

## Spiritual Healing in Kôngo Tradition: Its Nature, Scientific Validity, Generalization to African Cultures and Modern Continuation

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**Abstract:** The highest healing practice in Kôngo traditional society has always involved the purification of being and/or the use of spirits. This approach has been so far frowned at as having no scientific foothold, i.e., as being a mere superstition. In this paper, the author demonstrates the scientific anthropological bases of the purification of being, exposes the scientific validity of the existence of spirits, and evidences the main two approaches of the use of the spirits in divine healing as being the use of water, of herbal and mineral agents as well as the sole use of prayer. The methodology used in this paper is based on the use of the facto-deductive scheme to formulate the kemetic cosmological argument and the pre-suppositional use of the systematic natural theology thus stated to prove the scientific nature and validity of the various aspects of the Kôngo culture. The demonstration thus made has been shown to be susceptible of generalization *mutatis mutandis* to cover any African traditional society. Finally the author gives a glimpse of the modern continuation of African traditional spiritual healing practice.

**Keywords:** Healing; Kôngo; cosmological argument; purification; spirit; spiritual healing.

### INTRODUCTION

Speaking of Kôngo culture Janzen [1] affirms that “the healing traditions of the *banganga*, *bilongo*, and *min’kisi* are like shadows or memories in popular consciousness that may spring to life under special circumstances” (p. 51); however this practice is well alive in many Kôngo milieus. Traditional healing has always been a spiritual linked enterprise. This fact is correlated by the presence of the initiatory teachings of divine mystery (the natural preserve of the Kimpasi, the academy which reigned in the southern part of the Kingdom of Kôngo) in the two human mystery schools: the civil (Lemba, established in the northern part) and the martial (Kinkimba, whose bastion was the west) [2-4]. This inclusion of divine elements in human mystery teachings implies that in Kôngo culture, the divine, sacerdotal, mystery was the natural indispensable foundation on which any human benevolent practice used to stand on.

In this paper we intend to demonstrate the nature and scientific validity of the highest healing practice in Kôngo traditional society: spiritual healing. Spiritual healing in Kôngo culture, the Bukôngo, evolves around two elements: the purification of being and the use of divine spirits to cast out the evil ones. In a world dominated by empirical sciences, this approach of “medicine” has always been seen as bordering with magic, and as being immersed in superstition. Van Wing [5] writes about this:

*“Between the religion of the ancestors on one side and the true practice of n’kisi on the other, there are various acts and gestures (...) that the European, fond of generalization and classification, would categorize under the etiquette of magico-profane, magico-religious, superstitious, etc.” (145).*

For the demonstration of the nature of spiritual healing in Kôngo milieus, we will resort to previous researches done on this area. However to add our original perception we will use ethno-linguistic. Our findings will be reinforced by the knowledge we have acquired of the African traditional initiatory schools. We will also rely on informal conversation we had with someone who had instructive intercourses with practitioners of Kôngo traditional medicine.

Our approach for the demonstration of the scientific validity of African spiritual healing will rely on the solar cosmological interpretation (SCI), a methodology developed by the Institut des Sciences Animiques (ISA), a think-tank based in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, whose center of interest is the epistemology and spirituality of traditional Africa. The SCI involves the use of the facto-deductive scheme to state the kemetic cosmological argument (KCA), and the pre-suppositional use of the KCA, as systematic natural theology, to prove the scientific nature and validity of the various aspects of the Bukôngo in particular and of African culture in general as evidenced by the ethnography, through comparative study.

The demonstration thus made will be shown to be susceptible of generalization *mutatis mutandis* to cover any African traditional society, because the ISA has proven that, in its configuration, Kôngo initiatory system is the continuity of the ancient solar initiatory system found in ancient Egypt [4]. Thus, the southward migration of African ethnics and the immersion of African ethnics, ancient Egypt and Sumer in the same spiritually-based epistemology imply that any trend of ATR can be demonstrated to constitute a devolution of the Bukôngo [6].

Finally, we will introduce the reader to the modern implementation of Kôngo spiritual healing by the ISA. The ISA relies of the systematic natural theology of the Kongo religion, the Bukôngo to translate Kôngo traditional healing practice into a modern mental praxis.

