *zanig* poem about sugar shortage without sugar, tea-drinking sessions can not take place. Members of the tea-drinking association contracted the merchant and urged him to approach the Governor and convey their concern to him. When the Governor was informed about the seriousness of the situation, in anger he struck the table with his fist. Then he opened his file and read thereafter, he wrote in green and signed in red. (Indicating top priority). With such strict orders, everybody was busy loading sugar sacks on the train. When the train started moving, possibly from the metropolis - Khartoum - to Darfur, the train conductor lit his cigarette and took a deep breath of relief."(3)
This poem presents a typical picture of contemporary urban administration in the Sudan, with clear influences from the colonial past. The dramatis personae (the governor and the train conductor), and the whole office atmosphere of files and signature in red represent the new administrative experience.
The Influence of Modern Mass Media:

Modern mass media in the form of radio, television, video-tapes and cassettes and more recently satellite stations constitute an important dimension in the process of urbanization and modernization. They have exerted a tremendous impact—both positive and negative—on the state of Sudanese folklore. Such impact has reached rural areas, but it is most heavily felt within the urban and suburban areas.

A striking example of the impact of the mass media on the folklore of the urban groups is provided by a Jardag (love poem) recorded from the Miseriya settlement in Khartoum. In this poem the bard describes the international reputation his beloved had gained for her beauty. The Provisional Government of Ethiopia sent letters enquiring about her. The leaders of the White House held a special meeting because of her. Berjenaif, the Secretary General of the Communist Party, cabled her. She is also compared to the Russian rocket which no currency can buy, and the sky hawk aeroplane which bombarded the military airport. \(^{(4)}\).

The unconventional material in this urban love poem can be attributed to the impact of radio and television media to which the urban dweller is constantly exposed the poem lies on the borderline of Baggara (Miseriya) tradition, it is in fact a new tradition in the making. In this case the mass media have drastically changed the folk tradition, whereas
in the two examples from rural areas discussed above, the impact of modernization on folk poetry was not so extreme.

The mass media have not completely displaced local oral performers - the bards and narrators - in rural communities. In many communities these two methods of transmitting information complement each other.

Far from replacing the local bards, the mass media have broadened the world-view of these local performers and consequently that of their audiences also. The bards are professionally responsible for the transmission of news-among other things - and they act as intermediaries between the mass media and their local communities. They digest the content of mass media broadcasts, then utilize it in their poetry, popularize it and transmit it anew to their audience, in the oral artistic manner to which they are accustomed. Thus, they assist in linking their communities with international circles. At the same time as they preserve the tradition, they are extending the boundaries of that tradition.

In the last few years, however, the influence of the mass media in the Sudan has been growing. Thousands of Sudanese, from most regions and ethnic groups, have immigrated to neighboring oil-producing countries such as Saudi Arabia, Libya and the United Arab Emirates. According to a study published in 1979, Sudanese workers in Saudi Arabia alone were 140,000 people. (5) Those
figures have multiplied in the 1980s and 1990s.

They joined the multi-national, and ethnically diverse working population in these oil-producing states. While living abroad, they were temporarily separated from their traditional cultures. Moreover, they adopted the life styles of the Arabian states to which they immigrated, including acquisition of luxury items and electronic equipment such as radios, television sets and cassette recorders.

Upon returning home, either finally or on leave, the immigrants imported numerous electronic goods for themselves and for their families and friends. Those items have found their way into most parts of the country, even the remotest rural villages. Hand-in-hand with them came an imported ready made culture, which lately started to threaten the traditional culture.

Another important factor related to the increasing influence of the mass media in the Sudan, is that the area covered by Sudan Television which has expanded during the last few years. New statins have been built in various regional capital cities. Also a system of boosters is expanding the range of the present station, thus providing wider coverage.

These events, the importation of electronic by Sudanese workers returning from abroad, and the expansion of the national broadcasting network, are having a serious effect
upon folklore. In urban areas particularly, many active tradition-bearers have become passive listeners and viewers, rather than performers.

Conclusion:

The foregoing overview of the impact of modernization on folklore in the Sudan suggests that it is neither easy, nor advisable to generalize about this subject. Some genres such as the grinding stone songs have disappeared in the urban setting; but other genres such as the legend have been flourishing even in the factory environments. In other cases traditional genres have persisted but show clear signs the influence of the modern environment, especially the mass media. Thus, we conclude that in assessing the impact modernization on folklore, every genre and every situation must be studied separately. Moreover, since folklore can be seen as an index of socialization, it may be utilized in understanding such processes as urbanization modernization and globalization, and in assessing their impact on the folk.
NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO


2. This does not mean that urbanization or industrialism are new phenomena in Africa. For instance, in the Sudan urbanization dates back to pre-Christian time. The city of Meroe in the Meroetic Kingdom was an urban industrial centre.


4. The Department of Folklore at the Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum is the only fully-fledged folklore department within an African University. However, there are numerous folklore programs in a number of universities, and some centres and institutes.


10. Mohammed A. Ibrahim, the Impact of Modern Water Supply


13. Ibid, P. 205.


Chapter Three

FOLKLORE AND TRADITIONAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA
Chapter Three

FOLKLORE AND TRADITIONAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

The African World-View:

Before examining the issue of folklore and traditional education, we need to look very closely at the world-view of the individual who is to be educated and that of the society which is responsible for undertaking the educational process. In traditional societies, the individual and the group often tend to merge, especially in issues such as world-view. The layman and the sophisticated intellectual share common ground; and if there are any differences they are a matter of degree rather than kind. We also need to examine the concept of education of the society in question, as opposed to that of other societies.

As a starting point, it is necessary to look into the intricate questions of how a certain people see the world, how they view others as well as the universe around them, and how they see themselves in relation to others and to the universe as a whole. Fundamentals of perception and cognition for that society revolve around those questions, and are of prime importance to the educational process.

In African societies the Dead, the Living and the Unborn constitute one continuum; a continuum that is considered an important matrix in the African World.
The Dead, i.e. the ancestors, are the guardians of society and of tradition. They look after the living and are held responsible for their successes or failures. They affect the lives not only of their sons (i.e. the present society), but also of their grandsons - both born and unborn (i.e. the future society). The ancestors and their descendants have very distinct duties and responsibilities towards each other. This intricate system of mutual obligations is passed from one generation to another creating cultural continuity. The living of today are the ancestors of tomorrow, and the un-born of today are the living of tomorrow. Thus, traditional education in Africa is education about and for the past, the present and the future, because it is difficult to separate the three according to African world-view.

Another important parameter of the African world-view is that man, and his physical and metaphysical surroundings are closely bound up, and affect one another. Human beings, animals, plants and even stones are in a state of communion. Nothing is ruled out or considered absurd. Trees and animals talk and man listens. Human beings complain about their misfortunes to spirits and ancestors. The sound of the blowing wind and the shapes of accumulating clouds convey definite messages too. In brief, man is in complete communion with nature both animate and inanimate. This world-view is clearly expressed in African folktales, in folk
religion, in the contributions of African creative writers and in the writings of African leaders and intellectuals. Storytellers keep retelling stories whose episodes derive from this world-view, because this is the way they see and realize things. Their audiences are captivated by the stories, spread them around, and assure their circulation and persistence in tradition, because for them they are the actual portrait of the way things are.

This world-view is not restricted to traditional laymen in rural areas, but is shared by some of the intellectual leaders as well. In fact some of Africa's intellectuals have become more aware of the basic parameters of their traditional cultures through close contact with foreign cultures. Leopold C. Senghor, for example, is one who embraces and advocates the traditional African world-view, although he gives it a philosophical existential dimension. While defining negritude which is basically a call for return to the African roots, or to the "folk" and the folklore he states

"So negritude is essentially human warmth which is a presence of life, a world-presence a world-view. It is existentialism so to speak, rooted in Mother Earth, blooming in the sun of Faith. This world presence is the participation of the subject with the object, the participation of man with the cosmic forces, the communion of man with other men, and finally with all beings from the smallest stone to God" (I).
The concept of education:

Before discussing the contribution of folklore to education, or elaborating on the basis of African traditional education, I would like to focus on the concept of education in the West as opposed to Africa. This is necessitated by the fact that contemporary formal education in Africa has been based on Western models, and in the enthusiastic application of these models, the African concept of education has been either forgotten or ignored.

In the Western concept of education, knowledge and education are closely associated with reading and writing. Taking our examples from two widely used dictionaries of English language, we find the following:

1. Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines a literate person as:
   a) An educated person
   b) One who is able to read and write.\(^{(2)}\)

2. Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary also defines a literate person as:
   c) A learned or educated person
   d) One who is able to read and write.\(^{(3)}\)

The equation of literacy with education is valid for Western culture, but is by no means universally valid.
However this culture-specific concept of education has been applied to other societies to which it is not suited.

The formula which equates knowledge with literacy does not meet the challenge presented by the African real it:

One must realize that African culture is basically a culture, and that oral and visual arts play an important role in African traditional education. When a Western scholar - or anyone enslaved by Western concepts of education claims that Africa has no history or civilization, this apparently contemptuous assertion is based on an inability to see that African education has its own cultural premises.

The claim that an African is illiterate or uneducated falls down once literacy and education are defined in terms appropriate to African culture. An African need not read or write, in the Western sense of the words, in order to be educated. He has been instructed in systems of traditional knowledge by traditional forms of education. With such an education he can "read" many messages which a literate Westerner could not.

An uneducated African (in the Western sense of the words) is capable of encoding and decoding knowledge, information, and messages. In pursuing such an activity, he utilizes the oral, aural and visual dimensions. For instance, when an African, who is conversant in the tradition of his people, sees a scar on the face of another African, he can
easily identify him and recognize his tribe or home town. The beat of the talking drum can also be deciphered by the knowledgeable African to provide him with important information. Likewise, he can unravel the symbols behind the art and sculpture of an African deity, such as Eshu, and comprehend their meaning and significance. Thus, such an individual can decode signs and information i.e. he can read, albeit not in the Western sense. However, this is the form of literacy that is required within his culture, and amongst his own people, if he is to be considered knowledgeable.

Other Characteristics of Traditional Education in Africa:

Traditional education in Africa is basically informal, but there are also formalized practices, almost in every society besides the informal tutoring that is open to members of the society throughout their lives, there is a the formal learning of skills, which is only open to the "elect" and/or the "select", and that is intended to provide the society with its experts and specialists.

There is also general consenses among educationists that traditional education in Africa depends upon observation, Imitation, and participation. (4) Some educationists also think that traditional African education is "acquired' for life and through life" (5) whereas other scholars propose that "education is life itself" or that it is "living and doing". (6) Most of the studies cited above, either
explicitly or implicitly point out that traditional African education is a continuous activity, and stress its functional nature. However, one study elaborates on the relationship between education and self reliance. (7)

Another important feature of traditional education in Africa is that it is an integrated experience an experience which is realized within an overall social context, and that should accordingly, be looked at from a holistic perspective. Stressing this integrated nature Babs Fafunwa states:

"The aim, Content and the method of traditional education are intrinsically interwoven; they are not divided into separate compartments as in the case with the Westernized system of education". (8)

The fact that informal African education is tradition-based, society oriented, and undertaken within a broad social context, puts it in a close and direct relationship with folklore, as has been noticed by numerous folklorists. For them this is an accepted common statement, about which they do not need to be reminded. But, other Africans, regardless of their areas of specializations, also need to realize this close relationship once they begin to deal with education in Africa. In this connection, G. Brown and M.Hiskett have this to say:

"Informal education was and still is provided within this overall social context. Children's games are
important and frequently take the form of copying the activities of adults: hunting and fishing for boys, mother care and housewifery for girls. Important, too, is the history and folklore of the community which is passed on from one generation to another by word of mouth. Oral Tradition sets a premium on community memory-mindedness in a way that is difficult for people from media-saturated countries to appreciate."

However, as mentioned earlier, our endeavour to grasp and appreciate education in Africa, or for that matter, African life in general, should not stop at the overall social context. We should move from the social context to the cultural context and to the entire world-view.

**Folklore and Traditional Education in Africa:**

As mentioned above, some scholars have argued that in Africa, "education is life". Education takes place through oral and visual channels, by observation, imitation, and participation. These channels of transmission are not restricted to education; they are essential for the functioning and continuity of daily life, and they are also the same and channels by which folklore is transmitted.

Traditional education takes place through folk groups whether the extended family, the age-set or the ethnic group a matter which also brings time closer to folklore. Moreover, its content is basically data that has stood up to the test of
it and that has persisted in the tradition of the concerned
group(s). Traditional education is often pursued in a manner
which appeals to the aesthetic faculties.

African traditional education is accomplished in an
institutionalized artistic manner through folklore materials
and genres such as myths, legends, folk crafts, children's
games and poetry, and through various customs and social
institutions.

If a certain initiation ceremony aims at creating a sense
of brotherhood and group solidarity between the initiates,
then the songs sung in the ceremony will deal with this
theme, and the manner in which they are sung will also
inculcate a feeling of unity, solidarity and brotherhood. If a
child or a young man attends a festival of historical
significance, the historical information wrapped up in this
festival will not be passed down to him in a drab lesson, but
in the form of a song, to which he acts as a chorus, or as a
dance in which he participates, or as a dramatized folktale
that captures all his senses. When he grows up, he sings,
dances, and acts the history of his people. The lessons that he
had learnt become an integrated experience that enlightens
and entertains at the same time.

In the following pages, I intend to highlight some
aspects of the use of folklore in African education. The use of
folklore in informal education covers a very wide
area which incorporates many daily activities, but I shall focus on the use of African folklore in environmental, social, moral, aesthetic and vocational education.

**Environmental Education:**

At an early age, the African child is introduced to his physical environment through myths and folktales. The river, the valley, the mountain and the dense forest will all be the subject of myths and legends which tell him about the origin and essence of these important physical features. Creation myths address both the child and the adult at a philosophical level. Etiological myths (explanatory myths) attempt to deal with fundamental issues that preoccupy the child's mind, such as: Where did I come from? How did I come into being? Where did earth come from? Where did fire come from? ... And so on.

A little later, once the child has come to grasp some of the realities of his physical environment, he is introduced to certain aspects of the metaphysical world. He (she) starts to learn something about the roles and characteristics of the ancestors, the deities, the powers of the underworld and the supreme god. Fictitious folktales also play an important role in sharpening and training the child's imagination and inventiveness - two important qualities for education.
Social and Moral Education:

One important function of education is to enable individuals to relate to other members of his community. Social norms and institutions are inculcated through social conditioning within the family, and with the help of narratives and proverbs. Respect for elders, competition, benevolence, communal responsibility, respect for family and tribal links, and other desirable social attributes are reflected in traditional narratives and in various ceremonies.

The folktale stands out as a model for social and moral behavioral patterns. It influences the child's educational development. For instance, we find the following well-structured pattern in many folktales:

"Three brothers or mates compete in undertaking difficult task. One of them enters the competition at a disadvantage either because of his social background or his young age. The disadvantaged competitor distinguishes himself by showing respect to elders being kind to animals ... etc. This deed, which is desired by his society, is appreciated and enforced. He receives supernatural help, achieves great victories and is eventually rewarded again by being married to the king’s or the chief’s daughter.

This pattern recurs frequently in African narratives and provides a behavioral educational model which
influences the child's social and moral development. While listening to such a folktale at night, the African child identifies with the hero of the story—the one who makes the right choice by being respectful to elders or kind to animals. When the hero faces a challenge, such as in a contest, the child in the audience feels challenged, and when the hero is rewarded the listener feels that he too is rewarded. Then the child goes to sleep and may even dream about the adventures of the hero of his favourite tale. Next morning when the opportunity presents itself i.e. upon his first encounter with a situation which calls for showing respect to elders or kindness to animals, it is his chance to become the hero in actual life.

Children's games also provide a form of social and moral education. As mentioned by Raum, through children games the age group carries out a kind of practical self education. They provide experience in living within a group and in respecting its rules. The children make the rules of the game, and devise a system of rewarding the winners or penalizing the losers. But what is more important is that the age-set is very strict in punishing those who deliberately try to violate the rules of the games, or who refuse to accept the penalties. It is very common to notice at one corner of the "play ground a child who is sitting sadly as an outcast observing the game from a distance, probably because he
violated the rules and refused to accept the penalty. He would be reinstated into the group, only after he had been disciplined. By learning to respect the rules of these games children develop a sense of respect for law and order. Children's games prepare the African child for being a good citizen who knows how to relate to other members of his community, and how to abide by the laws and norms of his group.

Aesthetic Education:

Another interesting area of African education in which folklore plays a vital part is that of aesthetics. African cultures are highly appreciative of artistic expression. Witty stylized speech can win legal cases, settle disputes or lead to wars. What you say is important. But how you say it is equally important. To take only two examples from the field of aesthetic education we choose wit and articulation. African cultures try to ensure that their members will be witty and articulate. From early childhood on riddles are introduced into African education in an attempt to sharpen the child's wit. A question is posed in a metaphorical and allegorical tricky way and the child is requested to give the right answer. The African child is also expected to pronounce his plosives and dentals and pharyngals in the right way. Even if they occur in difficult clusters. He is often challenged to pronounce difficult sequences of utterances quickly but

66
still in a distinct and articulate manner, and these tongue-twisters help the African child develop his faculties for articulation.

**Vocational Training:**

Different African societies aim at giving their members practical training in hunting, fishing, farming, and other skills. Among African groups who depend on hunting for their subsistence, the younger men organize themselves into hunters' societies and arrange hunting parties and camps which provide them with practical training. Information on animals and on hunting techniques are embodied in songs and other traditions which are recited and learnt by members of hunters' societies. Such information is put to use when members of these societies go on hunting expeditions.

If we choose farming as another example, we also find that African folklore has significant functions in providing practical vocational training to make an African a better farmer. Different farming techniques and a multitude of information pertinent to farming is embodied in different folklore genres. Part of acquainting the African child with his environment is in the form of weather-lore and plant-lore. The child learns about the climatic conditions in his area. He is also introduced to the different kinds of soil within his neighborhood, and the different kinds of plants in his area. All this is part of the general education to which the
child is exposed at an earlier stage. However, at a later stage the African farmer is supplied with more specialized information in poetry or narratives. For instance, he is taught how to make use of his knowledge of the physical environment. What is important at this stage is the application of traditional knowledge. per se. This kind of practical education enables the African farmer to determine which kind of soil is best for what kind of crop and under what climatic conditions.

Initiation as Culmination of Youth Education:

The aspects of traditional education discussed above are carried out in a gradual and informal manner. That fits the quality and pace of daily life. The successful integration of the educational process into daily activities makes the youngsters hardly aware that they are being educated. However, at a certain age the young boys and girls (who are considered to be not young any more) are exposed to a carefully-planned and well-calculated educational process through their participation into initiation camps. The majority of African ethnic groups have (or used to have) initiation camps which constitute a more intensified form of education involving the indoctrination and practical involvement of the learners. They serve as culmination of youth education, and the threshold of a new life.

Initiations stress different attributes according to
the sex of the initiates and according to the mode of life in
the society to which they belong i.e. whether it is a hunting,
pastoral, nomadic and so on. However, there are a number of
qualities that are expected of all the initiates regardless of
their ethnic groups. Qualities such as endurance, courage and
training as future warriors receive special attention in male
camps; whereas female initiates receive emphasis on how to
become successful wives, housekeepers, and mothers. Going
through these initiation camps (or the appropriate secret
societies associated with them) amounts to a rite of passage
accompanied by a change of status from youth to adulthood.
This change of social status is reflected in many ways such as
naming, appearance, and new activities. New male initiates
receive the facial mark of their people carry the spear as
recognized warriors, are entrusted with the cattle, and attend
dances as fully participating adults. In the initiation camps
and secret societies, as elsewhere, education is also carried
out through the genres and media of folklore. Folk songs,
folk dances, customs and beliefs play an important role in the
initiation process. Folk songs, in particular, constitute the
major form in which this traditional heritage is preserved,
and thereafter, transmitted to the initiates. Most of the
numerous studies of initiation camps in Africa stress the
educational and folkloric aspects. (11).
Education of the Traditional Expert:

The kind of education discussed above is accessible to every member of the community, and is, in fact, expected of everybody in that community. However, there is more rigorous and long-lasting training which is geared to educating the educationists and training the trainers. This is the education of "the select" and "the elect". A number of children and young adults who have shown natural aptitude towards certain skills and/or those who occupy recognized social, artistic, religious or occupational positions within group are chosen to become the traditional experts. The son of blacksmith is likely to be trained by his grand father or by his father, or by elder brothers to become a blacksmith. Similarly, the son of a traditional priest who is entrusted with the religious secrets of an oracle, or that of the bard who entrusted with the history of his people, are eikely to follow the steps of their fathers and to be trained by them. This specialized training, however, is not restricted to the members of the right families, but is also extended to those who excel, regardless of their parentage.

Like other members of their ethnic groups, the traditional experts learn by observation, imitation and participation. However, in their case, the educational process is more laborious and involves intensive and lengthy practice. Such training is often in the form of apprenticeship
under the guidance and direct supervision of a recognized expert. After years of training, the apprentice is often tested by his trainers, and also in front of an outside audience before a licence to practice is granted.

Although I have stressed the education of youth in this presentation, traditional education in Africa is by no means confined to the young. Education is a continuing process from the cradle to the grave. Adults and elderly people are constantly exposed to traditional education in the form of oral history, prophetic praise poetry, heroic poetry, and saints legends. Adults learn from the elderly and from their recognized mates, and the elderly learn from one another, and especially from the recognized traditional experts.

**The Need for Synthesis:**

It is also important to mention at this stage that traditional education in Africa has a lot to offer to formal education. Various scholars and educationists have stressed this point. For example, G.N. Brown and M. Hiskett describe some of the potential uses of traditional education for "modern" education in Africa:

"Apprenticeship, in fact, highlights the way that it is possible to embody much of the traditional African philosophy of education into modern education. The emphasis on educational activity has much to recommend it; the stress on the relevance of
education to the individual 's subsequent career is important in countries with a low GNP, the 'folk wisdom' approach to education can be utilized in making available to the school curriculum some of the research undertaken by University institutes of African Studies, and the emphasis on community participation in education is one of the more valuable aspects of the critique of Western education that is made by the de-schooling movement"(12).