### THE KÔNGO CONCEPT OF DISEASE AS A REPRIMAND

Besikôngo, people of Kôngo ethnic, use mainly two words to express the concept of disease: *kimbevo* and *bêla*. According to Mahaniah [7] on the level of causality there are three kinds of diseases for Besikôngo:

- “The normal disease or *bêla niâka* is that to which corresponds a short convalescence and is short-lived” (p. 27). This kind of disease is functional or organic; it doesn’t really bother Besikôngo; it can be healed easily and doesn’t recur.
- “The abnormal disease or *kimbêvo kia nza*; it is any non-natural disease” (p. 27). Janzen [1] in this case speaks of “*kimbevo kia muuntu*” (p. 57), i.e., disease caused by a human being. This is not readily healed, and can recur. Among the possible causes of this kind of disease Mahaniah indicates:
  - Unfortunate events.
  - Other people, this certainly includes the witches.
  - Ritual unbalance between the ancestors and the here-living.
  - Breach of social rules.
  - Breach of ritual alliance.
- “The supernatural disease, *kimbevo kia Nzâmbi*; it is any disease caused by God or by God’s will” (p. 27). This alludes to incurable diseases or to those due to old age.

It is obvious from the above descriptions of Mahaniah that the great concern of Besikôngo is how to face the second kind of disease; thus the main focus of the scholar must be to better understand the *kimbêvo kia nza*.

Bittremieux [3] was certainly astounded when Besikôngo of the western coast of the Kingdom of Kôngo, Bayômbe, told him that the words *bêla* (disease) and *bêla* (to lose a court trial) are synonymous! To understand the apparently awkward

concept of these Africans, one must first analyze their judicial system.

When a person has won a trial in a court of law (*mbazi a nkanu*), kaolin (*mpêmba*) was applied on his forehead, as a sign of being clean, of being pure, of siding with truth, with the enlightened ancestors; because *mpêmba* means also water as symbolizing the holy abode of the ancestors [2, 8]. To the failing party was applied charcoal (*kala*) as the token of siding with the rejection of truth or light, of siding with the devil.

Now the devil is called *nkadi-ampêmba*; this term implies the rejection of truth, the fact of not siding with enlightened ancestors who abide in *mpêmba*; the devil is thus perceived as an attitude rather than a personal entity.<sup>1</sup> Speaking of this concept of Besikôngo, van Wing [5] affirms: “obviously the belief in a *nkadi mpemba* identical to Satan of Christian religion doesn’t exist among Bampangu” (p. 293).

All these notions combined mean that to lose a case in a court of law (*bêla*) is like to be reprimanded (*bêla*) by the ancestors; disease (*bêla*) is always the result of a breach of sacred law (*n’lôngo*), or of sacred order (*kin’lôngo*). Disease (*bêla*) is thus the fact of failing to put oneself in proper protective connection with God through the enlightened ancestors. This failure leads mortals to fall prey of the attacks coming from other people or to be victims of social unbalances, hence the name of *kimbevo kia nza*, disease caused by those of this world. Thus, for Besikôngo “disease was considered to be a form of punishment” [9], i.e., *bêla* and *bêla* are synonymous.

### SPIRITUAL HEALING THROUGH THE MEANS OF WATER

The concept of *n’lôngo* casts more light on the nature of disease and the spiritual remedy against the *kimbevo kia nza*. Fukiau [2] explains that the words *n’lôngo* (sacred interdiction), *an’lôngo* (sacred), *longa* (to educate) and *n’langu* (water) derive from the same “root *lônga*” (p. 119); thus they are intimately linked in their meanings and use.

According to the ISA, every human being is perceived in the Bukôngo as divinely complete, “*muntu wa lûnga*” [2]. The concept of the divine completeness of being is seen in the three Kôngo initiatory academies where it is called Kimahûngu in the Lemba, Kimalungila in the Kimpasi, and Kitafu-Maluangu in the Kinkimba [4]. The divine completeness of the

<sup>1</sup> This perception can also be deduced from the concept of the devil among the Igbos of Nigeria, they call the devil *ekwensu*; which can be understood as a contraction of *ekwe ensu* meaning: if you believe it happens to you. Thus the devil for these Africans, like for the Besikôngo, is not a personal being, but a mental disposition.

*muntu* (human being) is symbolized by the conjunction of the male and the female; thus the fact that every *muntu* among Besikôngo calls his right part male and the left female shows that the divine completeness of being (called the Verb in the terminology of the ISA) is always present in the *muntu*, though *sin*<sup>2</sup> reduces it to a mere potential state.