The late President Julius Nyrere, who advocates education for self reliance, has also called for the utilization of traditional knowledge and the incorporation of such knowledge into "modern" education. Basing his argument on Tanzania, which is basically an agricultural country, Nyrere proposed that the African way of learning by doing should be stressed, and that communal farming, which is the traditional and common occupation of the population, should receive major attention in the schools. At the same time both the learners and the learning institutions should pay attention and respect to traditional knowledge but without being entirely enslaved by it:

"Our farmers have been on the land for a long time. The methods they use are a result of long experience in the struggle with nature; even the rules and taboos they honour have a basis in reason. It is not enough to abuse
a traditional farmer as old-fashioned; we must try to understand why he is doing certain things and not just assume he is stupid... But different rules and different land tenure systems are being used now. Again, therefore, our young people have to learn both a practical respect for the knowledge of the "uneducated" farmer and an understanding of new methods and the reason for them." (13).

Conclusion:

Traditional education in Africa has its own cultural premises. It has its own philosophy and logic which emanate from the basic concepts of African world-view. African scholars and intellectuals need to comprehend and respect the cultural premises of traditional education in Africa, and indeed, of African life in general. The majority tend to overlook this matter or simply take it for granted without giving to adequate consideration.

In present day Africa, formal education is dominated by Western concepts and philosophies which are meant for a different society. Traditional education, on the other hand, has many merits from which we can learn. It is highly functional, characterized by an integrated outlook (which is typical of African life) and by an artistic approach that makes it more appealing to the learner. Moreover, it is closely associated with folklore. In fact, in many instances, it
smoothly merges into folklore. There is an apparent discrepancy between the informal and genuinely-African traditional education on one hand, and the formal and Western-influenced modern education system on the other. The former is tradition-based and society-oriented; whereas the latter is individual-oriented, alien, and, indeed, alienating in certain instances. Since only a minority of the African population have access to formal education, as well as to the social change that is associated with it, the discrepancy between formal and traditional education in Africa tends to create a cultural and socio-economic gap between the elite and the rest of the population. A synthesis of informal traditional education with the formal and so-called "modern" educational system is essential. Traditional education can assist by returning the communal, functional and culturally-relevant aspects of African life to formal education. Bridging the gap between the African elite and the African masses is a challenge that faces Africanists, African intellectuals and scholars, and especially educationists. Folklore has a positive role to play in addressing this problem.
NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE


5. Fafunwa and Aisiku, op. cit., p. 18.


Chapter Four

FOLKLORE AND THE CULTURAL PREMISES
OF AFRICAN ORAL HISTORY
FOLKLORE AND THE CULTURAL PREMISES
OF AFRICAN ORAL HISTORY

The last two decades have seen a considerable growth of interest in the use of oral data for historical purposes especially in Africa. Folklorists, historians, anthropologists, students of literature and political scientists, all are using oral data more and more. Accordingly oral data is acquiring growing recognition within academic and cultural circles as a repository of information about the past, as a vehicle of national pride, and as an important influence on both contemporary realities and future aspirations.

Folklorists and anthropologists have shown the way with regard to using oral material. Both disciplines depend on oral data, and have developed appropriate techniques for using it. Folklorists have been demonstrating the relevance of oral data to historical studies since the nineteenth century, but political science studies using oral materials only date back to the 1940's. Contemporary academic historians have only been conducting such studies since the 1960's(1). Many historians are still uncomfortable with oral history, even in Africa where oral data is indispensible to the study of history.

Folklorists have been interested in the relationship between folklore and history since the infancy of their discipline. As early as 1908, George Lawrence Gomme
published his work *Folklore as an Historical Science*. (2) In later years folklorists have continued this interest in the historical aspects of their material, as reflected in some of the presidential addresses delivered to the British Folklore Society: Margaret Murray and H.R. Ellis Davidson both spoke on this topic in 1955 and 1974 respectively. (3) In 1930, Alexander H. Krappe claimed that folklore was "an historical science," because "it attempts to throw light on man's past." (4) A number of dissertations by folklorists have dealt with the relation between folklore and history, (5) and in recent years a number of oral history projects have been established, often in conjunction with folklore programs.

Since folklore is by nature folk-oriented, it can indicate the shortcomings of the individual-oriented approach to history and show the merits of group-oriented histories. Writing in 1908, Sir George L. Gomme argued against the individualistic orientation of written history:

"It is always well to bear in mind that the historical records preserved from the past must necessarily be incomplete. An accident preserves one and an accident destroys another. An incident strikes one historian, and is of no interest to another. And it may well be that the lost document, the unrecorded incident, is of far more value to later ages than what has been preserved...much is needed to make the picture of life
complete. It is the detail of everyday thought and action that is missing - all that is so well known, the obvious as it passes by everyday chronicler, the ceremony, the faith and the action...which make up the personal, religious and political life of the people."(6)

Gomme, thus, advocates a group-oriented approach to history and a holistic approach that emphasizes the functions and activities of different activities in life. This line of thought explained by Gomme in the above statement is followed by a number of the early folklorists. Writing about the scope of folklore, Alexander H. Krappe states:

"It is to reconstruct a spiritual history of Man, not as exemplified by the outstanding works of poets and thinkers, but as represented by the more or less inarticulate voices of the 'folk'."(7)

Within the field of African studies, so far folklore and oral tradition have been used mainly as a source of historical information and as an aid in historical reconstruction. The main emphasis has been on perfecting a sound methodology which makes the collection, annotation, and use of oral tradition a scientific venture that merits academic respect. However, the role of the folklorist can and should extend beyond the reconstruction of historical incidents.

The historian, especially the oral historian is well equipped to perform this role. The folklorist can explain
concepts of history and indicate the cultural dynamics which lead to the events that make history. Together with anthropology, folklore is well placed to point out and indicate the factors that create the cultural fabric of society, and that eventually lead to the making of history.

The Concept of History:

Questions related to the concept of history, its significance and relevance to the people who are the subject of historical investigations merit serious consideration from African scholars and Africanists. The knowledgeable outsider may be in a better position than the native insider to understand his own history. Due to the subjectivity of the insider, and because he tends to take for granted certain aspects of his history without caring to register them, 'studying history from within has its limitations. On the other hand, the outsider who tries to study the history of another group brings along with him his own cultural values, including the concept of history which he unintentionally and often unconsciously forces upon the group whose history he is studying. If we accept Vansina's statement that cultural values are "the prejudices of a society," (8) we find that prejudices inevitably influence the informant, the tribal chronicler, and the modern historian just as they had previously influenced the protagonists who made that history. Thus, the issues of insider versus outsider and subjectivity
versus objectivity bring about an unavoidable paradox.

"On the one hand, the historian tries to reconstruct the past in the most objective way possible; he therefore uses rigorous methods. On other hand, history cannot simply be even a classified accumulation of authentic facts; it has also to give meaning to these facts by searching for the driving forces, categories and explanatory links. But such interpretations risk a reversion to the subjectivity which the study was at such pains to eliminate. Not only, as has been said, is the historian exposed to the double influence of his socio-cultural background and of the spirit of his times, but he knows also that absolute, impartiality is an impossibility."

The historian, therefore, needs to be alert to the underlying factors affecting the data which provide the basis for his study, and which also influence his own understanding of history. While striving for objectivity, the historian also needs to strike a balance between his own individuality and the "communality" of the group he is writing about, especially if he comes from a different group. If impartiality is an impossibility, it might be more acceptable to opt for history that leans towards the socio-cultural background of the group rather than towards that of the individual historian. A group-oriented emphasis is much
needed in African history to balance and counteract the individual-oriented outlook. In this respect it is relevant to remember Gomme's argument that the individual historian may record one incident that is insignificant for the people he is studying while missing numerous incidents that are of greater significance to them.

The concept of the historicity of oral traditions is part of a bigger problem, i.e., the problem of the concept of knowledge. As I have argued in chapter three, the Western world view holds that knowledge, learning and history cannot exist in the absence of literacy. As a result a number of Western scholars find it difficult to believe in African oral history, or that non-literate people can have history at all. Therefore, when a Western scholar, or even an African scholar brought up under Western historical scholarship, says that "Africa has no history," we are faced with a genuine conceptual problem, although I am not denying that there are sometimes deliberate contemptuous attitudes behind such statements. This conceptual problem is not confined to African oral history, but extends to the history of non-literate people in general. Robert Lowie, for example, denies "utterly that primitive man is endowed with historical sense or perspective."\(^{30}\) Lowie not only fails to see the logic and underlying concepts of the other side (non-literate American Indians in this case) but he also insists that they see their own
history through Western eyes "If primitive notions tally with ours, so much the better for them, not for us."(1)

In Africa, the concept of history should be discussed with reference to the concept of knowledge, and both must be viewed within the broader perspective of African world-view. One aspect of African world-view is the concept that life is a continuum in which the past and the present are closely linked up and influence one another. This is evident in the belief system, in oral historical traditions and in social and political relations. If an African traditional group is celebrating a contemporary achievement such as the opening of a developmental project; or even if they are meeting ceremonially to perform a social function, an important feature of such gathering would be pouring libations or offering sacrifices to the ancestors. The philosophy behind this is that the past - represented by the ancestors - is projected into the present and influences contemporary realities.

The reciprocal relationship between the past and the present is very common among many African groups, and it is of primary importance to understanding the concept of history. For instance, in his study History on the Luapula, Ian Cunnison states that the Bemba word ilyashi which means history 'implies the affairs and cases of the past which make the present affairs what they are. (12) The reciprocal
relationship between the present and the past and its significance for history is also apparent in a Sudanese proverb 'al nisa gadimu tah," i.e., "He who forgets his past, will lose his way." The idea behind those two examples is that the past is relevant to the future, and should contribute towards shaping it. However, the present also contributes greatly towards shaping a group's vision of its past. For example, many historical traditions such as king lists and stool traditions are coined so as to keep the status quo vis à vis justifying political institutions and securing the right of access to power. (33).

A second, important, aspect of African historical traditions and African culture is its communal, integrative and comprehensive nature. This requires a holistic and comprehensive approach from the historian. Historical information is reflected in oral traditions, verbal art, costumes, folk dances, fishing traditions, social and religious institutions, etc. Such information can be transmitted orally, visually, through written document or by mere practice. Much historical information is present in contemporary forms that are often overlooked and that seem on first glance to have no historical significance. For example, festivals are important in inculcating and reviving African history. Festivals merit special mention in this discussion because they constitute a combined social, religious, and political
climax in the life of the community. They comprise a variety of folklore and folklife genres. Moreover, they exhibit the holism, the study of which was advocated by folklorists like Sir G. Lawrence Gomme and Alexander Krappe. Discussing the role of folk festivals and their historical significance among the Akan, Kwame Daaku states:

'During such orderly and impressive ceremonies or durbars, history is literally and figuratively outdoored. At such times E.H. Carr's definition of history as 'that undying dialogue between the present and the past' truly finds expression among the Akan. This periodic reliving or reenactment of the past enables people to learn the general outlines of the history of the whole state... many African peoples such as the Yoruba, the Bakuba, the Baganda, to mention but a few, hold festivals in one form or another in which the past is vividly brought into the minds of the living'"[14].

The Social Relevance of History:

Individuals and groups are more inclined to remember and preserve the historical traditions which are still relevant and affect their lives. Oral traditions that either have direct or indirect bearing on the welfare of a contemporary society receive elaborate treatment from its members and are likely to be preserved. One of the basic functions of history for any group is to inculcate values and record the glorious
past. Thus, we should expect to find elaborate testimonies about the personalities and incidents that satisfy and glorify ethnic and national pride. By contemporary scholarly criteria, i.e., by an outsider's measures, this history might be considered to have serious shortcomings. But from the perspective of the group, a bias in its history is not a shortcoming. For them the function of history was never to record equally the good and the bad. Historians should not expect the oral traditions of groups to record with accuracy that was not intended.

Incidents of great social and political relevance provide the backbone of oral historical traditions. They also provide relative chronology for historical testimonies. The issue of chronology is problematic, however. The past and present are closely linked and tend to enrich one another. Biographies and testimonies about the contemporary period help explain testimonies dealing with the past. During interviews about dating contemporary incidents in their community and local environment, people often provided answers similar to those given in the following conversation.

Interviewer: "When did this incident happen?"
Informant: "Before the death of my brother, Ali." Upon further questioning by the interviewer to determine the time of the death of Ali, and consequently that of the incident being investigated, the informant continues.
"At that time Hussein (his son) was not born yet, we only had Fatima (his elder daughter)."

An informant may not know the age of his own son or daughter in numerical terms. Accordingly, it is difficult for him to give the exact dates of incidents happening in his own life-time. In fact many informants may not know their own ages in numerical terms. In 1968 while interviewing one informant, we asked him about his age. He stated that he was not sure, and that his age would be about sixty or seventy. He added that he could count and verify his age for us. When we asked him to do so, he used a system based on two factors:

a) Natural and geographical phenomena as well as important social, political and economic incidents that have exerted notable impact on the informant's community. Such phenomena and incidents acted as landmarks punctuating time and providing a basis for chronology.

b) Filling the gaps between such landmarks by working out sets of anniversaries between one landmark and the other.

For example, the above informant stated that he was born in the year of the locust. Accordingly, he started counting in the following manner: The year of the locust, its first anniversary, its second anniversary, its third anniversary. The year of the drought, its first anniversary, etc. He
continued through each landmark up to the year in which the interview was conducted - 1968. Whenever he counted one year using this system, he drew a line on the ground with his stick. We determined his age by counting the lines drawn on the ground. Among the landmarks used by that informant, were: The year of the locust, the year of the drought, the year of the scheme (Gezira Agricultural Scheme), the year of Mosilini (World War II), the year of the flood (1946), the year of the flag (independence, 1956), the year of 'Abbud (1958), etc.

Historians can not expect the informant to provide an exact chronology for incidents that took place centuries earlier. However, the informant can provide the basic landmarks which assist in establishing relative chronology. What is true of the family history is also true at the level of ethnic groups and at the national level. Utilizing the social and political relevance of history, the historian should try to elicit the important landmarks in oral testimonies, and attempt to use them judiciously. It has been pointed out that "when the historian asks chronological questions from oral tradition he is in most cases seeking information that these sources were never designed to provide. The memory of the past in oral societies seldom included its abstract quantification." The researcher must utilize both oral traditions and, extra-historical information to arrive at
historical facts his work is similar to that of the linguist who is obliged to extend his investigations to extra-linguistic features in order to determine and explain basic issues about language.

**Folklore and the Making of History:**

The folklorist is capable of sorting and sifting mythical elements, from the historical facts his training and his research tools (including the Motif Index and the Type Index) guide him in this process. Oral tradition consists of a blend of fiction and reality; some of its elements are fictitious themes and motifs that enjoy international distribution and can exist any time and anywhere, whereas other elements refer to local incidents of historical significance. Folklorists are in an ideal position to assist oral historians. However, the duty of the folklorist does not end after sifting the mythical from the historical. He should not disregard and throw away the mythical elements so that the historian could reconstruct history from verified factual, oral data. A major responsibility of the folklorist starts at this point; mythical elements play a major role that has been relatively ignored by both oral historians and folklorists. They contribute to the making of history.

**Conclusion:**

The study of African oral history should not be conducted outside its cultural and social parameters
nor should it be divorced from the communal nature of African, life. The chronology, social functions and relevance of African oral history should be examined from within the concept of history held by the folk who are the subject of historical investigation. The concept of history for most peoples is closely linked to their world-view. Folklore scholarship is basically community and folk-oriented, and has been concerned with the relationship between oral data and history since the nineteenth century. Folklorists can help greatly in the study of African oral history. Most studies of oral tradition have focused on the use of oral data in historical re-construction or on the perfection of a sound methodology for the use of oral data; issues of great importance. The main contribution of folklore will lie in pointing out how oral tradition influences the making and interpretation of history.
NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR


5. As an example of folklore dissertations dealing with history, see W.L. Montell, *A Folk History of*


11. Ibid.: 163.


Chapter Five

FOLKLORE AND DEVELOPMENT
FOLKLORE AND DEVELOPMENT

(A challenging paradox)

The Relationship between folklore and socio-economic development is the subject of this chapter which aims at pointing out the contribution of folklore in this area. This presentation will fall into three sections:

1. The first section will present certain general problems related to concept of development, especially in countries of the "Third world".

2. The second part will discuss briefly some examples of how folklore has been used (and can still be used) in the development of African traditional societies.

3. The third section presents a case study from a farming community in the Sudan, showing how this community used folklore and traditional technology to maintain cohesion and foster prosperity.

The traditional farming system is compared and contrasted with the new mechanized system stressing the impact of the latter on development, and on social life in general.
The Concept of Development:

The term development poses special problems. It has become an obsession to "Third World" countries: One hears the word development many times every day in radio programs, newspapers, political speeches, and ordinary social conversation. It is important to ask whether it is used in all these contexts with the same meaning and connotations; and whether its numerous users even care to state what they mean by development. In some circles, the entire basis of development, its direction and major goals are presently being challenged. Ziolkowski pointed out that "development is on trial nowadays." However, there is a degree of consensus on the definition of factors which are sometimes explicit and often merely implied such as economic growth, increased productivity and technological advancement leading to a general rise in the standard of living of the masses.

Ideally development should emanate from social structure and social values, rather than disrupting them. Development planning must recognize and be accommodated to the social and cultural constraints which have the potential to affect development. This position is summarized in the following statement which considers development:

"An accumulative, continuous, socially controlled growth of productive force involving the totality of the
economy and population, and generated by fundamental changes which pave the way for the creation of local mechanisms of accumulation and social progress. Such development will not be possible without the elimination of the social, political, ideological and cultural obstacles which prevent it; and by this we mean the end of the internal-external domination.²

A basic premise of development which has been increasingly challenged is its "econo-centricism", and the exaggerated role assigned to economic growth which is expected to lead automatically to socio-cultural changes. Scholars such as J. Ziolkowski have categorically stated that this "econo-centricism" is a fallacy.³ It is becoming increasingly apparent that economic growth does not necessarily mean better standards of living for the majority of the population.

In developing countries recently emphasis has been laid on "man". This is logical and justifiable since "man" is both the means of achieving development, and its ultimate recipient. However, the manner in which this was done did not achieve the desired result. The emphasis was mainly on "man" as a means and a tool for achieving development. Vast investments in education caused a rapid increase in the numbers of educated people and an increase in the
opportunities for training in Western technology. The necessary manpower essential for development was created but it did not solve the problem of underdevelopment. Creating such a cadre without providing it with either the means of production or the atmosphere conductive to "development generated many negative results in developing countries". Education alone is demonstrably not the answer to the problem of underdevelopment.

This predicament, in which many African states still find themselves, is described by Ann Seidman:

"In the late 1950s, as African states were winning political independence, many theorists concluded that greater investment in "human capital" was essential to facilitate the spread of modern technology to more backward areas. But rapid multiplication of the numbers of educated men and women, unaccompanied by expansion of modern productive activities, has created large pools of unemployed school leavers, unwilling to return to the backbreaking drudgery of traditional rural life ... But the result has not been the spread of specialization and exchange to encompass the traditional areas in increasingly productive activities rather it appears in recent years to have accelerated the flight of rural Populations to the squalid slums of urban centers. Even University graduates find
themselves without employment ... Increasingly numbers are leaving their countries in search of employment abroad.\textsuperscript{(4)}

Development projects, which often imply planned change, are conceived, supervised and implemented by government, international, and private agencies mainly on the basis of professional excellence. The projects pay little or no attention to traditions and local customs. Scholars in both the humanities and social sciences have noted this shortcoming in development projects. In this respect George M. Foster states:

"There has been a strong tendency to assume that design and construction that meet the highest standards of the profession or professions involved in a project is the primary goal of development. It is assumed that successful environmental modification through sound design and engineering will automatically engender changes in behavior. In other words, if people are presented with what planners and designers feel to be better ways of doing things, they will be eager to accept the innovations.\textsuperscript{(5)}

The problem here lies in the fact that the conceptualization and establishment of such projects emanate from foreign technical expertise, while the behavior of
those who are supposed to utilize and benefit from these projects is rooted in folklore, folklife and local traditions. This discrepancy often leads to the entire failure or reduced utility of development projects. Examples are numerous and of varied nature. In a number of developing countries apartment complexes that have cost millions of dollars are not fully utilized, and sometimes not occupied at all, because they are not suitable for the nomadic habits and tastes of the local population. In other countries factories have been closed because planners have failed to take into account the cultural milieu and the pattern of social life of the population among whom such factories were set up.

In the Sudan, a meat-canning factory which had been set up in Kosti immediately after independence was closed only few years later. A milk processing factory which was set up in Babanusa to produce milk powder met a similar fate. The populations around Babanusa are semi-nomadic people whose pattern of life has been marked by seasonal migration from times immemorial. Moreover, the idea of selling milk is one that tradition in this area does not encourage and even looks down upon. So the factory failed. Later it was used for processing hibiscus powder, since hibiscus grows abundantly in the area.

What is the place of folklore in all this? Can't anthropologists and social and development planners handle
such problems? The answer is that anthropologists and development planners are capable of handling such problems, especially anthropologists, if they are concerned with folklore data. The folk put their beliefs, likes, dislikes, prejudices and hidden sentiments into their folklore genres and unfortunately few anthropologists and social planners are interested in such genres. The folk often reveal themselves more directly in folklore and it is necessary to utilize the Content of folklore in addition to observable behavior and testimonies acquired through interviewing. What is important is that the humanistic aspect of development must be stressed and in this pursuit folklorists, anthropologists and economists all have a positive role to play.

The Role of Folklore in Regroupment and Resettlement:

In Africa and in many "Third World" countries the means available for development are scarce, and the population which is supposed to receive the services and facilities brought by development projects are widely dispersed. Accordingly, it is often necessary to re-settle and re-group such populations before the development project can be started, or at least, in time for people to enjoy its benefits. This is particularly true for projects designed to bring new or better services to the Population.