Mahaniah listed among the possible cause of *bêla* the breach of a spiritual alliance, which can be understood as a breach of a sacred rule (*n'longo*) or a breach of the divine completeness of *muntu*, the Verb. The unity and sacredness of the words derived from the root "*longa*" imply that in the mind of Besikôngo the highest remedy (*n'longo*) for this breach is included in a sacred education (*longa*) which might reestablish the level of the spiritual unity, the manifestation of the Verb, that was destroyed through the breach. Education cures the spiritual unbalance introduced by the breach through the restoration to the *muntu* of his lost purity (*bun'longo*); and the purification needed to attain the sacredness was ritually obtained through water (*n'langu*). Thus is established that one of the spiritual remedy to *bêla* is purification through water.

To illustrate this conclusion we will rely on the informal conversions we had with Mrs. C. K. Makela in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. Mrs. Makela recounted to us a case where the specific "singing" water of an eddy was used to cure a case of speech difficulties encountered by a baby; according to the informant different kinds of water are thus used to heal various kinds of diseases.

Our hypothesis at this level is that when water is used for a cure, it is in reality the spirit which inhabits the precise kind of water which purifies the diseased and casts out the evil spirits, the validity of this hypothesis will be given below. This perception is sustained by the fact that Western medical science doesn't attribute to the molecule of water (H<sub>2</sub>O) a healing ability.

We must add that in certain spiritual milieus, among the Bangunza<sup>3</sup>, water is replaced by wind; thus in order to cast out the evil spirits, the sick is ventilated through a towel. We understand by analogy with our hypothesis that it is the good spirits which abide in the wind which casts out the evil ones. The use of water has a long tradition in Kôngo spiritual healing; this fact is evidenced by the inclusion of this doctrine in the old

<sup>2</sup> The concept of *sin* (*sumu*) is not foreign to the Bukôngo; it is evidenced through the existence of the commandments of God ("*nkôndo mi Nzâmbi*") (Van Wing, 1956, p. 147) or "*khongo*" (Bittremieux, 1936, p. 133). But original *sin* is not in the Kôngo perception of *sumu*.

<sup>3</sup> Fukiau (1969, 149) defines a *ngunza* as a trance healer; *bangunza* is the plural of *ngunza*.

semantic of the Kikôngo, as seen above; while the Kingunza is more recent as it appeared in 1921 with the healing work of Simon Kimbangu, the great Kôngo prophet [2].

## SPIRITUAL HEALING THROUGH THE MEANS OF SPIRITS

What we have explained in the above section is that one of the ways spiritual healing is operated is through purification by water. In this section we will examine the case of spiritual healing operated through the means of herbal or mineral agents. To illustrate this second approach we will rely again on the informal conversations we had with Mrs. Makela.

The informant has a son who was sick of pulmonary disorder. Due to the failure of Western medical practice to cure the case, she decided to turn to a traditional healer for a solution to the bad health of her baby. Upon confirming the diagnosis of the case, the traditional healer placed the sick baby on the roof of a hut; she took various herbs from her backyard and knocked the baby three times with the bundle of herbs; the sick baby jumped up and was instantly relieved.

This healer, like Mrs. Makela, belongs to the area of the Kimpasi, the Kôngo sacerdotal academy; this fact leads us to hypothesize that his healing knowledge was inherited from a spiritual healer of this initiatory academy. We know that the usual way of utilizing medicine is to introduce it in the body through natural orifices or to deposit it over or under the epidermis through tattooing [9]. The fact that a simple contact with the bundle of herbs led to the cure implies that the healing agent was not chemical, but the spirit, or spirits, which inhabits these herbs according to the African holistic worldview.

## THE TWO DIFFERENT USE OF MATERIAL AGENTS IN TRADITIONAL HEALING

The spiritual healing through purification by water and through the use of herbs and minerals recounted in the two previous sections gives us a clue to the difference which exists between the healing done through human means thanks to herbs or minerals, and the spiritual healing done through the use of the same physical agents. This difference implies the existence of two main uses of material agents in the practice of traditional Kôngo "medicine":

- Its use in human healing practice.
- Its use in spiritual healing practice.