Folklore can affect this process of the re-grouping of population both negatively and positively. Within the
Muslim parts of the Sudan, people congregate around notable religious personalities and settlements often grow around the graves of Muslim saints. The graves of saints are often honored by building tombs on them. They act as sanctuaries for the population, providing protection and spiritual support for the villagers. Legends about the manifestations of such saints, especially about their roles as protectors of their followers are taken very seriously and constitute an important part of the belief system. These saints and other religious notables buried around them, together with the ancestors, constitute an integral part of the living realities of their communities. The ancestors, who are not endowed with spiritual privileges recognized by the entire community, are only significant for members of their own families but the saints hold special significance for the whole community. Villagers invoke the saints' help at times of difficulties, consult them while they are about to take serious decisions that are going to affect their lives and those of their families, and depend on their presence both spiritually and physically.⁶

A problem then arises when the establishment of a development project necessitates re-settlement of diverse groups together. People are reluctant to move away from their saints and sanctuaries. An example of this problem arose in Kordofan in connection with the installation of water
tanks and the provision of modern water supply system. The initial response to the new system and the level of its utility were affected by folklore and local traditions. (7) Folklore tends to separate people in some circumstances but it can also bring them together, and both cases are relevant to the development planner. James Fernandez provides us with an example of how the Fang migration legend acted as an important instrument of revitalization and re-groupment of diverse clans whose members share and believe in this legend. In this case the legend acted as the common tradition on the basis of which diverse, and yet related clans, were regrouped during the 1940's and 1950's in southern Cameroon and northern Gabon.

Although James Fernandez stressed the political and nationalistic aspects in this process, it is relevant for development because it also indicates how regroupment, which is essential for a number of development projects, can be carried out effectively. In contrast to the case presented by Fernandez, Khashm El Girba scheme in the Sudan incorporated ethnically and traditionally diverse groups within the same area. The Khashm El Girba scheme was basically a resettlement agricultural scheme involving both agricultural and nomadic population. The project was planned and established during the time of a military regime when personal and public opinion could not be expressed
freely, so folklore was employed in expressing "hidden" sentiments. Hiding behind the anonymity and collectivity of folklore, local bards expressed the group's vision of development and provided development agencies with useful indicators for early correction and improvements. (9) They also expressed the feelings of each ethnic group towards the others.

**Traditional Farming and Its Folkloric Basis:**

In traditional agricultural communities, agriculture, the core of life in such communities, is based on folklore, tradition, and particularly traditional technology.

This picture of traditional life can be contrasted with contemporary Government-planned developmental processes affecting the community and the rest of the country. The impact of contemporary development on the majority of the traditional sector of the Sudanese Community must be analyzed.

The traditional agricultural community selected for the purpose of this study is the Nubian community in the northern region of the Republic of the Sudan. It has practiced irrigated cultivation for many centuries. Cultivation was practiced on the basis of traditional knowledge and technology handed down through generations and based on local resources. It enabled the population to lead a decent and prosperous life. Among the Sikkot Nubians,
agriculture is the basis of life and of the well being and development of the community. This is reflected in many folk beliefs and practices. Immediately following the birth of a child, the afterbirth is buried under the waterwheel: with this symbolic folkloric gesture, the society wishes the newborn close and eternal association with land and with agriculture. From that moment the long process of socialization begins to be conducted through the media of folklore and the vehicle of tradition. This process inculcates vocational, moral, social and aesthetic values to produce an accomplished and productive member of the community; a member who is both willing and able to work within the group, respects it, and gains its respect.

With time the child grows up, becomes a young man and works on the family plot which his father inherited from his own father, who in turn inherited it from his father. Ultimately the young man, who may not be young any more, gets direct and authoritative access to the plot, or to part of it, through inheritance or bequeathal. Among many traditional agricultural societies in the Sudan ownership of agricultural land means the right to cultivate, and that right is often extended to members of the community in or another. Members of the group are introduced to a rich corpus of information about land, agriculture and farming in the form of folklore and popular practices. This information has been
crystallized through centuries of usage and practice. It is in
the form of traditional technology or applied folklore which
assists the traditional farmer through the different phases of
cultivation and helps make him a better farmer. A certain
degree of specialization gives some individuals recognition
for being more knowledgable in certain aspects of traditional
agriculture.

**Land Preparation and Farming:**

The whole community must begin cultivation on the
same day, which is specified by the *italics* (the traditional
astronomer) who is expert in soil and weather conditions, and
possibly in other secular and sacred affairs. Cultivation starts
with the preparation of land. According to a system of *italics*
(mobilization), those who finish preparing their plots help the
sick and the slack. The preparation of land is managed by
ploughing, using a plough driven by oxen.

Three rotations of cultivation are known within the
region: Flood season rotation, winter rotation and summer
rotation. The questions when does each rotation begin and
end? Which crops are cultivated in each rotation? How are
they cultivated: on what kind of soil and under what weather
conditions? Are all answered by tradition, that operates like a
data bank.

The average person within the group uses tradition to
provide him with answers to such questions. He utilizes
the information provided by tradition to cultivate land and maintain himself and his family.

**Irrigation System**

For many centuries regions along the Nile Valley have known mechanized irrigation in the form of the *sagiya* (waterwheel), a very sophisticated form of traditional technology. Irrigation devices other than the *sagiya* have been used to cultivate crops near the Nile but the *sagiya* was till recently the backbone of irrigation and agriculture in the Nile Valley. It is constructed by local experts from local materials; wood and ropes made from palm trees. It is operated by animals. Minor repair and regular servicing, eg., changing ropes, can often be managed by the farmers themselves. However, major repair is conducted by a traditional specialist who is responsible for the maintenance of a number of *sagiyas*, and who is paid in crops at the end of the harvesting season. Traditionally, six farmers share one *sagiya*, which they operate interchangeably, using six cows. They work under one leader (*samat*) who is the sole agricultural, technical and administrative director. He acquires this position by virtue of his recognized experience. This group of six adopts a system of two or three shifts, although two shifts are more common. They work day and night; usually morning and night, and resting during the hot afternoon.
**Crop Protection:**

Regular and tedious weeding is constantly undertaken by the farmers to ensure quick growth of the plants and eliminate dangerous soil insects. Methods of crop protection ranging from simple scarecrow devices to sophisticated use of medicinal herbs are utilized to protect the crops from disease. In the same way the scarecrow is used to scare birds, smoke is utilized to chase off dangerous insects. Herbs known for their power to kill and eliminate insects are hung immediately under the gutter of the waterwheel. Water drawn from the well, and flowing through the gutter falls on the herbs before pouring into the cultivated plots. The medical ingredient of the herb is liquefied and diluted by the running water, and carried to all the irrigated plots, providing the necessary protection for the growing crops.

When the crops are ripe harvesting begins, a time also associated with numerous ceremonies and traditional techniques. Immediately after the collection of the crops, the farmer pays the obligations arising from the crop, such as those related to the use or repair of the saqiya, or the use of land. After reserving enough food to sustain his family until the next harvest, he sells the surplus and any cash crops. Money obtained from the sale of cash crops enables the farmer to meet the other needs of his family, e.g., clothing, preparations for the wedding of his son, etc.
From a development point of view, the primary merit of this system is that it depends entirely on local sources within the environment. The materials (wood, ropes, herbs, etc.), the driving force for ploughing or irrigation, the technology and the expertise are all found within the local setting. The second merit is that this system arises from group traditions, is oriented towards the well-being of that group and tends to enhance its communal nature.

From Traditional Farming to Mechanized Agriculture:

The traditional agricultural system discussed above could have served as a good basis for development. Agriculture received major attention in development schemes; justifiably in a basically agricultural country like the Sudan. However, the traditional system was entirely bypassed by development planners. In fact its very existence has been threatened by development, and in some areas it is approaching extinction.

In recent years, particularly in the sixties and seventies, the Sudanese Government made a considerable effort to foster agricultural development, especially through mechanization. Huge schemes like The Manaqil Extension, Khashm El Girba and El Rahad were instituted. Smaller schemes in the traditional agricultural sector were grouped together and changed into schemes operated by mechanical pumps. A number of people, from individual or
communal initiative also converted to the pump. After having seen the positive aspects of the "new" machine and realizing the advantages of mechanization, such as ease and speed of ploughing and irrigation, many people adopted modern mechanization at the expense of the traditional system. In certain cases this change was associated with increased productivity.

In spite of its numerous merits, the changes associated with development and modernization were the beginning of external domination. For the first time the traditional agriculturalist, subjected to contemporary development, found himself at the mercy of factors over which he had no control. He gave up a comprehensive and well-integrated system over which he exercised full control, in favour of a new system which was not yet well established and over which he had no control.

Instead of the plough driven by oxen, ploughing was done by tractors. Both the tractor and the gasoline that operated it had to be imported. Moreover, the technical know-how for operating, servicing, and maintaining the tractor had to be secured; a matter which was often impossible, or at best difficult. Machines were quickly worn out. Spare parts had to be made available, and from time to time machines had to be replaced. These problems, true of the tractor, were equally true for the pump and other
agricultural machinery. As long as machines were in good running order the driving force (petrol) was available the mechanical engineer was within reach and spare parts were obtainable cultivation was smooth and agricultural productivity was assured. But this was seldom the case. The oil crisis accelerated the problem. By the middle of the seventies it was a national problem in the Sudan and its effects were clearly felt. Without knowing it the helpless farmer was entangled in export/import policies balance of payment and foreign exchange problems. What he did know was that work on his farm had slowed down and sometimes stopped. Meanwhile he lost familiarity with the traditional way of agricultural production. Accustomed to the relatively easy modern mechanized agriculture, the farmer could not go back to the hard work which used to be acceptable, it became drudgery. As a result, the farmer gave up cultivation and his land became unproductive.

Having lost their basic occupation and finding great difficulty in sustaining themselves and their families many farmers migrated to the big cities, especially Khartoum where they hoped to find employment. Khartoum had become a mere stepping stone to the oil rich Arab countries. The immigrants from rural areas were often unskilled and unqualified for professional urban employment. Many of them remained unemployed while those who were employed
managed to secure only mean jobs and lived in very difficult conditions. Studies of immigration and population movements showed that the period between 1955 – 1973 witnessed a great influx into the big cities. The percentage of inhabitants of Khartoum Province who had immigrated from rural areas the three towns (Khartoum, Khartoum North and Omdurman) short up to 71.9%. The same studies showed that only 2.5% of the immigrants joined the agricultural sector. The majority performed unproductive and parasitic jobs such as middle-men and peddlers, and became a burden on the big cities. (12)

The shift of a great sector of the able population from food producers to consumers, coupled with the marked rise in export of food, created serious scarcity. The demand was very high for the little that was available, and the prices of essential food stuffs became prohibitive. By 1979 the problem had become so serious it led to something unprecedented in Sudanese history.

Prompted by the acute shortages and rising prices, people demonstrated and broke in the streets of Khartoum, burning cars and threatening the public security. This situation was aggravated by drought and famine during the 1980s. In March/April 1980 the same masses, driven by the same forces, i.e., food, shortages and higher prices, demonstrated for a whole week and led to the downfall of
General El Numeiry after the success of the popular Sudanese uprising.

After 1979 it was evident that the problem of low productivity in the agricultural sector was a national problem in 1979 and 1980 this problem was discussed by the National Assembly, which instructed its appropriate committees to study and report on the problem. "Manpower and Production committee" compiled a report based on fieldwork and numerous visits to different agricultural schemes. The report found that inadequate equipment needed for agricultural operations, lack of spare parts, shortages of gasoline, frequent power failures, and lack of trained personnel led to low productivity and poor performance.\(^3\)

Development, in the sense described earlier, could not be achieved in the manner agricultural development was attempted in the Sudan. It leads to neither increased productivity nor a raised standard of living for the masses. In fact, it threatened the economic and social structure, and endangered traditional values. How can one become generous, when one had nothing to give? How can one speak of group solidarity, when one's own family is broken down and dispersed?