### Material agent in human healing practice;

In this first case the chemical healing agent can be isolated by modern pharmacists to be used in Western medical practice. This kind pharmaceutical practice is attested by Janzen [1] who writes:

*"A few pharmacists with advanced training succeeded in subjecting local materia medica to scientific*

*examination and the production of new plant-derived medicines. Montreal-trained pharmacist Flaubert Batangu Mpesa founded the Centre de Recherche Pharmaceutique de Luozi to develop patented medicines that eventually concentrated in the production of Manalaria and Manadiar, a prophylaxis and a cure for malaria” (p. 52).*

The healing obtained through these traditional natural agents is material, though the healer prays to God before engaging in his curative enterprise: *buka mu kati ya buka kumbazi*, which means literally: heal the inner while I attend to the outer (Bahelele, 1971, p. 60). It is worthy here to note that, according to Mrs. Makela, this saying is used only by the traditional allopathic healer; this branch of healing is the preserve of Kongo civil academy, the Lemba, defined by Janzen [10] “as the most important of the consecrated medicines” (p. 4). This confirms two things:

- Spirituality was perceived as indispensable to any human allopathic healing practice, as seen above in the presence of divine teachings in the curriculum of human mystery schools.
- Besikongo perceive that the true *muntu* is the inner, i.e., the spiritual; thus they consider the healing work to be incomplete unless the relative spiritual completeness of the *muntu*, the Verb, is reestablished.

#### **Material agents in spiritual healing practice**

In the second case of healing, though water, herbs, or minerals are used, the healing agent is not chemical, but spiritual. The healing practice in this case is based on the fact that a spirit, or spirits, inhabits any phenomena and being; thus to any disease corresponds a healing spirit, or spirits, inhabiting the water, an herb, or a mineral. This understanding led Besikongo to envisage spiritual healing through prayer alone in their praxis of ATR. However the existence of these healing spirits requires a proof that we will provide later in this article.

#### **THE SCIENTIFIC DEFENSE OF THE VALIDITY OF KONGO SPIRITUAL HEALING**

As we said in the introduction, our approach of the defense of African spiritual culture is the SCI; it entails the fact of establishing the correlation between ethnographical statements and the systematic natural theology offered by the KCA. In this purpose, the SCI requires first the use the facto-deductive approach, a deduction by starting from an empirical base, to state the KCA, and finally the pre-suppositional use of the KCA to demonstrate the validity of the ethnographical descriptions of the studied African cultural elements through comparative study.

The ethno-linguistic analysis made above has revealed that healing in Kongo milieus is linked to spirituality; thus it will be more efficient to first expose the nature of Kongo religion, the Bukongo; next we will

deduced from an empirical basis the characteristics of the Bukongo while showing the correlation between the KCA and the nature of spiritual healing evidenced above.

#### **SUMMARY OF KONGO RELIGION**

In their introduction of the *Encyclopedia of African religion*, Asante & Mazama [11] define ATR as including the following basic elements:

- A transcendent Supreme Being
- A creator of the universe
- Spirits
- The belief in the intercession of the ancestors.

The ISA [6] has elaborated on this definition to present the ATR in an all inclusive perception embracing the different trends of African indigenous religion. The main characteristics of the religion bequeathed by our ancestors have been thus explained as originally and essentially comprising:

- The original preponderance of the divine mystery teachings of sacerdotal academies over the curricula of the human ones (the civil and the martial). The preponderance in any pre-colonial African culture of the civil mystery eroded the prerogative of the high priest in favor of the king, a case seen in Uganda [12]. As to the preponderance of the martial elements it created martial religions; this case is epitomized by the Vodun through its Gods of war (Hounon 2001) and of witchcraft [14]; witchcraft being a possible weapon of war.
- Hierarchical monotheism, a perception of theism where the Most-high thrones above the demiurgic creator and other lower Gods who are His manifestations.
- The presence of the notion of the Verb as the divine completeness of being in and around the *muntu*.
- The existence of Spirits.
- The indispensable intercession of ancestors.

These features of ATR are perfectly expressed in the Bukongo because the initiatory system of this culture was traditionally marked by the preponderance of the divine mystery over the human [4]. The scientific validity of this characteristics will be seen in their deduction through the KCA.

#### **THE KCA AS A CORRELATION OF THE BUKONGO**

The cosmological argument starts from “the presence of the cosmos back to a creator of the cosmos” [13]; the empirical premise of the KCA is the existence of individualities in this universe. From this base the KCA evolves deductively through the use of the law of causality and the principle of sufficient reason. This

systematic natural theology can be summarily stated as follows<sup>4</sup>:

- Being made up of individualities, our universe is an individuality; thus it is a contingent entity.
- According to the law of causality there is a necessary individual being whose presence explains the creation of this universe and includes it.
- Since this creator is an individual being, there must be along him other relative necessary individualities having at least a potential creative causation.
- The possession of individualities by these relative necessary beings is a contingency; thus there is an absolute necessary cause including all the relative necessary individualities.
- Being the greatest possible being, this absolutely necessary cause is the Supreme-Being. As an absolutely infinite entity and being without any contingency, the Most-high is indivisible; thus each relative necessary being, as the manifestation of His individuality, expresses His wholeness, the Verb.