Under strained circumstances, folklore, which appraises and reiterates traditional values, tends to become void. The younger generations who have grown up in
displacement and dispersal either have a distant, romantic, and nostalgic association with the folklore of the homeland, or merely fail to relate to it. There is a need to study the folklore of both the migrant and the immigrant groups. The folklore of the children of Sudanese who are working abroad, a developing sector of the Sudanese community, has not yet been studied.

The Paradox and the Challenge:

The paradoxical situation which is shown implicitly in the previous discussion will be highlighted here by the following statements:

a) One system, which is fully mastered, is given away for the sake of a new system that is not yet mastered.

b) The system that is given away is fully controlled by the group benefiting from it. All the requirements needed for implementing the system are found within the local environment. All the requirements of the new system have to be imported and tend to put the country under external domination.

c) The intended development brings about negative results and leads to lesser productivity and lower standards of living for the broad masses.

d) To move forward, we must look back first; to
achieve modernization, we need to consult traditions. Traditional culture, which is associated in the minds of many people with backwardness and underserved developments, is an essential component in achieving modernization and development.

Conclusion:

The study shows that the basic challenge facing policy makers and development planners is to achieve development based on local sources and traditional cultural premises. Traditional technology provides a great asset and a positive step in that direction. The challenge is to develop it rather than to substitute it with an imported ready-made system. A well-developed system of agricultural productivity, based on traditional technology, was established centuries ago. It has many advantages over contemporary agricultural development. It is unfortunate that these systems, and similar ones, are on the eve of extinction. They need to be rescued, developed and used as a basis for development. It is also evident from the above study that inadequate transfer of technology has impoverished the country and led to further un-development. Any African states are presently facing severe drought and famine. Many people have lost their cattle and fertile land and are consequently displaced outside their traditional habitat. Governments
which could import food in the 1960s and 1970s are no longer able to do so. Earlier hopes for development are presently relegated to mere survival and re-habilitation. Folklore still has a remarkable role to play in this process. Development of traditional skills such as in the case of crafts and cottage industries, revival of inexpensive methods of producing, processing and storing food are among the potential utilities of folklore in this phase.
NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE


6. In different parts of Africa, many people think of the dead as being both physically and spiritually around them. The actual existence of tombs and shrines is accordingly considered important.


11. For further discussion on different views concerning mechanization of agriculture, see M.A. Jalal al Din and M.Y. Mustafa, al hirati al wafidati ila wa al hirati al dakhiliyyati fi al Sudan, Khartoum, 1979, p. 119-123.

12. Ibid., pp. 128-138.

13. See report on Manpower, the Sudanese National Assembly. This report was reviewed in al sahafa newspaper of Jan. 24th 1980.
Chapter six

FOLKLORE AND TRADITIONAL MEDICINE
FOLKLORE AND TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

In contemporary times, folklore is often unjustifiably equated with superstitious, magical, outmoded and nonscientific practices; whereas medicine is thought of as modern scientific and logical. Folklore and medicine, and indeed folklore and science are seen as falling into two very different and unrelated realms. This presentation advocates the desirable and inevitable bridging of the gap between science and culture particularly traditional culture. If folklore is by definition "traditional" then traditional medicine has one foot in folklore and the other in medicine. As such, traditional medicine is in a good position to demonstrate the relationship between science and culture.

Students of culture have felt the dichotomy and detachment between science and culture more strongly in recent times. The need to bridge such a gap has also been equally recognized by specialists in cultural studies and natural science. It is notable that among the different specialists in the natural sciences, science historians have taken more cognizance of the detachment between science and culture, and have called for bridging it. The difficulty in disassociating culture from science has been expressed by the science historian Thomas S. Kuhn in the following lines:
"Simultaneously, these same historians (science historians) confront growing difficulties in distinguishing the "scientific" component of past observation and belief from what their predecessors had readily labelled 'error' and superstitious....

If these out-of-date beliefs are to be called myths, then myths can be produced by the same sorts of methods and held for the same sorts of reasons that now lead to scientific knowledge."(2)

It is not a mere coincidence that science historians are foremost in their knowledge and appreciation of the relationship between culture and science in comparison with their fellow scientists. This is mainly because the disengagement which is presently felt between science and culture was either non-existent or very minimal in earlier times. In fact science, magic, mythology, religion and world-view were completely fused and integrated, and science historians (who are concerned with the past) are in a better position to realize this close relationship than other scientists (who are concerned with present, contemporary realities). At the present time socio-economic differences also tend to exaggerate already existing dichotomies. For instance, traditional medicine can be looked at as the medical lore of the "folk" and as distinct from modern medicine which is the medical knowledge and practice of the "elite"; and as such
traditional medicine is considered superstitious, non-scientific and out-moded. Accordingly, it falls within the area of folk-lore. However, we need to remember that the "folk-lore" of to-day was the "elite-lore" of yesterday. What was then considered top medical knowledge among the early Greek, Arab, Assyrian and Babylonian elites, and what was accordingly practised by their recognized medical practitioners, has been passed down to the "folk" of to-day and constitutes an integral part of their cultural tradition. So the continuity of proven medical practices of earlier times, their integration and inculcation into the folk beliefs, customs and practices of certain contemporary societies, provide us with a closer link between traditional medicine and folklore; hence a thorough examination of socio-cultural factors is an important priority of medical investigation. This approach becomes more imperative when we remember that the founders of the WHO defined health as "physical, mental and social well-being".

**Magic, World-View and Science:**

Metaphysics and supernatural beliefs have influenced earlier science tremendously. This is definitely something to be recognized and looked into, because the scientist comes to science with a prior set of beliefs and a repertoire of knowledge that influences science. Furthermore, the layman who is the subject of science is never void of beliefs. The
knowledge and appropriate manipulation of such belief systems and cultural traits should be among the major preoccupations of the scientist who could gear them to the benefit of his science. In the following paragraphs I shall discuss different aspects of early medicine in the light of the perspective and approach mentioned above.

If we examine the medical practices of earlier peoples such as the Ancient Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Greeks, the Persians and the early Arabs, we find that such practices were dominated by magic. In Ancient Egypt medical practices were very closely linked with magical incantations. (4) Also, among the Babylonians and the Assyrians, the seers and sorcerers were the medical practitioners, especially in Babel where medicine was a branch of magic. (5) The same thing can be said about early Persian medicine which was based on a combination of incantations and magical practices. (6).

As specified above the early medical practices of various civilizations have contributed greatly to the nature and state of traditional medicine among different peoples. However, in numerous regions of the world, eg. Africa, the Arab countries, Latin America, and South-East Asia, indigenous cultural traditions (especially those about cause, prevention and treatment of diseases) have managed to assimilate early medical practices and give them continuity,
vitality and new life in line with their own social and religious realities.

In early science, e.g. early medical practices, as well as in contemporary traditional medicine, metaphysical and religious factors play a dominant role. In both cases, the animistic outlook towards disease and its supernatural causes are closely related. In many instances they provide the key to the identification of the disease, and hence its treatment. Such an argument is expressed in the following statement:

"In traditional medicine, knowledge and identification of the cause of disease, natural or supernatural, magical or religious, are central to the whole medical process. The diagnostic, prognostic, therapeutic and prophylactic endeavours are all directed towards the cause which is central to any discussion of the connection between medical phenomena and their cultural settings. Causality is always sought in the patient (sic) relationship with his surroundings." (7)

Among different folk groups who attribute the nature and or cause of a disease to supernatural factors, the supernatural also dictates and influences the methods of prevention and cure. For instance, in different parts of the Sudan (and possibly in other countries) "epilepsy,
infantile paralysis and facial paralysis are attributed to a slap of the *jinn*. Imbecility and deformity of children are attributed to a *shaytan* substituting his own imbecile or deformed child for a human child and is called *mubaddal* (changeling). (8) Accordingly, the folk mentality believes that the cure of such diseases falls in the realm of religion, i.e. in the hands of the Muslim saint or *fakih*. Thus, it is still noticeable in parts of the Sudan that these are the kind of diseases which many people prefer to take to the fakih rather than to a medical doctor. When someone is afflicted with one of the above-mentioned diseases in the Sudan, we still hear people saying, "*da ma marad hakim*" (this is not the kind of disease a medical doctor will cure). The message behind such a statement is that since the cause of the disease is supernatural, so also should be the cure.

An example of a very old magico-religious medical practice that is very common in some parts of the Sudan is curing by saliva (spittle) *lu'ab*. This practice was well known in Ancient Egypt, (9) as well as in Arabia. (10) This cure is in the form of rubbing saliva on the affected part of the body. However, in many Muslim countries this magico religious practice has been incorporated into popular Islam and consequently given an Islamic perspective and rationale. It is now more commonly known in its transformed Islamic representation - the *'azima* (the mumbling of Quranic verses
which also involves ceremonial spitting). In this later form, magical incantations are replaced by Quranic verses and the character of the sorcerer or magician is replaced by that of the fakih. However, curing by spittle remains the core of both practices. Both in its earlier and later forms, this practice is based on the underlying concept of contagious magic. It should be noted that Islam recognizes the magico-religious factor as being a basic component in the cause and treatment of disease.

Another magico-religious practice prevalent in many Muslim countries is the mihaya (erasure). Unlike the former example, theʿarima, this latter practice is seen as an exclusively Muslim phenomenon. It takes the form of Quranic verses written on a wooden tablet (slate) which are then washed and the water given to the patient to drink. The spirit and blessing of this holy water is supposed to cure the disease and aid recovery. Although viewed as an exclusively Islamic practice by numerous believers and practitioners, the mihaya is deeply rooted in sympathetic magic.

Perhaps one of the most clearly marked and often quoted examples of the relationship between world-view, folk belief and traditional medicine is illustrated by the four humors theory. In accordance with this theory of ancient physiology and pathology, the four principal bodily fluids, i.e. blood, phlegm, cholera (yellow bile) and melancholy
(black bile) determine the state of health and temperament. Likewise, the hot-cold and wet-dry oppositions are equally important for health.

The appropriate equilibrium between the four cardinal fluids and the degree of dryness, wetness, heat and cold determine the state of good health in the human body. Any disturbance in the above factors causes disease. The doctrines of humoral pathology which were formulated by the Greeks, were adopted and popularized by many peoples, especially in Arabia, the Middle East, the Mediterranean and North Africa. They were behind sophisticated and elite physiology and medical practice in ancient times. Moreover, they are also behind folk and traditional medical lore in certain contemporary societies. In fact, some folklorists think that with respect to certain aspects of the humoral theory, the contribution of the early Greeks was simply the formulation of an already existing folk theory. Alan Dundes states in this connection Alan Dundes argues:

"In this connection it seems reasonable to argue that the wet-dry opposition is just as important as the hot-cold opposition, which has been frequently studied by anthropologists and students of the history of medicine. Perhaps it is even more important. Classical humoral pathology in fact included all four distinctions: heat, dryness,
moistness and cold ... the distribution and age of the complex would tend to suggest that the wet-dry opposition is much older than its articulation among the ancient Greeks concerned with humoral pathology. Rather it would appear that the formulations of humoral pathology simply formalized a folk theory already in existence"(13)

It is interesting to note that the doctrines and diction of classical humoral pathology which were prevalent many centuries ago still constitute an integral part of the knowledge of traditional healers. In an interview (March 1986) with one of the famous Sudanese traditional healers, he was asked how he diagnoses different diseases.