Thus introduced the KCA affirms the transcendence of the Most-high; this nature of the Supreme Being is sustained by the ethnographies of the Bukôngo, because for Van Wing [5]: ‘Nzâmbi is unique, apart from everything else, invisible and yet living, acting in sovereignty, independent, elusive and inaccessible.’ (305) This Bittremieux [3] confirms:

*‘Nzâmbi cannot have equal, He is not even (...) the "primus inter pares" or the term of an animist evolution, a polytheist one, or another, but the One, the Inaccessible, the Great Chief, who from his empyrean dominates everything.’ (133).*

Aside from the transcendence of the Most-high which has established the existence of a hierarchy of divinities (the Supreme Being, the creator, the Verb, etc.), the KCA has substantiated the existence of the Verb which has been already shown above to be the basis of Kôngo definition of disease as a breach of the divine completeness of being. Moreover the same transcendence of the Most-high justifies the necessity of the intercession of holy ancestors. Thus the main features of the Bukôngo are in harmony with the KCA; it remains only the existence of spirits that we will prove lower.

### **THE KCA A PROOF OF THE NECESSITY OF SPIRITUAL HEALING**

The KCA has revealed that the creator is a relative necessary being; however, the necessary realm

<sup>4</sup> The words “father”, “son”, “man” are taken to convey the gender-free meaning of the Kôngo words *se*, *mwana*, and *mûntu* which can be used for persons of both sexes.

being without any contingency, a temporal consciousness cannot exist in it. Moreover, according to the principle of harmony, the creator cannot include simultaneously an eternal and a temporal consciousness; nor can he totally leave the eternal consciousness for the temporal, due to the absolute non-contingency of the eternal realm. Thus, since the absolutely infinite necessary realm includes all reality, creation occurs in an illusory intermediary temporal consciousness which is only a perspective of spiritual realm. It must however be noted that the illusory nature pertains to the limitation the perspective tries to affix to the eternal reality, not to the good which appears in the temporal realm because the ISA demonstrates the substance of that good to be the Supreme Being [15].

It results from this deductive development that anything in the temporal realm is only a perspective of its eternal reality. Thus, on the anthropological level, the *mûntu* is only a perspective of his spiritual heavenly reality as a relative necessary being, a Son of God. This double nature of the *mûntu* is correlated by Tempels [16] who affirms that “the Bantus distinguish in the visible beings the exterior appearance and the being itself which is a force and an invisible nature” (p. 58).

God, the Father, being absolutely without contingency, the *mûntu* is never deprived by Him of the Verb, but the bad use of the free will resulted in the apparent descent which is the manifestation of the *mûntu* on the temporal plane. The KCA has thus shown us that the real and most important nature of the *mûntu* is the inner, the divine completeness of his being, the Verb. Moreover, it has been seen that disease is a breach of this divine completeness of the *mûntu*.

This explains the pledge of the allopathic traditional healer to God, through the ancestors, to heal the inner man (*buka mu kati ya buka kumbazi* (Bahelele 1971, 60)); therefore, the KCA provides the proof that to restore through sanctification a relative manifest expression of the Verb in and around the *mûntu* is the essence of Kôngo spiritual healing practice.

### **THE SCIENTIFIC EXISTENCE OF SPIRITS**

We have seen that the highest *modus operandi* of African traditional healing is the use of the spirits that governs water, herbs and minerals in order to cast the evil spirits that cause and control sickness. However Eurocentric science eschews any direct participation of religious entities in the explanation of the universe; alluding to cosmologists, Magnan (n.d.) puts it this way:

*“If they want to discover the why of Life, cosmologists must imperatively to abandon the idea that religion provides the answer... It belongs to science, and to science alone, to decide on the truth of things religion has nothing to say on the matter”*

Speaking of the different perception the West and Africa present, Janzen [1] insists that “Science” and “spirit” are shorthand terms that represent two prominent aspects of health and healing in postcolonial Kongo’ (p. 47). In fact Janzen contrasts here two Eurocentric views, as seen in his quote-marking “science” and “spirit”. The ISA demonstrates that Western materialistic science (called lunar due to its focus on matter) and the African spiritual-based science (called solar due to its focus of the divine) are two different perceptions of nature [4].

Lunar science is based on non-demonstrable a priori presuppositions the main of which is that reality is material, while solar science is based on the fact that reality is spiritual. The presuppositions of lunar science are accepted a priori, while the bases of solar science can be demonstrated through the KCA which clearly establishes that all reality is in God; this view, as we have seen above, offers the simplest solution to the dynamics of the universe at the astronomic and subatomic levels, a holistic “theory of everything” [15]. Thus it is anomalous to reject African perception on the basis of the scientific nature of Western worldview.

The limitation of Western perception of nature is in reality indigenous to its epistemology which imposes a dichotomous view of the universe [17]. The epistemology of African traditional culture seizes nature holistically as a unity of the visible and the invisible. In such a perception science and religion must harmoniously co-explain reality [4]. It is a worldview where the existence of spirit is a scientific fact; but this assertion requires proof.

The existence of spirits can be proven through the systematic natural theology of the Bukôngo, the KCA, in this way:

- Being absolutely without contingency, the Father (the Most-high) is indivisible; thus each Son of God expresses the fullness of His divinity, the Verb.
- Therefore the Father, the Son and the Verb are inseparable in their substance, being and activity; this is the trinity of solar religion; it implies that the Father always acts through the Sons thanks to the Verb.
- Being the ultimate causative power and being All-in-all, the Father is Spirit, the animating Principle of all reality; since the Father always acts through the Sons, each relative necessary being animates an aspect of reality.
- Thus, due to the all-pervading nature of the Father as the sole substance of reality, each Son of God is manifested in the temporal universe as the animating principle of an aspect of its reality.

Therefore, the existence of these “divine Spirits”, called *bakisi* in Kikôngo [8], is not a superstition as claimed by some Eurocentric-minded

scholars [5], but a demonstrable fact of African indigenous knowledge [4]. Moreover, because good is God, the sum total of spiritual reality, evil is only the result of a reverse consciousness caused by the bad use of the free will by the fallen *mântu*.

#### ON THE SCIENTIFIC VALIDITY OF THE KCA

The KCA is a deduction from an empirical basis. Ladyman (2002) affirms about this mode of reasoning that “it is not possible for the premises all to be true while the conclusion is false” (p. 264).

Moreover, the KCA dictates that the creator must move from an eternal consciousness to a temporal one in order to create. But since the creator is a relative necessary being, and creation is temporal, the creator moves back to the eternal consciousness. The ISA has proven that this move-back prompted by the Verb translates into an acceleration of the absolute space-time, the one which includes the different planes of our universe, towards its nothingness. This acceleration has been used to explain mathematically in a Newtonian physics the movements and stability of bodies at the astronomical and subatomic levels, a holistic “theory of everything” [15].

The KCA is demonstrated in this way to be a scientific approach, a systematic natural theology, due to its deductive method and its mathematical convergence with Newtonian physics; thus its correlation with the ethnography of the Bukôngo and its spiritual healing theory proves the scientific nature of these ones.

#### SPIRITUAL HEALING NOT MIRACULOUS

Spiritual healing is viewed in the Western epistemology as belonging to the realm of miracles; something that goes beyond the understanding of its materialistic science and violates the laws of nature. Such a conclusion is in accord with a dichotomous perception which separates the visible from the invisible and divides science and religion to finally eschew any participation of religion in the scientific explanation of reality.

Contrary to this Western materialistic epistemology, Wiredu [18] affirms that the African eschews any natural/supernatural dichotomy in his perception of the universe. Thus this scholar was led to validly conclude that “the notion of a miracle does not make sense in this context; if a miracle is something supposed to happen contrary to the laws of ‘nature’” (p. 33).

#### GENERALIZATION OF SPIRITUAL HEALING OF THE BUKÔNGO

The demonstration of the existence and validity of spiritual healing in the Bukôngo is susceptible of generalization *mutatis mutandis* to cover any African traditional society, because:

- The ISA has proven that Kôngo initiatory system is the continuity of the ancient solar initiatory system found in ancient Egypt [4]; both cultures share the same solar epistemology which results in solar religion characterized by the hierarchy of divinities and the notion of the Verb (see the table).
- Having preserved the three main initiatory schools of solar culture within the frame of the preponderance of the divine mystery over the human ones, the Bukôngo presents a paragon of solar culture.
- The southward migration of African ethnics and the

immersion of African ethnics, ancient Egypt and Sumer in the same spiritually-based epistemology led the ISA to demonstrate that any trend of ATR constitute a devolution of solar religion, i.e., of the Bukôngo [4].

Thus, just as the religious system of the Bukôngo can be used to explain any trend of the ATR, the conclusions reached about the spiritual healing in the Bukôngo can be generalized *mutatis mutandis* to any ethnic of Africa.