His response echoed the language and doctorines of humoral pathology. Using jaundice as an example, he stated:

"It is caused by the mixture of yellow phlegm and black (azraq) phlegm. The concentration of these two substances causes jaundice which is of two kinds - the black one which appears at the finger tips and on the eyes, and the yellow one which appears in urine and on the eyes. Its symptoms are a feeble body, moistness in the limbs and excessive heat in the stomach. "(14)
Folklore Genres as a Repository of Traditional Medicine:

Folktales, epics, anecdotes, saints legends and other folklore genres constitute valuable sources for the study of the history of medicine and traditional medical practices in numerous contemporary societies. They contain much information about which diseases were prevalent in the past, what were the causes of such diseases and how they were cured. However, such information is not only a survival of the past; quite often it is a reflection of the present and an extension of the world-view and belief system of contemporary narrators. Traditions incorporated into these genres, and in folk beliefs associated with them, represent the continuity of the past and its merger into the present. For instance, many medical practices used by the early Arabs, Persians and Greeks have been taken over and adopted by numerous contemporary societies. In the following section I refer briefly to a few examples in order to indicate the continuity of such medical traditions.

While reporting on pre-Islamic medical practices and beliefs in Arabia, al Alusi stated that the early Arabs believed that a person stung by a snake should not be allowed to sleep so that poison would not spread over his body. They used to divert him from sleep and keep him awake by hanging jingles on his body. (15) The same practice is still very common in the Sudan. If somebody is stung by a snake or a scorpion in
certain parts of rural Sudan, a dancing and singing party is arranged so as to preoccupy the stupefied person and divert him/her from sleep.

In an attempt to review the medical content of folklore genres, I start with the epic. Sometimes epics make significant references to medical practices prevalent in traditional societies. Rustum, the hero of the Persian epic, the *Shahnamah*, was born in an abnormal way; a matter which is in line with the international cycle of the birth of the hero. According to the epic he was born by what is presently known as a Caesarean section. The epic describes the actual operation in a detailed way. The name by which this surgical operation is internationally known at present is also very significant. It is a folk etymology derived from the belief that Julius Caesar was born in this manner. Such belief was initially associated with the concept that supernatural achievement (such as that of Julius Caesar) comes from people born in an abnormal way.

If we examine folktales (fictitious folk narratives) we find that they incorporate a rich repertoire of medical lore. Folktales related to Type 551: *The Sons on a Quest for a Wonderful Remedy for their Father* and Type 610: *The Healing Fruits* are examples of such narratives. These tales, which revolves around disease and cure provide narrators with a suitable framework for providing current
and prevalent information on disease and its treatment within their societies. Local oiocotypes of such tales are full of information about the local environment, especially medicinal herbs. They also contain useful data on the nature of disease and the best ways of its prevention and cure.

Legends are also another useful source of medical lore. For instance, in the Sudan, legends of Muslim saints reflect beliefs and practices associated with the treatment of mentally disturbed people. The achievements of notable religious leaders are popularized and widely disseminated after their death. However, sometimes the remarkable achievements of a certain fakih or a descendant of a Muslim saint in treating psychological disturbances and other diseases may be recognized during his lifetime.
Folklore and Traditional Psychiatry:

Folklore in the form of myths, ceremonies, folk songs and dances, folk and ritual drama provides traditional cultures with various forms of psycho-therapeutic practices that have been widely used and happily accepted for many centuries. Such practices aim at both the preventive and curative aspects of disease. They also focus on the individual as well as the whole community. The use of musical therapy to induce trances and the use of other methods of divination such as cowaries and sand divination assist traditional healers in the diagnosis of disease, and in arriving at the best method of treatment. Group interaction and the unquestionable belief which is achieved by the realization of psycho-therapeutic practices eg. rituals, trances...etc., in a supernatural atmosphere and religious context, render such practices more effective.

In different African societies traditional psychotherapeutic practices which cater for the whole community are very common. Although the individual undergoing treatment may sometimes be the focus of attention in such medical practices, yet there is always room for everybody. In fact, a number of ceremonies of psychiatric significance are meant for the whole community rather than the individual. All members of the community are supposed to attend such ceremonies and benefit from their effect in the
establishment of mental, social and political equilibrium.

Among such practices is the *Apo* ceremony of the Ashanti which is a cleansing communal ceremony of psychiatric significance. When asked about the significance of this ceremony, the high-priest of the god Ta Kese at Tekiman explained:

"Again, you too may have hatred in your head against another, because of something that person has done to you, and that too causes your sunsum (soul) to fret and become sick. Our forbears knew this to be the case, and so they ordained a time, once every year, when every man and woman, free man and slave, should have freedom to speak out just what was in their head, to tell their neighbours just what they thought of them, and of their actions, and not only their neighbours, but also the king or chief. When a man has spoken freely thus, he will feel his sunsum cool and quieted, and the sunsum of the other person against whom he has now openly spoken will be quieted also. The king of Ashanti may have killed your children, and you hate him. This has made him ill, and you ill too; when you are allowed to say before his face what you think, you both benefit." (ibid).
Zar and bori ceremonies provide us with similar examples and are common throughout different parts of Africa especially along the Sudanic Belt. Such ceremonies, which have recognized preventive and curative psychotherapeutic, value, operate through the media of folk singing, dancing and drumming, and are realized in the context of folk religion.

In spite of the lack of a coherent policy towards traditional healers in many countries, and contrary to the aversion of modern medical practitioners to folk medicine, traditional healers continue to provide the minimum required attention to wider sectors of the community. The advantages of both traditional healing practices and modern medicine have been enumerated by different researchers. Mutual confidence and treatment within the familiar social setting have been pointed out as among the advantages of the former; whereas the use of sophisticated equipment, clinical testing and hygienic surroundings are recognizable benefits of the latter. It is apparent that there is room for the two systems which should not be seen as mutually exclusive. However, cultural and socio-economic diversification in Third World countries make it clear that certain individuals respond better to one system while others are more inclined towards the other. In this connection, the following statement is pertinent to the situation in Africa:

134
"To send an illiterate country-dweller in an acute psychotic state to a psychiatric hospital in a distant town some hundreds of kilometres away where his mother tongue is not understood, for treatment with neuroleptics, when there is available in his neighbourhood a traditional healer capable of treating his condition successfully, is a negation of good sense and is dangerous for the patient. Similarly, it would be unwise to use traditional treatments on a city-dweller who has been subjected to acculturation and severance from his ancestral world, since that would force him, in a defenceless and acute psychotic state, into an pattern abrupt confrontation with the sociocultural attern he has repudiated. In such circumstances, doctor wearing a white coat and sitting in a modern consulting room would give him a much greater sense of security. (39)

Not only do we need to encourage mutual co-existence between the traditional culture-oriented system and the modern science-oriented system, but we should also work towards their beneficial integration. Some collaboration between traditional healers and modern medical practitioners exists in certain parts of Africa, eg. in Aro Hospital in
Abeokuta, Nigeria, in the Fan psychiatric hospital in Dakar, Senegal and - to a lesser extent - in Umm Dawwan Ban, Sudan. However, such collaboration leaves much to be desired.

**Conclusion:**

The World Health Organization has previously recently set the goal of "Health for All by the year 2000". The time set for achieving this objective is over considering the present state and slow development of modern health services in Africa, the realization of this goal is far-fetched and almost impossible to meet. Any basic step in this direction should take cognizance of the place of traditional medicine in Third-World countries and its substantial contribution towards attaining health for all. Mutual confidence and closer collaboration between traditional and modern medicine is thus essential for the realization of humane, effective and wide-spread medical services to cover wider sectors amongst both urban and rural African populations. The integration of the two systems requires the cultural heritage and particularly the inherited skills of the traditional healer as well as the sophisticated equipment and up-to-date training of the modern medical expert. The marrying of tradition with modernization is essential to the prosperity of many "Third-World" countries, and has thus to play a substantial role in the realization of the objectives set by the WHO.
NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

1. Other terms used frequently to denote traditional medicine include folk medicine, ethno-medicine and indigenous medicine.


5. Ibid., p. 18.

6. Ibid., p. 20.


12. See Quran, surat al falaq.

137

14. This is a verbatim translation from an interview with Sheikh El 'Atayah Ahmed al Beshir, a famous Sudanese traditional healer who received numerous patients from different parts of Sudan and from other countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. See al *sahafa* newspaper of March 23rd. 1986.


Chapter seven

TRADITION AS A BASIS FOR NATIONAL RESISTANCE IN AFRICA
TRADITION AS A BASIS FOR NATIONAL RESISTANCE IN AFRICA

Numerous studies related to African nationalist movements have focused on the role of political parties and specific societies and leagues. Grass root resistance and the contribution of the masses to nationalist movements have not received adequate consideration.

Although such resistance has often remained within ethnic and regional circles, it cannot be overlooked or belittled. It constitutes an integral part of the nationalist movement and eventually adds up to the final picture of the encounter with colonial intervention. Moreover such resistance. Which has often been referred to as "primary resistance" had a frightening and disturbing impact on colonial governments. It signaled the earlier beginnings of disturbances which were liable to develop and spread and it was associated with the inner regions away from the control of the central government. Likewise, such resistance was closely linked with spiritual and communal factors that were difficult to reason with.

Different ethnic groups through Africa did not wait for the formation of political parties and Politically oriented leagues and societies in order to launch their battles against invaders and colonial powers. They clustered and rallied around traditional repertoire and common
heritage which served as a basis for the mobilization of the masses. Although such tradition-based movements were often associated with specific ethnic groups, they managed to unite clans and sub-tribes. In fact, they often managed to promote inter-ethnic solidarity and unity, though temporarily in many cases.

Primary resistance movements, which are the topic of this presentation, were the subject of scholarly controversy. Some scholars considered them as "primitive, "backward-looking, tribal and reactionary and could not see a connection between them and modern nationalism; whereas other scholars considered tradition-based popular resistance as an important stimulus to the historical development of African people as well as useful source for the historiography of African politics \(^{(i)}\). However, the fact remains that during the nineteenth century and the first half of the present century tradition-based resistance movements were prevalent in the African political scene.

In different parts of Africa, tradition played an important role in the process of national liberation, in the consolidation of national integration and in the establishment of national political parties. However, traditional cultural heritage may also be utilized to achieve disintegration. Thus, the political manipulation of tradition is a dangerous weapon. Throughout Africa there are numerous primary
resistance movements that lean heavily on traditional cultural heritage. Social institutions such as age sets, secret societies and initiation ceremonies were adapted and utilized for political purposes. Heroic traditions, mythologies and other religious repertoires were employed in order to give political movements a sense of conviction and a spiritual perspective. Moreover, folk songs, riddles, legends and other genres became instruments of political mobilization and resistance. Such genres and institutions could function as agents of national resistance and liberation when the masses were subjected to political domination and social injustice. When feelings of frustration and helplessness were at their peak, masses resorted to cultural traditions, especially spiritual heritage.