**Table-1: Comparative table of Memphis and Kôngo hierarchy of divinities**

REALM	EGYPT Memphis theology	KÔNGO
Heavenly	The Unnamed Sole Lord	The angels of the celestial throne and the angels of the court of God the Most-high.
Intermediary	Atom or Ra, the firstborn of Nut (the heaven).	Mbumba Lowa, the Solar creator.
	Ptah, the God of order	Mpina Nza, the governor
Temporal (holy ancestors)	The “dead God”	Kôngo, the primeval ancestor.

The divinities of memphis theology are deduced from James [19], the Pyramid Text of Unas and the Egyptian Book of the Dead. The existence of the tomb of a dead god in every district of ancient Egypt is affirmed by Maspero [20]. Kôngo hierarchy is furnished by the prayer of Simon Kimbangu, the great kôngo prophet, in the forest of Mbanza-Nsanda, Kôngo-Central, DRC, in 1921 [21].

**MENTAL SPIRITUAL HEALING THEN AND NOW**

We have seen that spiritual healing among the Besikôngo includes two components: purification and the use of divine spirits. This healing can be done through the means of material agents: water, herbs or minerals. Our purpose in this section is:

- To show the existence in the Bukôngo of mental spiritual healing; i.e., spiritual healing through the sole use of prayer.
- To demonstrate the rational bases of this highest spiritual healing.
- To provide a glimpse of the modern approach of mental spiritual healing of the ATR taught by the ISA.

**THE EXISTENCE OF MENTAL SPIRITUAL HEALING IN THE BUKÔNGO**

It has been evidenced above that for the Besikôngo *bêla* and *bêla* are synonymous. This similitude implies that disease is always perceived as the result of a reprimand from the illuminated ancestors for breaching the sacred law (*n'longo*) or for failing to put oneself in proper protective connection with the holy ones (*ban'longo*), the enlightened ancestors; thus disease has been defined as a breach of the divine

completeness of the *mûntu*. Since the Bukôngo demonstrates the reality of being to be spiritual, it involves the possibility of spiritual healing through prayer alone; this perception is reinforced by the fact that the word *sâmba* means both “to plaid a case in a court of law” and “to pray”.

Thus *sâmba* provides a proof that for the Besikôngo the highest remedy for the *bêla* (disease) is prayer (*sâmba*); because if for these Africans *bêla* (disease) and *bêla* (to lose a case in a court of law) are synonymous, then the similarity between *sâmba* (to plaid in court of law) and *sâmba* (to pray) is the correlate of the synonymous nature of the formers. Moreover, even when the *n'longo* (sacred medicine) is used, we have seen that the healer accompanies it with prayer to God for the healing of the inner *mûntu*: *buka mu kati ya buka kumbazi* (Bahelele 1971, 60).

Therefore prayer for healing without a material agency has always been in the Bukôngo the highest means for the cure and the protection of the population against the assault of diseases of any kind: personal, social, etc.

**SCIENTIFIC BASES OF SPIRITUAL MENTAL HEALING**

We have seen above that Africa and the West present two different perceptions of nature; the first is a holistic grasp of the visible and the invisible while the second is a dichotomous view which eschews any participation of the invisible in the scientific explanation of reality. Thus both don't have the same description of human being: the words man and *mûntu*

are not synonymous, though they both allude to human being.

The KCA has demonstrated that the *mûntu* is not essentially a corporeal entity, but is rather a perspective, a consciousness of a spiritual heavenly reality: his temporal “reality” is thus essentially a mental limitation. This conclusion has been correlated by the fact that the traditional allopathic healer asks God to heal the inner *mûntu*, while he attends to the outer physical appearance: to heal the body is not to heal the inner true being, while the reverse is true, as seen in the existence of spiritual healing. By his prayer the traditional healer acknowledges the inability of his material potions to reach the “real” *mûntu*.

The difference between the *mûntu* and man is also pictured by Tempels [16] who explains that:

*“It appears to me improper to translate the word mûntu by man. Indeed the mûntu possesses a visible body, but this body is not the mûntu... Mûntu means a vital force endowed with intelligence and with will” (pp. 35-36).*

Tempels elaborates by explaining that the word *mûntu* in the equivalent of a “person”; that’s why some Congo ethnics consider God as the greatest *mûntu*, a particular *mûntu*, *mûntu ampil’ankaka*. Since God is clearly understood as the Spirit, not a corporeal being, the *mûntu* is in reality a spiritual individual and socializing consciousness. Thus being essentially spiritual, the healing of the *mûntu* cannot be complete if it is undertaken only materially while undertaken spiritually the healing impacts positively the material.

#### **MODERN SPIRITUAL HEALING PRACTICE OF THE ISA**

Our purpose in this section is not to expose in details the healing approach of the ISA, this is a task devoted to modern initiation into the divine mystery of ATR, an initiation offered by the various branches of the ISA. What we offer here is just a glimpse of African spiritual healing as practiced by the ISA in a scientific context.

The KCA has demonstrated that the manifestation of the real and the unreal in the temporal order are only states of consciousness. The real is good, spiritual, non-contingent, all-inclusive and depends on God; the unreal is temporal illusory and limitative, it is ultimately a subjective state produced by the bad use of the free will, a breach of sacred law (*n’lôngo*). This conclusion has been correlated by the fact that the devil, *nkadi ampemba*, is not a personal being but an attitude adopted by mortals.

Therefore the victory against evil can be conceived as a change in the temporal consciousness to be achieved through the power of the Verb by the

affirmation of the consciousness of reality and the negation of the opposite illusory limitation.

Since the temporal consciousness is illusory in its apparent limitation of good and the spiritual consciousness is non-contingent, evil is always a suggestion, whatsoever be its nature and duration! Evil cannot attain a point where it becomes a reality for the following reasons:

- The KCA demonstrates God to be the sum total of reality; thus no reality exist aside the Supreme Being.
- Since God, the sum total of reality is non-contingent; any additional reality would deny this absolute non-contingency.
- God, good, is absolutely infinite, the existence of a “real” evil would deny this divine nature.

Thus, spiritual healing activity consists not in a move from the human consciousness to the divine, but rather an affirmation and spiritual acceptance of the last as the only true abode of the *mûntu*, in his reality, and a negation of the former; these affirmation and negation lead to the destruction of the suggestion of the limitation of good parading itself as disease. According to the trinity of the ATR demonstrated through the KCA, this healing result can be reached only through the Verb, i.e. through purification which destroys the seeming power of sin which reduced the Verb to mere potentiality.

To put it comparatively, modern spiritual healing of ISA starts from perfection (spiritual reality) to deny the suggestion of imperfection (material illusion), while any material healing practice starts from material imperfection to reach material perfection (limited “good”); it is in order to remedy to this incomplete nature of material healing practice that the Kôngo traditional healer pleads for the healing of the inner *mûntu*.

Modern spiritual healing of the ISA is not to be confused with autosuggestion. First of all it entails the activity of the Verb, which eschews human will, and secondly, on the epistemological level autosuggestion is unconceivable in ATR; because reason is perceived as being essentially revelatory; it is a series of direct and/or indirect revelations leading to knowledge [4].

#### **CONCLUSION**

The highest healing practice in Kôngo traditional society has always involved two main components the purification of being and the use of spirits. This approach has been so far frowned at as having no scientific foothold, i.e., as being mere superstition. In this paper we endeavored to demonstrate the nature and scientific validity of the spiritual healing of Kôngo religion, the Bukôngo, by using the correlation which exist between its systematic



natural theology and ethnological evidences deduced from ethno-linguistic.

This study revealed that spirituality has always been an essential component of the healing practice of the Bukôngo; even material healing required the accompaniment of prayer because the reality of the *mûntu*, the human being, is perceived as spiritual.

Ritual spiritual healing involves the use of water, of herbs or of mineral to purify the diseased and to cast out the evil spirits through the agency of the divine spirits that animated the elements of the temporal world.

However healing through the mere use of prayer has always been part of the praxis of the Bukôngo. The necessity and scientific validity of this approach to the cure of disease result from the fact that the *mûntu* is perceived a being essentially mental. The mental nature of the *mûntu* is evidenced by ethnology and by the kemetic cosmological argument (KCA), the systematic natural theology of the Bukôngo.

Mental spiritual healing thus demonstrated can be generalized to any African spiritual culture *mutatis mutandis* because the Bukôngo is the solar religion which characterized ancient Egypt; therefore the southward migration of African ethnics and their immersion in solar epistemology, shared by ancient solar civilizations, dictate that the different trends of ATR can be explained from the Bukôngo.

Kôngo mental spiritual healing is today continued by the Institut des Sciences Animiques (ISA) as the implementation of the facto-deductive science of the African traditional religion. This healing practice consists essentially in the affirmation and spiritual acceptance of the divine reality and the negation of the opposite evil whose nature is always a suggestion coming to the *mûntu*.

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