The following presentation refers briefly to certain resistance movements in different parts of Africa and discusses in some detail two examples from the Sudan. Examples from eastern, central, western and Northern Africa have been noted, and examined by various scholars. Among such uprisings are those of the Ndebele, the Shona, the Mau Mau, the Maji'Maji and the Dinka in East and Central Africa. Other examples include Mahdist movements in Somalia and the Sudan. However, although will be unjustifiable to refer to Mahdist movements such as those of Muhammad Abd Allah Haasan in. Somalia, Muhammad
Tumrat in North Africa and Muhammad Ahmad in the Sudan as primary resistance movements, they are tradition-based revolutions. They are based on spiritual traditions, specifically prophetic traditions. Prophets who constitute the basis of most of the primary resistance movements in Africa were regarded by Evans-Pritchard "as a politico-religious institution which has recently emerged in answer to changes in the social order." (2) Oppressive economic conditions caused by heavy taxes, social injustice aggravated by exploitation and free or semi-free labour suffered by the masses at the advent of colonial domination led to such prophetic movements prophetic movements based on spiritual power. However, such institutions could only become operative through charismatic leaders and men of conviction. Among such leaders are Deng Kur, Ater Wol, Dhiew Alam and, Ariandhit of the Dinka and Kinj ikitele of the Maji Maji uprising, as well as Muhammad Ahmed, the Sudanese Mahdi, and Muhammad Abd Allah Hassan, the Somali Mahdi. Also related to such resistance movements are pseudo-prophetic and faki-type uprisings such as those of, Abd al Qadir Muhammed Imam, Wad Haboba in the Gezira and Faki Ali in the Nuba Mountains in 1915. (3)

Deng Kur stirred the Dinka and encouraged them to mount armed resistance against the colonial government in 1918. He led his followers to believe that he had the power to
render government bullets as harmless as water. The period between 1917 and 1921 also witnessed the appearance of other prophets whose power was derived from the spiritual power of water attributed to gods and deities who take divine abode in different pools throughout Dinkaland. Beside Deng Kur other Dinka prophetic leaders include Ater Wolof of the Agar Dinka and Dhiew Alam who led the Atwot revolt of 1918. Those prophets revealed that they were in direct communion with the water deities and that such deities ordered them to stir their followers into open revolt in order to expel alien rulers. They also convinced their followers that Divine Providence would turn the bullets of government troops into water. Thus, the masses who believed that they had nothing to fear came out forcibly and challenged the colonial authorities. Such challenges took different forms such as refusing to pay taxes, obstructing roads, burning down government buildings and killing government agents.

The above-mentioned Dinka uprisings were similar to the Maji Maji movement in nature, spiritual support and mythological background. The Maji Maji uprising of 1905 which took place in Tanganyika against German colonialism, also demonstrates the return to the spiritual supernatural at times of disaster, and incapability. The spiritual also and the factor helps in uniting the masses and mobilizing them in a matter which renders their incapability into capable
militancy. As in the case of the Dinka prophet-inspired uprisings, the Maji Maji was associated with a spiritual leader who derived his power from a water deity dwelling in a pool near Rufiji River. Kinjikitele, the spiritual leader of this movement consecrated his followers by sprinkling them ceremonially with holy water; a matter which he claimed would render ineffective the bullets of German colonial forces. Recruits into the movement, started marching and drilling in military fashion and organized themselves in the form of cadets. They became the spearhead of militant resistance. Throughout most of the country.\(^5\).

Similarities between the uprisings of the Southern Sudan and those of their neighbours in East Africa, e.g. the Maji Maji are numerous. Likewise, historical connections between the Maji Maji uprising of 1905 and those which appeared in the Southern Sudan during the first two decades of the previous century are, quite possible. In fact earlier connections cannot be ruled out. In this context it is appropriate to cite Robert Collins's reference to the emergence of Allah water cult inspired the Southern Sudan in 1883.\(^6\).

Although I have focused so far on prophet-inspired uprisings and shall continue to do so while discussing the movement of Ariandhit, there are numerous tradition-based uprisings which are not necessarily associated with the rise
of African prophets. Among these is the famous Aliab Dinka uprising of 1919. In this case failure to understand or appreciate tribal traditions, especially those associated with homicide and the settlement of blood feuds, led to the intensification of conflict, which eventually culminated in the incidents associated with the uprising. This predicament has been described in the following way:

"The inevitable result of the administration's failure to bridge the gulf of misunderstanding was sudden hostility at best, open rebellion at worst. Only by close and careful administration carried out with a determination to understand and appreciate Dinka attitudes framed in the reference of their own customs and traditional way of living could this gap be narrowed."

Another major resistance movement which advocated unity and managed to transcend ethnic boundaries is that of Ariandhit. Although basically a prophetic movement its political nature and perspective and its intention to unite and organise Dinka society were strikingly clear. In this sense it can be seen as a socio-political nationalist movement based on prophetic tradition and Dinka spiritual heritage in general.

In order to comprehend, fully the nature of Ariandhi t's movement, it is essential to highlight some of the major parameters of Dinka religion. In Dinka religion, the
spearmaster's clans constitute the religious and political leadership. They derive their authority from the Divinity which is associated with the supernatural power of the river. Traditional Dinka religion which has an in-built political component is perpetuated by a highly-cherished body of mythology which validates politico-religious authority. The religious component makes it difficult to question the political aspects of leadership religion. Members of the spearmasters clans had the power to bless and curse, so they were both respected and feared.

Ariandhit belonged to 'the', spearmaster's clans; accordingly, he was capable of leadership that can hardly be challenged. However, he was not just another spearmaster. He was, indeed, 'a charismatic leader with a clear social and political vision. He was a social reformer who settled numerous disputes, worked towards unifying his people and resisted foreign domination. His peace missions, and his call for unity were not limited to, his own region, but covered the whole of the Dinkaland, and his prophetic claims were supported by acknowledged rain-making abilities and powers to bless and curse. Like a number of his predecessors in the Southern Sudan and Eastern Africa he promised his subjects to turn the bullets of government troops into water. Around him many followers who defied the Anglo-Egyptian government, organised armed resistance and refused to pay
taxes. His movement reached its climax in 1921-1922 when the government sent a punitive campaign against him. He was defeated and surrendered in March 1922. The arrangement of troops on the basis of ceremonial consecration by holy water was also another feature of the following report refers to this feature.

"It was reported that magic water had been distributed in the Yei river district and alleged to give immunity against government rifles, taxes or payment of any dues to government. On initiation drinkers receive initiation rifles of reeds and promised to be given genuine ones in the following months" (8).

In the previous examples political power has been based on traditional African religion, especially folk beliefs centred around the sanctity and supernatural attributes of rivers, pools and water in general. Although similar beliefs associated with water are very common and internationally distributed, the area along the Nile Valley from Egypt all the way up to some parts of East Africa has known different forms of religions rituals and ceremonies pertaining to the Nile, its tributaries and other rivers and pools' for many centuries. Faced with colonial penetration, and the resulting political and socio-economic changes.'many African peoples felt it, necessary to unite and resist. Foreign domination. In
their Pursuit of unifying factors, many Africans resorted, to issues over which they have little or no dispute and controversy, i.e. their traditional religion.

The role played by tradition in inspiring and mobilizing national resistance in Africa has not been confined to traditional African cults or traditional religion. Popular Islam also contributed greatly to the shaping of resistance and liberation movements in North, East and West Africa. Most of these movements, especially major ones, were tradition-based prophetic uprisings against foreign domination. Among such movements is the Sudanese Mahdist revolution of Muhammad Ahmad al Mahdi. If the prophetic movement of Afrian of the Southern Sudan could be compared to that of the Maji Maji in Tanganyika, it can also be compared to that of Muhammad Ahmed in the northern parts of the Sudan in many respects. Like Ariandhit, Muhammad Ahmad al Mahdi was a culture hero. His biography fits into the pattern of the cycle of the culture hero, starting from the abnormal birth, upbringing, refuge and heroic achievement. Both were spiritual leaders and social reformers. Likewise, they were both charismatic leaders who sought to unite their people and resist foreign domination.

Folk traditions about a messianic deliverer, which are current among followers of Muslim religious orders in different parts of the Sudan, prepared the way for the
Mahdism movement. This religious factor, together with the
economic and social injustice suffered at the hands of foreign
rule, and the determined character of Muhammad Ahmad al
Mahdi led, to the success of his movement. His divine mission
which he disclosed in March 1881 was both religious and
political. The spiritual aspect of the movement made it easily
and readily acceptable by the masses. In response to his
divine call the Mahdi's followers fought: their foreign
invaders with conviction and determination. The scope of
Sudanese Mahdism, its appeal to different Sudanese ethnic
groups and its regional and international aspirations gave it a
different perspective in comparison with other uprisings
discussed above. However, like those uprisings, Mahdism is
basically a tradition-based prophetic movement.

Colonial governments failed to understand and
appreciate African nationalist movement; their main
objective was to suppress such uprisings. The derogatory
way in which they described such movements is indicative of
their negative attitude towards them. They described such
uprisings as "savage" and "reactionary" and conside red their
leaders as madmen. E.g. Muhammad Abd Allah Hassan,
whom they referred to as the "madmullah". They also
described the followers of such spiritual leaders. E.g. the
ansar., as "dervishes."
In conclusion, it is interesting to note that contemporary political activities in the Sudan are deeply rooted in cultural heritage, especially politico-religious tradition. For instance, if we examine the nature and development of some of the major Sudanese parties, particularly those which enjoy wider mass support, we find that they are still based on popular religious tradition and cultural heritage. In this, and in many other respects, primary resistance prepared the way for modern nationalist politics.
NOTSE TO CHAPTER SEVES


5. For further information on the MaJi Maji see, G. Gwassa and J. Iliffe, eds.: Records of the Maji Maji Rising, part I (Nairobi, 1968).


8. See E.E. Mohammed, Ope cit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


'Abd Allah, Sayyid M. **min hayat wa turath al nuba bimantiqat al sukkot**, Khartoum: I.A.A.S., 1974


Al, Alusi, **bulugh al arab fi abwal al 'arab**, Cairo: al matba 'a alrahmaniyya, 1924.


"Traditional Medicine and its role in health promotion in


Bushra, Mohammed E. *Folklore and Folklife in a Sudanese Factory*, M.A. dissertation, Folklore Department, University of Khartoum, 1981.


Collins Roberts Land Beyond the Rivers: The Southern Sudan 1898-1918 (New Haven 1971).


154


Enry, Pierre. The Child and His Environment in Black Africa:
An Essay in Education, translated and adapted by G.
Evans Pritchard, Nuer Religion (Oxford,1964)


Mawut, Lazars leek. *Dinka resistance to condominium,* Rule 1902-1932 University of Khartoum Graduate college Publications monograph No.3.


The author

Sayed Hamid Hurreiz is the Dean of Post Studies, Deanship, International University of Africa and professor of folklore, I.A.A.S University of Khartoum. He was formerly Director of the Institute of African and Asian studies, Executive Director of the East African Centre for Research on Oral Tradition and National Languages (EACROTANAL) and professor of anthropology and folklore, University of United Arab Emirates. He is author and editor of various publications on folklore, linguistics and African studies, his books in English include:
