

‘Dialogue, Argumentation, and Belief Revision: A study of apologetic
conversations in West Cameroon’

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OCMS, Ph. D

ABSTRACT

This work studies dialogue, argumentation, and their relationship to belief revision in person-to-person apologetics in five West Cameroonian dialogues. The seeming irrelevance of Western Apologetics to West Cameroonian thought is the problem that stimulated the study. The primary methodological steps of the study include obtaining meticulously transcribed scripts of unrehearsed conversations, and subjecting those transcripts to an inquiry about the presence and nature of dialogue, argument patterns, commitment, questions, rhetoric, and belief revision in the conversations. These primary tools are drawn from *Commitment in Dialogue* (1995), *Argumentation Schemes* (2008), ‘A Truth Maintenance System’ (1979), ‘Reason Maintenance and Belief Revision’ (1992), and related sources. The initial premise, to be tested by the research, is that these conversational elements are present, and that the theories are useful in understanding the dialogues’ rationality. The second, but no less important, premise of the study is that this research contributes to an understanding of the nature and role of the cumulative case in the practice of person-to-person apologetics in West Cameroon and cultural situations dominated by relativism. Chapter 1 introduces the background of the research and the questions of the inquiry, which I call ‘tools’. Chapter 2 questions the significance of the tools and the analysis of the data for person-to-person apologetics in pluralistic contexts. Chapters 3-7 document the analysis of the dialogues. And chapter 8 ends with a summary of the evidence for the thesis of the work: ‘A belief’s entrenchment, the result of argument patterns converging into a cumulative case for the belief, is primarily sensitive to understanding and revision in the context of dialogue.’ This work contributes to the understanding of modern African rationality, and the relationships of dialogue, argument, belief revision, and the cumulative case in relativistic contexts.

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A study of apologetic conversations in West
Cameroon’

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Declaration Page

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Nary A. Stephens

Signed

Date 9-10-2016

Statement One

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote.

Other sources are acknowledged by midnotes or footnotes giving explicit references. A compilation of the complete dialogues and a bibliography is appended.

Nary A. Stephens

Signed

Date 9-10-2016

Statement Two

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Dedication

First, this work is dedicated to the students I taught in West Cameroon over a period of twenty five years. My interaction with these men and women taught me much about the culture and rationality on display in the following dialogues.

Furthermore, this thesis is dedicated to missionaries everywhere who are called to communicate with those who have different ways of reasoning about the world. Though it contains no method that guarantees understanding or communication between those of different cultural backgrounds, it chronicles a creative approach to understanding and communication.

Lastly, and most importantly, it is dedicated to furthering St. Paul's mission 'to demolish arguments and every pretention that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and...take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ' (*The Bible*, 2 Corinthians 10: 5).

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Churchill defined courage as ‘grace under pressure’. I could never have finished this work without the grace of God faithfully operating in my life over the ten years this project has taken.

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Preface: The Author's Perspective as a Researcher

My commitment from the outset of this project has been to the basic tenets of evangelical Christianity. With that in mind, I approached this project as research that would help ground the Christian discipline of Apologetics in the contemporary rationality of West Cameroon. I firmly hold that one cannot present or defend Christianity as a reasonable faith (the task of apologetics) without considering how a people reason in their cultural context. As Lamin Sanneh notes, reflection, which I take to include the processing of new information, is essential to Christian conversion: 'On the other hand, conversion that takes place in mission as translation rests on the conviction that might be produced in people after conscious reflection' (1989, 29).

As the research task unfolded, I recognized the importance of the following theories and data for person-to-person apologetics in other cultures. I became convinced that doing apologetics responsibly aims at belief revision. Through dialogue, an apologist should aim at adding new knowledge to the hearer's belief set that stimulates the hearer to reflect on and revise his beliefs and actions. In my own experience, new knowledge of the identity and significance of Jesus Christ provoked changes in my identity, worldview, and actions.

I approach the dialogues in this collection with deep respect. The human process of belief revision is often a long, and difficult process. I, like the reader, observe and participate in the following conversations. I try to stand in the shoes of each apologist who listens as their dialogue partner speaks. Perhaps I am in a privileged position to do this. For most of 23 years I sought to understand how West Cameroonians reasoned in their own setting. However, the agents in these conversations are the front-line interpreters. They agree or disagree, explain or comment on what the other person has

said. Reading the dialogues intelligently requires paying attention to what a speaker says, and how the other person responds.

This researcher makes no claim to understand or exposit all the dialectic and rhetoric in the dialogues. Space does not allow such an endeavour. Often the best I can do is to suggest several possible interpretations. Though I have provided the reader with a selection of dialogues that present a variety of features (1.9), I do not claim that the dialogues of this collection are a scientific sampling of all possible conversations.

In light of the data, however, I argue that dialogue can have an unexpected, but potentially crucial role in building a cumulative case that facilitates the process of belief revision. With this in mind, I suggest that dialogue and argumentation theories facilitate reading the dialogues, and Reason Maintenance System best models the changes in an agent's beliefs.

Finally, while the focus of the work, the research data and theories contribute to understanding the cumulative case, the Christian apologists documented in chapter two contribute a great deal to its presentation. Though a fully Christian view of belief revision requires placing the above process in the context of Scripture and the work of the Holy Spirit, the position taken here is that effective use of dialogue and argument, at a minimum, opens the human process of belief revision to the possible work of the Holy Spirit. However, the discussion of the Holy Spirit's role in belief revision is well beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Chapter One: Introduction

This research informally began in 1988 and continued over a period of 23 years at two seminars in West Cameroon. This chapter documents that research setting, describes the perplexing problem that initiated the work, and chronicles the development of this research. Section 1.1 describes the project's context. Sections 1.2-1.4 recount the early understanding of the problem, the informal inquiries into it, and the academic context of that developing focus. Section 1.2 narrates how teaching logic led to an appreciation of cognition, a general name for the process that leads to belief revision. Section 1.3 further develops the relationship of the content of an argument to the process of cognition and belief change.

Section 1.4 summarizes three areas of anecdotal evidence that gave rise to the research. It relates how this project generally differs from anthropological treatments of rationality, and specifically, from Odera Oruka's effort to document sage philosophy (1991). Section 1.5 further delineates the scope of the research to a primary question and documents the areas of study employed to answer the question. This section further distinguishes the nature of this project from the work of Horton and Lukes, and the work of apologists who treat or touch upon dialogue as an important tool in Apologetics.

Section 1.6 treats the aims and objectives of the project, which are expanded into methodology in sections 1.8-1.15. Section 1.7, on knowledge and belief, provides a basis the theories, their use, and provides the objectivity so sorely needed in a work like this.

Section 1.16 presents observations based on the evidence presented in each chapter. Finally, 1.17 concludes with the contributions that this research makes to knowledge.

1.1 The Research Setting

Western Cameroon, where my wife and I taught at Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary (CBTS), Ndu, over a period of eighteen years, and Cameroon Baptist Seminary (CBSK), Kumba, for six years, allowed for a broad exposure to African life. This exposure ranged from in rural villages in the Northwest Region to urban life in Kumba, a city in the Southwest Region. With 110+ indigenous language groups (Gullman 1991) and a large number of Nigerian immigrant-residents living in Kumba, Western Cameroon is strongly multicultural. The official lingua franca and the language of instruction in Western Cameroon is English; in reality, Pidgin is more widely spoken in the home and marketplace. Owned and operated by Cameroon Baptist Convention, the seminaries at which we taught had multi-ethnic student bodies.

In 1947, the CBC established Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary (CBTS) to meet the challenge of a growing number of churches, and as importantly, the growing emphasis on ‘O’ and ‘A’ levels¹ in the cultural context. Moreover, Convention educators recognized that these rising educational standards required the ongoing development of new programmes. In 1984, CBTS began a bachelor’s programme that included the study of logic.² In 1988, shortly after our arrival at CBTS, its academic dean asked me to teach the course.

1.2 Reasoning and Cognition

The teaching of logic stimulated a deeper appreciation of the problems related to processing new information. This section documents how I became aware that different

¹ ‘A’ and ‘O’ levels, ‘A’ being the highest, are certificates of successful further education in specific subjects.

² As early as 1959, Dr. George Dunger crusaded for a ‘Theological School’, which would eventually take the shape of a B. Th. Programme (The Baptist Herald 12/24, p. 9). In 1966, the curriculum review committee of CBGS recognized eventual necessity of developing the Bachelor of Theology programme. (Kwast 1971, 170).

forms of reasoning,³ including basic logical operations, influence the acceptance or rejection of new information.

Logic, as a foundation for theological method, fitted admirably into an advanced degree. Insofar as I could determine in 1988, the original theory behind the course was pragmatic: Induction facilitates Bible study⁴ and deduction provides a means to reach general conclusions from propositions derived from the Bible. While this explanation greatly simplifies the relationships between deduction, induction, biblical data, and theology, it seemed to approximate the theoretical base for teaching logic at CBTS.

It became apparent that the logic course would not follow this theory. Since my students had little exposure to formal logic, I taught informal fallacies in 1988. However, I felt at the time that teaching about bad arguments was inadequate without exposing the student to ‘good arguments’, which I took to mean deductive and inductive logic. However, this effort raised many questions about how one arrives at new knowledge or beliefs, the process called cognition.

1.3 Difficulties in Teaching Logic as a Cognitive Process

Cognition is the ‘mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses’ (Pearsall and Stevenson 2010). Questions about deduction aside, I was committed to teaching students how to reach new insights through logical thinking. The unexpected difficulties in this task, which is the subject of this section, became the stimulus for the research presented here.

The basic processes of deduction and induction posed a significant challenge to the students I taught. No doubt, my limitations as a teacher played a role in that difficulty. In addition, although the schools at which we taught required students to have a

³ ‘Different forms of reasoning’ include argument patterns (Walton, Reed and Macagno, *Argumentation Schemes* 2008; Pollock 1992).

⁴ I taught the course, ‘Inductive Bible Study’ along with Logic.

moderate grasp of English, the language was not widely used by the student in daily living. Consequently, English presented its own challenges. However, there were factors at work in the student's reasoning that were not reducible to pedagogy or language. When called on to draw a conclusion from a group of premises or to judge a deductive or inductive argument, I observed that students consistently imported seemingly extraneous premises into that process, adding considerations that made the task virtually impossible.⁵

Since most examples of logical 'problems' in western pedagogical materials were culturally unfamiliar to the students, I began to use arguments from general West Cameroonian culture. One of the more notorious of those arguments, generally used with the first premise suppressed, was the syllogism that often justifies consulting a diviner or witch doctor about the cause of a death:

Premise 1: All persons who die young are persons who are killed (murdered).

Premise 2: X is a person who died young.

Conclusion: X is a person who was murdered.

Using materials familiar to my students, such as the above syllogism, raised the unanticipated challenge of processing both the logical and content dimensions of the arguments. This moved the pedagogical ground more toward the evaluation of the premises of an argument. For example, though the syllogism I have cited above is logically valid, I raised the question with my students about whether the argument is sound, which would require the premises to be true. The question drew a variety of student responses arguing for the truth or falsity of premise 1, and pointed to their difficulty in judging the value of a premise within their cultural context. Assuming premise 2 is true and denying the conclusion of the argument in this example required denying or substantially modifying premise 1. Many students were unwilling to do that

⁵ Section 3 describes a variety of factors that possibly played a part in the problem.

wholeheartedly. This relationship between reasoning and the revision of an argument compelled me to reflect on the problem of knowledge change⁶ in the students I taught.

In their larger academic context, the students faced processing new information about a variety of ministry or theological subjects. The students faced the challenge of modifying, and in some cases ‘unlearning’ what they thought they knew. I was sympathetic to their situations. In many cases, leaders with little or no training had mentored these students. In addition, some of these men already had served as church helpers or pastors without functional access to a Bible! Regardless of each student’s background, all of them came with an education from cultural sources, untrained Christian leaders, and experience.⁷ Moreover, they brought patterns of reasoning, like arguments from analogy or authority, to the act of processing of information that sometimes rationalized surprising conclusions.⁸ These problems of cognition and belief revision were not limited to the classroom. They provided clues to issues that I had, on occasion, observed first-hand in the churches.

Consequently, effective teaching in the Cameroonian context seemed to require more than an emphasis on reasoning and cognition. While teaching logic, I recognized that dialogue is essential to engaging the student’s conclusions and their reasons for those conclusions. One classroom experience in 1989 pointed to the crucial importance of dialogue. In an ethics class, faced with teaching the Ten Commandments, I assigned the students to write on whether their particular ethnic group possessed the general concept of stealing, and if so, what the group considered particular instances of theft. The resulting scripts documented that each of the 11 groups in the class had an

⁶ I did not recognize this as the general problem of belief revision until sometime after this research was well underway (~2007)

⁷ In 1968 Strauss reports that only 25% of the Baptist Churches in West Cameroon have ‘minimum trained leadership’ (Kwast 1971, 179).

⁸ A favourable analogical comparison between a Fon, who is head of an ethnic group, with a pastor, who is head of a church, often conferred on the pastor problematic authority and powers.

understanding of property rights. Nevertheless, what constituted theft varied between the groups represented in the class. A dialogue ensued in the class. By dialogue, I mean a conversation that has a mutually agreed upon goal or purpose, and one in which the parties cooperate by taking turns. While all dialogues are technically conversations, a conversation might casually wander between topics without a clear sense of direction. In this case, the members of the class knew exactly where they were going with the discussion.

The members of each group gave their perspective, and in response to questions, attempted to explain the reasons behind their view of stealing. The difficulty that the students had talking about the subject mirrored the challenge, and importance, of dialogue in the general community of West Cameroon. The role of dialogue became more compelling in teaching Apologetics. I gave students the assignment of doing dialogues in the community, thinking that they might share reasons for their beliefs with people who had very different worldviews. The outcomes of the dialogues did not fit my expectations in three ways.

First, western issues and warrants for belief were not significant to the people with whom they conversed. Secondly, their conversational partners often strongly defended their own beliefs. Thirdly, and most importantly, the student apologist did not know how to answer the other person's arguments. For many students, a dialogue with a non-Christian was the first time they faced processing their own ethnic beliefs and experiences.

1.4 Reasoning Together in a Dialogue

This section uses the data from the classroom (sections 1.2 & 1.3), a synopsis of a 2003 student dialogue, and one personal experience to clarify and develop the direction of this

work. The section then contrasts the approach of this research with selected perspectives of the anthropological community, and the work of H. Odera Oruka in particular.

Assuming that one way that cognition occurs is through thought or argumentation, ‘the chaining together of statements in a sequence of reasoning used for some purpose in a context of a dialogue’ (Walton, Reed and Macagno 2008, 269) is one means through which cognition occurs.⁹ Experience in the classroom demonstrated that this chaining was both complex and purposeful. For example, a dialogue consisting of only questions and answers could further the possibility of cognition. Secondly, a number of student reports on dialogues assigned to them as a course requirement presented remarkable chains of reasoning that encouraged further research. One of those reports, originating before this formal research project began, is worth noting:

I met a lady who was coming towards me [and] suddenly slid on a small stone and said, “You’ve looked at me with bad eyes.” I asked her what she meant by “bad eyes.” She told me that bad eyes are looking at someone with evil thoughts in your mind and as a result, something bad happens to that person. I asked her whether there can also be good eyes looking, and she accepted.

I asked her whether there should be someone behind the good eyes looking and another behind the bad eyes looking and she agreed and added that God is behind that. I asked her, “Who is this God we are talking about?” and she told me that it is the God Almighty.

I asked her whether she knows what God thinks about her and she said, “No.” I told her that God is a good God and as a good God, what kind of thoughts should he have for you and she said, ‘Good ones’ (Njeshue 2003).

This chain of reasoning led to the woman acquiring, one would hope, the knowledge (new understanding)¹⁰ that God had good thoughts about her. It is an excellent example of a shared cognitive process and also documents the fundamental type of belief revision, addition. However, some students’ dialogue ‘verbatim’ reported a wide variety of results, some of which could not be related to any obvious chain of reasoning. This had two implications for me at that time. I concluded that the process of

⁹ Krabbe and van Laar suggest that reason, referring to Walton’s definition of argumentation, has six purposes in dialogues (2007).

¹⁰ One would hope that she saw Njeshue as one being in a position to know. However, it is possible that these new beliefs might not affect her old belief system.

'belief revision' was more complicated than I first thought. Secondly, unspoken commitments (or factors) were at work. A personal experience documented such a commitment.

On a journey across Mount Oku in the Northwest Region to participate in a child dedication, I asked one of the Africans in our vehicle how much time it would take to reach his village. He replied that it would take about an hour. After driving for three more hours, I was perplexed. Since the road was the only open one to his village, the rider knew the road well.

Nevertheless, I sensed no intent on his part to be deceitful. Moreover, I reasoned that a lie about the travel time would eventually be embarrassing for him. So what was happening?¹¹ It occurred to me for the first time that answering a question with the truth (as I understood the truth) was a commitment that other commitments might eclipse.¹² In this case, some other obligation, or factor, had entered into the way he answered my question. I was convinced at the time that cultural commitments or a secondary consideration that was reasonable for him, affected his answer.

These observations pointed to a broader concept of rationality. However, the modern discussion of non-western rationality is a forest of philosophical and sociological theories (Wilson 1970; Hollis & Lukes, eds. 1982; Myerson 1994), with only occasional clearings of conversation (Griaule 1965; Hollis & Lukes, 1982, 149). I was not interested in conversations, or even dialogues, between expatriate anthropologists and Africans; I was committed to exploring dialogues between Africans.

¹¹ A number of kinds of commitments could have influenced his behaviour. He might have been embarrassed to tell me the actual time it was going to take to get there. On the other hand, he might have thought it more important to tell me what I wanted to hear rather than what he knew to be the case. His agenda does not matter for the argument to follow.

¹² Pollock asserts that one can reorder ones cognitive queue by reflexive cognition (2004).

Though such dialogues exist in fictional work (Achebe 1964; Okara 1964), to the knowledge of this writer, only Oruka (1991), by sending indigenous researchers to interview Kenyan sages, documented modern information-seeking dialogues between Africans. However, Oruka's purpose for his research was not the purpose I envisioned for this collection of dialogues. Oruka's researchers were interviewers armed with a largely predetermined set of questions. Oruka proposed that 'The role of the interviewer is to act as the provocateur to the sage. The interviewer is to help the sage *give both [the justification of and application of]...his full views on the subject under consideration* (1991, 31). On the other hand, the purpose of apologetic dialogues, and hence, the dialogues in this research would be persuasion. However, since I had only vague ideas about the shape that persuasion would take in West Cameroon, I decided to allow the men and women initiating the dialogues to conduct the dialogues largely as they saw fit. The only stipulation that I made was that they dialogue on the basis of the conversational partner's beliefs. (See 1.13 and Appendix One for more information on the procedures for and ethical issues in the dialogues)

In the following paragraphs, I will explain how the scope of this inquiry, since it involves several disciplines, has both narrow and expansive aspects. Focusing on its narrow aspect, I will develop its primary research question. The secondary research questions, or tools, all proceed from the primary question. Then turning to its broader dimensions, I will briefly describe the disciplines from which the research tools are drawn. In closing, I will comment on the selected fields and works that the inquiry touches.

First, this work is not an exercise in discourse analysis. Such a study of the dialogues' languages is currently unfeasible because indigenous languages often strongly influence each other, and in particular the forms of Pidgin and English in West

Cameroon. Moreover, English and Pidgin vary greatly according to the locality the student learned the language.¹³ Finally, we are not primarily interested in social interactions, self-perceptions of the participants, identity, or subcultures.

The primary scope of the research involved discovering and understanding the ways that Christian truths might be demonstrated to be reasonable in the West Cameroonian culture. Christianity posits that its doctrines, drawn from progressive revelation in the Bible, are coherent, and that its major teachings make sense of the world, history (life), and humankind. In essence, the dialogues were intended as opportunities for five young adult Christians to give their reasons for their Christian beliefs. However, the dialogues actually became occasions for the dialogue partner to express reasons for their beliefs, their criticisms of Christian teaching, and the chance for the apologists to engage those viewpoints. This latter result was not unexpected. Based on 15 years of data and experience, I recognized the usefulness of unrehearsed dialogues in discovering elements of conversational rationality in interchanges between Cameroonian Christians and non-Christians. Consequently, the research narrowed to the question:

How do the principles derived from this research into West Cameroonian rationality affect the practice of person-to-person apologetics in West Cameroon and other pluralistic contexts?

The broader perspective required determining which ‘elements of rationality’ would be examined. Since dialogue would be a primary concern of the project, it required a thorough investigation. Even though at the beginning of this formal research little literature was available on dialogue theory, Walton and Krabbe’s *Commitment in Dialogue* (1995) proved useful as a ‘base line’ for understanding dialogue. Argument was the second primary concern in the research. Literature abounds on argumentation.

¹³ Students often reported that they could determine a person’s ethnic origin based on the way the person used English or Pidgin.

Toulmin's *The Uses of Argument* (2003), Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca's *The New Rhetoric* (1969), Hamblin's *Fallacies* (1970 [2004]), Walton's *The New Dialectic* (1998), Pinto's *Argument, Inference and Dialectic* (2001), and van Eemeren & Grootendorst's *A Systematic Theory of Argumentation* (2004) are but a few of the works written in the field. However, Walton, Reed, and Macagno's *Argumentation Schemes* (2008) proved to be the most comprehensive work on the subject to date. Their view that an argument scheme consists of an argument pattern and a set of related questions was a starting point for understanding the complex relationship between argument and questions in rationality. Besides providing 65+ documented argument schemes, their work interacted with a vast number of writers, the aforementioned authors included. Lastly, since both dialogue and argumentation presuppose the possibility of the change in viewpoints (a belief revision) of those involved in the conversation, the project was not complete without exploring the implications of the discipline of Belief Revision for outcomes.

The literature on belief revision is voluminous. Though major works in the field include Gärdenfors' *Knowledge in Flux* (1988), Pollock's *How to build a Person* (1989) and *Cognitive Carpentry* (1995), and Rott's *Change, Choice, and Inference* (2001), much of its diverse theoretical work is scattered throughout journal literature. The analyses of the dialogues will reflect this diversity because I am convinced that theorists have different, but significant, contributions to make to the understanding of belief change.

Since chapter 2 argues that all three theories have much to contribute to the practice of person-to-person apologetics in the 21st century, this chapter confines itself to a discussion of how these theories facilitate an understanding of West Cameroonian rationality. Though the unexpected connections developed in this chapter between

dialogue, argumentation, and belief revision have potential implications for apologetics in other cultural contexts, they will be noted for the purpose of introducing the following chapter.

The scope of this study tangentially touches upon Horton's views of African rationality (1967, 1970). Horton's work attempted to bring African reasoning into an analogous relationship with Western scientific thinking. To me, the value of his work is his effort to bring some kind of intellectual framework, however tenuous, to the thought of Kalabari people.¹⁴ However, as this study's focus developed, I recognized that my use of dialogue was one of three qualities that set this project apart from Horton's effort. Secondly, my sensibilities suggested that the dialogues might reveal a much more complex rationality in indigenous thought than the theoretical schema that Horton developed. The third difference was the project's commitment to the contemporary rationality of West Cameroon. Though the dialogues are rich in historic patterns of reasoning, the participants in the dialogues have been to varying degrees exposed to and affected by aspects of rationality new to their historic patterns of thinking. However, separating the 'new' from the 'old' appeared to be difficult if not impossible, and irrelevant to the primary scope of the research.

Steven Lukes' work (1982, and 2000) touched on the practical dimensions of rationality. His view that rationality is composed of universal and context-dependent elements (1970, 208) was a great stimulus to this research. Nevertheless, the emphasis in his work on linguistic factors as universal criteria distanced his proposals from this project. While Lukes broaches issues imbedded in this inquiry (2000), in referencing

¹⁴ In his 1982 essay 'Tradition and Modernity Revisited' Horton recognizes the 'myriad communities of the continent' (p. 205), but still emphasizes the continuities between them. Breaking new ground, he seeks to connect the 'thought patterns of earlier Europe' with those in Africa. This thesis intentionally charts the relationship of Western 'thought patterns' to African ways of thinking along the lines of argumentation.

Winch, he does not attend to the intimate relationship between epistemic and practical cognition:

In such cultural settings, the cognitive enterprise in question is not yet separated out, in thought or in practice, from several others, some of them well described by Winch--such as coping with, by expressing and enacting attitudes toward, contingencies... (2000, 10).

On the data present here, what one thinks about the world and the decisions and strategies about coping with the world are interdependent variables.¹⁵ Nevertheless, this work is a response to Lukes' counsel, which frames his view on the imperative of this task:

But, nevertheless, assessing the rationality of the beliefs and practices of other cultures is always both possible and necessary. This is for a reason that should appeal to anthropologists eager to avoid the pitfalls of ethnocentrism. Our attempts to get them (the Azande, the Hawaiians) right must respect their attempts to get the world right (2000, 17).

However, the effort in this work 'to get West Cameroonians' attempt to get the world right' is not what Lukes had precisely in mind. The difference lies with the nature of the purpose, tools, and data of this study. The foundational purpose of the study is to document dialogues between individuals. It is not an attempt to develop generalizations about the West Cameroonian worldview. While these conversations contain a great deal of information about what the participants think about the world and how they reason to those conclusions, Grebe and Fon's description of the West Cameroonian religious context cautions the reader against concluding that they capture the complexity of the Cameroonian's attempt to get the world right (1995, 1-10).

Grebe and Fon claim that African worldviews, for example, the ones in these dialogues, have three dimensions. The foundation dimension is family, ancestors, and unity. Layered on this basic level is a concern for land, the gods of the land, and purity. The use of 'land' here conveys no fixed geographic area. Overarching these foci is the

¹⁵ The interrelatedness of epistemic and practical cognition is a documented aspect of all rationality (Pollock 1995; Harmon 2004).

importance of the 'tribe', gods of the tribe and peace (1995, 1-11). Thus, on any one occasion a speaker might be reasoning from the value of unity, or purity, or peace, or perhaps all three. This profoundly multi-layered context presents a general challenge to communication and understanding among West Cameroonians, and a particularly difficult setting to Christians who share what they believe and the reasons for that belief with non-Christian Cameroonians.

1.5 The Thesis of the Dissertation

Personal conversations with Africans and the verbatims of student's conversations with neighbours, family, and different kinds of ethnic leaders pointed to the significance of intransigent beliefs that were resistant to change through the presentation of evidence. The same factors pointed towards the importance of dialogue as a tool in revising (not necessarily eliminating) those beliefs. The answer to thesis question (1.4), expressed in terms drawn from the literature of belief revision, argumentation, and apologetics, and suitable for application to other settings, became:

A belief's entrenchment, the result of argument patterns converging into a cumulative case for the belief, is primarily sensitive to understanding and revision in the context of dialogue.

1.6 Aims & Objectives

I employ a modified planning chart to my approach in this discussion. I define 'aim' as the primary goals and contributions of the research. Objectives are the individual steps that achieve the aims of the work. The objectives constitute the core methodology of the work that sections 1.7-1.14 expand.

This work has two aims. First it intends to develop an accurate, empathetic understanding of how West Cameroonians reason with one another. Secondly it aims to suggest ways that understanding might be of service to apologetics and apologetic theory in pluralistic contexts. These aims are broken down into six objectives. Though the

objectives are not listed in chronological order, there is a necessary order regarding several of them.

The first objective will be to establish a working epistemology for the whole thesis, one which will address the epistemological problem inherent in the project.

The second objective is to collect conversations between adult Christians, labelled apologists, and their conversational partners as accurately and as free from cultural distortion as possible. Thus, the writer of this text *was not present at any of the conversations*, and to the best of his knowledge, the dialogues were not under observation by outside parties.

The third objective is to examine the conversations in light of dialogue, argumentation, and belief revision theories while allowing the conversations to speak for themselves. Six primary questions, each representing sets of questions, are addressed to each conversation. Though some questions are more relevant to particular dialogues, the answers to the questions constitute the analysis of the conversations.

1. Is there a type or types of dialogue present in the conversation?
2. What, if any, is the structure of the dialogue and that structure's relationship to non- dialogical components of the conversation?
3. What argument patterns are present in the dialogue?
4. What questions, including those directed to the arguments, are present in the dialogue?
5. What commitments are discernible in the dialogue?
6. What belief revision, if any, occurs in the dialogue?

The fourth objective is to interview each apologist about the conversation in which they participated and the relationship of what was said to their life. Though not uniformly helpful, several of these interviews provided helpful insights into the apologists' commitments, and the dynamics and the outcome of their dialogues.

In conclusion, in fulfilment of the fifth objective, I judge the suitability of the tools for the project, selectively argue from data and analysis that the thesis (1.5) is an answer

to the thesis question, suggest three contributions the research makes to apologetics in pluralistic societies, and speculate on the future of dialogue in pluralistic societies.

1.7 The Epistemological Problem

The epistemological problem is how to discuss a person's claim to know or believe something that seems patently impossible, or implausible, in the western marketplace of ideas without undercutting that claim? The content of the following dialogues, though rich in cultural layers, is largely religious in nature (Fon & Grebe 1995). Their topics, the extent of sorcerers' powers, the identity and influence of gods, the ability of man to come back to life through magic, the place of ancestors as objects of placation, and other mystical phenomena, do not seem rational to westerners.

However, these ideas about the world carry considerable credibility in the minds of those who are engaged in these conversations. The issues under discussion seem, for the most part, to be deeply held beliefs or knowledge. Throughout the dialogues participants offer various kinds of arguments for their beliefs and what they think they know.

These beliefs, many of which originated before Christianity came to Africa, constitute the phenomenon of traditional (or ethnic) knowledge among the various ethnic groups involved in these dialogues. More to the point, the use here of the adjective 'traditional' generally sets a belief apart as non-Christian in origin. However, it does not necessarily imply that the belief has great age or that the belief is false. For example, throughout the dialogues, traditional doctors presume that man can acquire and use the spiritual ('mystical') powers possessed by physical things. In the dialogues participants freely use the terms 'witch doctors' or 'country doctors' to refer to such people.

However, holding to pre-Christian beliefs does not make one a traditional practitioner or a witch doctor. A traditional doctor utilizes folk medicine/ideology to heal, protect, and bring success to those who employ his services.

1.7.1 Solutions to the Problem

Many approaches to rationality, particularly ‘alien rationalities’ exist (Wilson, ed. 1970, Hollis & Lukes 1982). I will mention only a few here in passing. One might invoke the anthropological theories of structuralism or functionalism to describe the aetiology of belief. Alternatively, one might revert to the principles of charity (Davidson 2001) or humanity (Grandy 1973) to give the belief or knowledge the benefit of the doubt. The approach taken here goes to the heart of the nature of knowledge. The theory that knowledge is a mental state connects a psychological concept, a ‘state of mind’, with the necessity of evidence and reason. While some psychologists claim the implications of this theory for their discipline (Smart 2007), this work presents a factive state of mind as a philosophical concept. This position will be discussed in 1.7.2 and following sections.

1.7.2 A Solution to the Problem Employed Here

This section presents the underlying epistemology for discussing belief, knowledge, and reasoning in these conversations. I have chosen a ‘factive state of mind’ toward knowing as the epistemological basis of the research for several pragmatic reasons: First, it allows for claims to authentic knowledge/belief on the part of those in the conversations. Secondly, it provides a plausible explanation for the person-relative nature of arguments. Thirdly, a ‘factive state of mind’ does not require an appeal to special circumstances in West Cameroon, a ‘special pleading’, for the conversationalists to be viewed as rational. While this epistemology is not one of the thesis tools, it undergirds all the tools, and the features prominent in argumentation and Belief Revision Theory. And lastly, it is

consistent with van den Toren's idea that man indwelling creation is at the root of a Christian view of knowledge (2011, 69ff).

1.7.3 A Factive State of Mind and Belief Revision

I present Williamson's view of knowledge and its proposed relationships to defeasibility, which supports argumentation schemes and Belief Revision Theory. The argument here is that the view of knowledge as a mental state whose content depends on the world is one that allows for defeasible reasoning, critical thinking (argument), and belief revision. Although I do not attempt to 'prove' this synthesis in any formal sense,¹⁶ its application to the content of the dialogue will serve to test the synthesis' coherence and usefulness.

Williamson posits that knowledge is a 'factive state of mind', a particular attitude toward the mental content in focus.¹⁷ An epistemology that allows believing and knowing—however different or similar they might be—to *be mental states* (Williamson 2000, 6) supports the contextual reasonableness of the beliefs and knowledge in these dialogues while maintaining the primacy of truth. Furthermore, knowledge as a mental state accounts for knowledge's defeasibility, and the coherency of knowledge revision.

To elaborate, 'knowing something' is a factive attitude that takes a statement¹⁸ (the content upon which it focused) to be the actual situation in the world. Under ideal conditions, three statements or tests characterise knowing something in this way: an

¹⁶ Williamson's view of knowledge, like any innovative theory, has been contested on many fronts (Jackson 2002; Sosa, E http://www.fitelson.org/williamson/sosa_review.pdf). While technical evaluation of his arguments is far beyond the scope of this research, this theory of the nature and its role will be evaluated in terms of its explanatory power.

¹⁷ Williamson's account of knowledge, in his own words, 'is nothing like a proof that the picture is correct' (Williamson 2000, 2). He continues, noting that 'epistemological theories are not usually susceptible of proof.' I adopt the theory here for several reasons. Pollock suggests that Belief Revision Theory requires an independent, robust epistemological base (2008). All the questions of the thesis prompt questions about knowledge. Most importantly, a 'state of mind' epistemology is the best explanation of the defeasibility of knowledge and belief revision.

¹⁸ It is arguable here whether 'content' refers to a proposition or a proposition and its supporting argument. The point is that the attitude affirms the content as truly describing reality.

agent requires no further evidence for the mental content that he thinks to be knowledge;¹⁹ an agent's knowledge is the evidence that he uses to judge ideas that are new to him;²⁰ an agent's knowledge enables sustained action in the face of changing circumstances (Williamson 2000, 8).

In Williamson's view, mental states 'constitutively depend on the external world'. All 'factive mental states' require content which is drawn in some way from the world outside the mind.²¹ This account does not specify the source of the content, nor why the knower focuses on that content. Perception, memory, deduction, witness testimony, and multiple other pathways that have varying dependability are the sources of this content. As to why one focuses on a particular content, Pollock suggests that interest is the motivation for that focus.²² One, however, could ask from where that interest comes. This collection of dialogues provides interesting answers to the latter question.

The use of knowledge as evidence, the second test, has important consequences for the role of culture in argumentation. If knowledge is evidence, then one's evidence is one's total knowledge (E=K). Since knowledge is mental content that needs no further justification, one's argument consists of and ends with what one knows. This implies that, in real life, the premises of an argument point to a larger body of evidence that makes that argument compelling. While there is no way to assess this 'total' role of cultural and personal knowledge in any dialogue, the analytical tools used here may uncover aspects of it.

¹⁹ This does not preclude an agent being open to new evidence.

²⁰ This is expressed by the formula E=K (Williamson 2000, 191, 222).

²¹ The content of a factive state of mind originates from any number of sources. In the present context, the content of a mental state often originates from personal communication. For example, a grandfather might tell a child that a particular wind is evil. Because the child trusts the grandfather, he assumes a 'factive attitude' toward the assertion and considers the account to be knowledge. However, the simplicity of this illustration belies the complexity of its aetiology.

²² Pollock, John L., 'Epistemology, Rationality and Cognition' (2010). Pollock suggests that epistemic cognition, which is about what to believe, and practical cognition, which is about what to do', are mutually dependent. Practical cognition poses the questions that epistemic cognition answers and practical cognition uses those answers in elucidating what action to take.

Belief, on Williamson's account, is also a mental state that depends on the external world. Though its support is also some form of argument or evidence, the evidence falls short of producing a factive state of mind. In other words, belief needs new evidence to remain stable or to become knowledge. However, a state of mind that 'falls short' of knowledge is not necessarily trivial. People hold beliefs, based on varying sources and amounts of evidence, with different degrees of tenacity (Williamson 2000, 79).²³ A strongly held belief behaves much like knowledge, but still does not have the endurance in the face of changing circumstances and new information that knowledge possesses. Williamson puts it this way, 'although knowing is not invulnerable to destruction by later evidence, its nature is to be robust in that respect' (2000, 63).

This same epistemological framework allows an agent to revise, annul, or demote knowledge to the status of belief or falsehood. Williamson suggests:

For even if one knows p, one can call that knowledge into question, provisionally treat p as though it did not belong to the body of one's knowledge, and then assess p relative to the rest of one's knowledge--one's independent evidence. Non-trivial issues of evidence and justification will then arise for p (2000, 10).

Williamson's view of knowledge supports the concept of defeasibility, which is essential to both argument schemes and Belief Revision Theory. Defeasibility is the well-known quality of being 'open in principle to revision, valid objection, forfeiture, or annulment'²⁴ in the light of new information. Defeasibility is essentially a temporal approach to knowing. With the passing of time, new knowledge has the potential of replacing or modifying old knowledge. For example, new census figures replace old census data. Consider another nuance of defeasibility. Although the theory of relativity

²³ This is analogous to Hansson's observations on 'degrees of resistance to change' (2003, 4), which could be viewed as the phenomenon of entrenchment, so much discussed by belief revision theorists.

²⁴ *New Oxford English Dictionary*, Kindle Edition. It is very important to note that this definition includes revision, which is quite different from the forfeiture or annulment in a game theory argumentation.

has greatly modified our understanding of gravity, it has not completely superseded the practical value of Newton's theory or the description of ordinary experience. Depending on the context, it seems that defeasibility has different implications for the things one knows or believes. Though all knowledge is defeasible in one sense or another, our focus at this point turns to presumptive knowledge and presumptive reasoning because of its critical role in the argument patterns.

A presumption is a fact (a proposition) taken together with a policy or rule that results in a generalization based on incomplete knowledge (Walton, Reed and Macagno 2008, 10). Even though incomplete knowledge characterises a presumption, in Walton's view a presumption contains core information thought to be factual. The generalization is the part of presumption that is defeasible. However, since the factual core of the presumption has some kind of support, the strength of that support determines the plausible strength of the presumption that serves as a premise in an argument (Koch 2007, 91).

Assumptions used as a part of an argument could be said to become presumptions. In an academic context, the presumption is put forward as a hypothesis, 'Let us presume for the sake of the argument...' In the following conversations, presumptions are often asserted as the way things are. To use Williamson's term, the speaker is expressing a factive state of mind, or the way things are.

Sections 1.15ff develop Belief Revision Theory further. However, before proceeding, cautions are in order about the use of this view of belief and knowledge in this research.

1.7.4 Limitations and Strengths of this Epistemology

While the idea of knowledge as a 'factive state of mind' does not depend on any particular method or standard of justification, it does draw a definite boundary between

belief and knowledge. One must use these categories with care in settings where belief and knowledge are not widely acknowledged as separate entities. First, it is clearly possible to impose the attributes of categorical states of mind on people who perhaps are not self-aware of their mental states.²⁵ This is particularly true in the case of knowing. Secondly, though the three test questions as to whether a proposition is knowledge are pragmatic, test questions one and two presume an evidential approach to establishing new knowledge. An appeal to evidence, while not a foreign concept to West Cameroonian culture, seems limited to testing practical knowledge.²⁶

However, in spite of the complexities in this approach, the difference between belief and knowledge seems to be a useful way of explaining how new knowledge might challenge an established way of thinking. In other words, given those categories, it seems that new knowledge seems more apt to produce belief revision than a new belief, even if it is a strong one (Friedman & Halpern, 1999, pp. 4-5). Some belief revision theorists are hesitant to make this difference. The question then becomes, in cases where a new idea successfully challenges existing beliefs or knowledge, ‘Why is the new idea, instead of the old, seen to be the way things are?’

1.8 Methodology: An Overview

In the following sections I introduce the research methodology used in this work. Though the methodological steps are placed in a logical order, it should be noted this

²⁵ Cognitive reflection is the mental act of thinking about one’s thinking (J. L. Pollock 2007). This broaches the whole area of the luminosity of knowledge, which Williamson addresses (2000), but which is outside the discussion here.

²⁶ Lukes (1994) quotes Evans-Pritchard, ‘Most specialists who are also fieldworkers are agreed that primitive peoples are predominantly interested in practical economic pursuits: gardening, hunting, fishing, care of cattle...’ This is consistent with this author’s experience of teaching Mill’s Methods in an African classroom. Unfortunately, Evans-Pritchard continues, ‘I have often noticed Azande lean their spears up against, or hand baskets on, the shrines they build for the spirits of their ancestors... they have no other interest in the shrine than a convenient post or peg. At religious ceremonies their attitude is very different...Mystical thought is a function of particular situations’ (Lukes, ‘Relativism in its Place’ 1982). If one considers mystical thought to be non-empirical (which is a questionable presumption), the dialogues to follow show that there is an intermingling between empirical and mystical modes in the thought of those involved.

order does not necessarily represent their temporal sequence. Much work on the analytical phase coincided with the data gathering phase, and so on. It must be said, at the outset, that the synthetic approach used here to study cognition, to this author's knowledge, has not been attempted.

Moreover, while the methodology used here is within the bounds of focused case studies (George & Bennett 2004, 18-34), its framework, philosophy of research, and approach to data analysis are significantly and intentionally different from those suggested in the current literature on qualitative analysis. Since the research is the first to apply the selected theories to conversations for the purpose of understanding rationality (cognition) *and* integrate the insights obtained through those theories into the narratives of the conversations, it is both theory testing (George & Bennett 2004, 115-123) *and* a form of conversational analysis. As such, it follows no recognized pattern of narrative, conversation, or discourse analysis (Gbrich 2013 216ff, 229ff, 245ff). These differences sprang from a commitment to the discipline of apologetics, the theories used in the analysis, and to the indigenous context in which the research took place

Since such an approach has not been used to assess the contributions that this analytical approach to cognition might make to Christian apologetics, no literature exists for the methodology of the research. However, work has been done on argumentative moves within dialogue (Walton & Krabbe 1995). Consequently, we will begin with obtaining accurate and realistic dialogue data within an African context.

1.9 Methodology: Data Gathering

The method of data collection and its analysis reinforces the uniqueness of the methodology used here. While it does approximate conversational analysis because the data collected was taken from conversations (Grbich 2013, 229), the intent of the research is to study purposeful conversations. Secondly, the question of the role of

‘particular environment’ in a conversation is not a primary consideration in the study. Finally, though social structure are reflected in all human interactions, the data was not primarily gathered in the attempt to discern that reflection.

The first objective was the acquisition and transcription of unscripted apologetic conversations between West Cameroonians. By ‘apologetic’, I primarily refer to the offering of reasons for the Christian faith.²⁷ The first step of this research was, in one sense, non-reproducible. Unlike Oruka’s method of sending persons out to interview sages (Oruka 1991), the apologists in this project invested a great deal of themselves into the dialogues which they initiated. Their sincerity and genuineness were core values of the research from the beginning. The only way to achieve this, it seemed, was to find individuals who were genuinely convinced that what they were doing possessed an importance over and above whatever they might contribute to the research project. Whole-hearted convictions and concern for the people with whom they talked, not simply an investigative spirit, would be the primary motivation for the conversations. To help avoid distracting the dialogues’ participants or distorting their contributions, I would not be present at the dialogues. Seven individuals responded to a public request for men and women with some Christian training²⁸ who would be willing to initiate a dialogue with the person(s) of their choice.²⁹ Of the five apologists who conducted these dialogues, four were students and one was a former student. As it turned out, all of them had a passion for dialogue, which in part originated from dialogue assignments given to them earlier in their student careers.

²⁷ Depending on one’s perspective, a strong defensive argument could be considered persuasive.

²⁸ The apologists who initiated the conversations had different educational levels and backgrounds. Though this policy intentionally aimed at a diversity of approaches on the part of those who participated, no correlations between the way the conversation was conducted and the educational background of the apologist was made.

²⁹ I selected five out of the twelve dialogues that the apologists conducted.

The dialogues they initiated did not have scripts. The apologists did not have a list of questions that they were to ask their conversational partners. Moreover, it must be re-emphasized that the dialogues in this collection were not technically interviews. I gave apologists one primary instruction. They were encouraged to engage in persuasion dialogues that took into consideration the beliefs of the other person in the dialogue. It was left to the apologist to decide what constituted 'persuasion' in a particular conversational context. The broad latitude in these instructions was intentional. The goal of the project was to discover ordinary West Cameroonian argument patterns, whether used by the apologist or their dialogue partner. The dialogues were not graded activities that tested how much they had learned about dialogues in an academic setting.

I did not remunerate the apologists based on the length of a dialogue or the number of conversations a research assistant did. However, I did substantially reward the apologists. Thus, while I made no quid pro quo payment for the length or quality of a dialogue, prior to the dialogues I had paid a substantial portion of the seven individual's school fees, and continued to support them afterwards in a number of ways. The pastor, with whom I had much the same kind of relationship at an earlier time, received the recording equipment and software that he used for the project. Most of the conversations occurred in the communities in which the apologists lived, but if the participant incurred expenses of any kind, I covered those expenses.

The apologists and their dialogue partners were asked to sign a release form (Appendix Two) in which they released the transcript of the dialogue for purposes that included research publications, seminars, and scientific investigations. The release form did not include the publishing of the dialogues for profit.

I employed a student assistant to do the transcriptions. To obtain as accurate a text as possible the assistant often consulted with the apologist who initiated the dialogue. I

paid a significant portion of his fees during his active period of work, payment for his hourly work, and at the end of his efforts, he received the computer and monitor he had used in the project.

As unconventional as these arrangements might be, they seemed culturally appropriate to everyone in the project. It was a community-based, patron-friend arrangement that focused on an activity that all the participants have continued to pursue, as far as I know, into the present.

Since the conversations were not strictly interviews, the conversational partners were free to spontaneously modify the focus of their conversations. Since most of the conversations were strongly dialogical, occasionally the conversations shifted from information-seeking to persuasion or inquiry. The ethics of the dialogues are discussed in Appendix A.

The five dialogues of in this collection were chosen from twelve conversations. The criteria, both subjective and objective, for choice included:

1. Both conversational partners must be authentic and spontaneous. (See appendix A).
2. The conversation must aim for dialogue, but realistically contain other conversational elements.
3. The dialogue partner should significantly contribute to the dialogue.
4. The core of the dialogue should be about religious belief.

The conversational partners in a couple of conversations appeared to answer the way they thought the apologist wanted them answer. In several, even though dialogical, the apologist did most of the talking. And in others, the dialogue was a counselling affair. Consequently, the data narrowed to the dialogues of this collection.

1.10 Methodology: Analysis

This section further introduces the reader to elements of the dissertation's critical apparatus. As noted in 1.6, the tools are six questions used to address dialogue type and structure, questions and answers, rhetoric, argumentation patterns, commitment and belief revision. In sections 1.10.1 through 1.15.3 I first introduce these topics. Each

introduction will contain theoretical as well as pragmatic observations on each tool and their related questions.

It is important to note that dialogue, dialogue type, dialogue structure, commitment, questions-answers, and argumentation schemes are normative concepts in the pragmatic, theoretical sense. For example, the conditional statement, ‘If one conducts a persuasive dialogue in a particular way, the dialogue will reach its goal in an optimal manner’ describes an ideal persuasion dialogue. I scrutinize throughout the dialogue analyses the normative use of these tools, as well as their applicability.

Secondly, I suggest some of the ways the variables might relate to the process of belief revision. For example, Falappa, Kern-Isberner, and Simari have suggested the importance of explanation’s role in belief revision (2002). However, as far as this author is aware, theorists have not addressed the roles of other argument patterns or of dialogue itself in the process of belief change.

1.10.1 Methodology: Dialogue and Dialogue Type

In this section, I will begin with a general discussion of dialogue, move to an introduction of dialogue type, and finally examine the position that dialogue is an important pathway to belief revision.

The view that dialogue is ‘a normative framework in which there is an exchange of arguments between two speech partners reasoning together in turn-taking sequence aimed at a collective goal’ is the starting point of the following analyses (Walton 1998, 30). Argument, used here in a broad sense, refers to premise-based reasoning, practical reasoning, questioning, explaining, and other types of reasoning between parties in a dialogue.³⁰ The setting of a conversation, if conducted as a dialogue, gives rise to a specific type of dialogue that has a specific purpose and side benefits for the participants

³⁰ See 1.8.2 for an explanation of the reasoning present in an information dialogue.

(Walter & Krabbe 1995, 66). Moreover, external and internal commitments play a significant role in dialogical reasoning (Walton & Krabbe 1995).³¹ While participants make internal commitments in the dialogue, they also bring external commitments to the conversation.

A mutual commitment to carrying on a particular type of dialogue, it seems, is the first step in carrying on an effective dialogue. Agreeing upon the purpose of a conversation, the participants initially know the goal that they will work toward, and are subsequently in a better position to contribute to its development and goals. In ordinary situations, these commitments are determined in a variety of formal or informal ways.

For example, a negotiation dialogue begins in an African market when a buyer offers a sum for or asks the price of an item. The seller immediately understands the goal of the conversation. The buyer and seller will then make ‘market’, adjusting their commitments to the offer from the other party.³² The primary goal of this dialogue type is quite specific: mutual benefit. A difference of viewpoint occasions a persuasion dialogue that aims at convincing the other party to accept a position. An inquiry (in theory) aims at determining the truth about a matter.³³ One who initiates an information-seeking dialogue typically intends to correct his ignorance. Finally, for the purpose of this introduction, the goal of a deliberative dialogue is decision making.³⁴

³¹ Their work broadened and developed C. H. Hamblin’s chapter 8, ‘Formal Dialectic in Fallacies’ (1970).

³² This reflects belief revision (proper), where both expansion and contraction occur (Gärdenfors 1992).

³³ Though the goal of the inquiry is to prove that a particular proposition is true or false, or that there is insufficient evidence to make both claims (Walton 1998, 70), the context of an inquiry, whether it be scientific experimentation, empirical investigation, or commonplace problem solving, shapes an inquiry’s particular method and standards.

³⁴ The persuasion and deliberative dialogue illustrate the Western separation between theoretical (persuasive) and practical (deliberative) rationality. In the following conversations, there are no specifically deliberative dialogues. Instead, the division between the two types of rationality is at times almost invisible. See Pollock, ‘Irrationality and Cognition’ (2006).

Most of the conversations in this collection begin as information-seeking dialogues, but eventually contain elements suggestive of persuasion and inquiry. This is consistent with the reality that the purpose of a dialogue is subject to change as a conversation develops. Sometimes this change, called a dialogue shift, occurs as a natural development in the conversation. On other occasions, the shift results from a hidden (external) commitment. In the first case, an interviewer in an information-seeking dialogue might conclude that only an inquiry will reach the truth in question. This would be a 'licit' shift. However, in the second scenario, the interviewer might decide to use threats to elicit information at any cost. The dialogue's type shifts, in this example, from information-seeking to negotiation, where one party gives information in exchange for safety or some such benefit. This is an illicit dialogue shift. The participants in the conversation typically judge whether the shift is licit or illicit.

Moreover, I proposed that in each of these types of dialogue what a participant, or both participants, know of the world is in some way changed or adjusted. At the minimum, the expansion of knowledge should be the result of any dialogue type. In a persuasion dialogue, one party at least learns about the other party's point of view. If a viewpoint is given up or changed, contraction occurs. However, any type of dialogue has the potential for initiating a complex scenario of both addition and contraction. Thus, talking about dialogue without the reference to potential belief revision makes little sense. Of course, there are those conversations in which no one seems to hear or accept anything the other party says. However, the question then arises, 'Was this conversation a dialogue?' As the dialogues prompt, I will address other secondary aspects of dialogue, drawn from the literature relating to dialogical issues.³⁵

³⁵ The selected bibliography includes (but is not limited to) Walton (1998), Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969), Pinto (2001), van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004), Toulmin (2003), Cohen (1944), Helm (1973), Copi and Cohen (1994), Hintikka (1976, 1984/1989), Walton (2008), Striker (1996), Aristotle, *Rhetoric* and *Topics*, Myerson (1994), Meek (2003), and Grice (1975).

Though the following chapters address these conversations with questions about these and other dialogue variables, the fundamentals of this theory are only the beginning points for understanding the qualities and types of dialogues in West Cameroon., The analytical method used here does not impose that theory wholesale on these conversations.

1.10.2 Methodology: Argumentation Schemes

The search for and examination of argumentation schemes, or informal arguments, constitutes the next analytical tool. However, the presence of deductive or non-monotonic reasoning in the dialogues is important because the two patterns of thought may be closely connected. Thus, section 1.10.2.1 introduces the two types of logic. A second consideration relevant to argumentation schemes is the relationship of defeasible to presumptive logic. A presumption is defeasible. However not all defeasible statements are presumptions. In section 1.12, I discuss how critical questions, addressed to an argumentation pattern, point to the defeasibility of premises but potentially affect the strength of an argument in both positive and negative ways. To do this I must first clarify a series of terms.

1.10.2.1 Monotonic and Non-monotonic Logic

Classic deductive logic is monotonic. It strikes one inferential note, that of deduction. There is one conclusion to a valid syllogism. Moreover, a deductive argument is a closed system. ‘The product, the completed argument’ (Copi & Cohen 1998, 4) of syllogistic logic, is by necessity, fixed in time. Inductive arguments are also completed products. An inductive argument is one based on a fixed dataset that results in a probable conclusion expressed as a numerical expression of less than one. However, to be cogent an inductive argument must include factors weighing against the likelihood (the probability) of the conclusion at the time of the probability’s calculation.

Non-monotonic argument builds on classical logic: a non-monotonic arguments also have one conclusion. However, non-monotonic reasoning is fundamentally different in at least two ways. Non-monotonic reasoning is based entirely on the content of the argument's premises. Thus, its conclusions are subject to the implications of new knowledge that is relevant to the premises of the argument.³⁶ Consequently, their conclusions are said to be probative, or likely. Moreover, the deductive form does not describe all non-monotonic arguments. I will discuss these two differences in some detail.

1.10.2.2 Defeasible and Presumptive Reasoning

An alternate name for non-monotonic logic is defeasible reasoning. Defeasibility, however, applies to both knowledge and arguments, and assumes that the premises (or data) of an argument are subject *to challenge and/or modification by new knowledge*. Defeasibility is not a sceptical position. It does not deny the possibility of having knowledge. Defeasibility simply says that incomplete knowledge is the basis for a 'factive state of mind', which is subject to error, revision, or annulment. Defeasibility might simply demand the revision of a statement. Thus, to claim that a statement is defeasible is not to say that it is false.

The statements primarily in view here are presumptive statements used in argumentation patterns. Since a presumption is typically composed of the content of a factive state of mine combined with a generalization (1.7.3), a presumption is subject to exception(s), or the judgement of falsity.³⁷ Now, it is manifestly true that one might

³⁶ Defeasibility is not the same as the inductive idea of cogency. Hurley notes, 'In a cogent argument, on the other hand, the premises must be true in a more complete sense. The premises must not ignore some important piece of evidence that outweighs the given evidence and entails quite a different conclusion' (1991, 45). Cogency focuses on evidential 'weight'. Defeasibility addresses the possibility of the future falsification of a statement or argument.

³⁷ However, conversationalists typically use presumptions as categorical statements without the awareness of what they are doing. Critical questions throw light on presumptive generalities.

contest the truth of a premise or data in a deductive or inductive argument (2.6). However, whether or not the premise(s) is true is of secondary interest to the logician. Thus, the practitioner of deductive logic is the one responsible for deciding whether premises are true or false.

On the other hand, defeasible logic in its assessment of an argument, evaluates a premise through questions. To put it another way, defeasible reasoning includes an epistemological step in the evaluation of the argument's force. It assumes that the evaluation of an argument includes more than the relationship of terms or propositions. Defeasible logic replaces the test of logical form or method with the test of content.

Defeasible logic, or presumptive logic, evaluates ordinary arguments that occur in commonplace situations. Whereas deductive logic is composed of at least five types of arguments,³⁸ the field of presumptive logic covers a large number of argument patterns.³⁹ Some of the types resemble deductive arguments; some resemble inductive forms; many forms are anomalous. What all these types of arguments have in common is their vulnerability to new knowledge.

Nevertheless, groups of presumptive arguments can be arranged in cumulative cases. For example, in a dialogue one often hears a source of knowledge used to back up a point of view or an action. The source could be a text, a person, or any other source thought to be knowledgeable. The source asserts that something is the case, and (therefore) it is true. Walton, Reed, and Macagno formalize the argument in this way (2008, 309):

Major Premise: Source *a* is in a position to know about things in a certain subject domain *S* containing proposition *A*.
Minor Premise: *a* asserts that *A* is true (or false if that be the case).
Conclusion: *A* is true (or false).

³⁸ Typically, arguments from mathematics, definition, categorical, hypothetical, disjunctive syllogisms form the body of deductive arguments.

³⁹ Walton, Reed, and Macagno's 2008 work, *Argumentation Schemes* gives 60 types and many subtypes.

The pattern of the argument does not determine the particulars of the argument or the validity of the conclusion. As we have noted, *a* might be a documentary, a book, a doctor, or a grandfather. Moreover, one can question the ‘sources’ behind the source. In our dialogues, source *a* is often a person who identifies with and communicates traditional beliefs. Who, or what, is *a* in this case? Tradition, it seems, often overshadows the person who communicates it.

1.11 Critical Questions in Argumentation Schemes

An argument pattern and the critical questions that are addressed to the argument’s premises constitute an argument scheme. Walton, Reed and Macagno associate ‘[a list of] appropriate critical questions’ (2008, 309) with each argument pattern, but the suitability of their questions for argument patterns in non-western cultures is far from self-evident. To illustrate how critical questions typically undercut the conclusion of an argument, we examine how three standard western critical questions address the argument from a position to know. However, it is possible for critical questions to strengthen an argument’s conclusion if the answer to a question affirms the truth of the premise.

With respect to an argument from a position to know, critical question one (CQ1) asks ‘is *a* in a position to know whether A is true or false?’ Position refers to ‘access to facts’, the facts being experiential in nature. However, this experience is not the experience of ‘witness testimony’, nor that of ‘expert opinion’, which have different questions. A witness has perceptual knowledge of an event. A person who has much practical knowledge of a field is in a position to know; the expert, who is a theorist, has knowledge of the competing theories in the field.⁴⁰ Thus, the theory separates knowledge

⁴⁰ It is possible for one person to be a witness, in a position to know and an expert at the same time. For example, a criminologist who spent many years as a police officer witnesses a crime. He is an expert

arrived through experience from the knowledge of the witness and the knowledge of the highly trained expert. Whether this categorical separation of knowledge sources is common in the Cameroonian dialogues is highly questionable.

The second question (CQ2), ‘Is *a* an honest (trustworthy, reliable) source?’ (309), addresses the credibility of the source. As simple as the question might seem, what constitutes a direct answer to the question is complex. Honesty, as a character issue, seems to be fundamental to reliability, but does not constitute all that reliability entails. The question about reliability also includes issues like eyesight, memory, and bias.

The third critical question asks whether the ‘*a* in a position to know’ actually stated A. Clearly this question has the narrowest venue, but depending on the nature of source *a*, the question might address problems such as whether the statement was misquoted or whether the statement was taken out of the spoken or written context.

Though questions like these have different implications when applied to different arguments, they begin the process of testing an argument by creating new channels for the growth of knowledge⁴¹ within a dialogue. Whether one thinks of the premises of a presumptive argument as knowledge or beliefs, this new knowledge potentially weakens or strengthens the argument’s premise, thus affecting the strength of an argument’s conclusion, or its ability to convince an audience in a particular context.

However, one question by itself may not be sufficient to establish new knowledge. Epistemologists suggest that a series of questions, which compares to the process of

in theories about crime. His years in police work gave him access to information about crime and the criminal. Moreover, he is an eyewitness to the event. Often these categories overlap, though not to the extent illustrated here. Often the lines between the categories are blurred. Nevertheless, these sources of knowledge are very important in the following dialogues as well as in the field of apologetics.

⁴¹ What constitutes knowledge, or the standards for new knowledge, is a crucial issue in Belief Revision Theory. Courtroom rules typically define what is admissible as evidence, relevant knowledge. However, customary rules of ordinary conversations are much harder to pin down.

deduction (Barth and Martens 1982, 74-75; Hintikka 1985, 135-150), is more effective in establishing knowledge.

1.12 Methodology: Questions and Answers in Dialogues

In this section, I first address the nature of questions. I then turn to answers, the complement of questions, and suggest that a response that solves the problem of ignorance on the part of the questioner is an answer. This leads to a discussion of the relationship of belief and knowledge to belief revision.

1.12.1 Methodology: Questions

First, I outline some of the general qualities of questions, then move to a brief treatment of the logic of questions and answers, and finally return to the relationship between informational questions and critical questions.

‘Questions have presuppositions, [that is] they contain propositions and they do make assertions’ (Walton 1989, 5). ‘All questions are complex’ entities (p. 7). Thus, a question reveals both the knowledge and the ignorance of the questioner. The question ‘What time is the interview today?’ affirms that an interview will take place today. Of course, the underlying presupposition in this case is defeasible. In fact, there may be no interview today. Questions such as ‘Have you stopped beating your wife?’ contain an *ad hominem* presumption in addition to the facetious appearance of seeking information.

The type of a question distinguishes whether the response is an answer or reply. Question types include, but are not limited to, whether, yes-no, which, what, who and why questions, as well as deliberative, disjunctive, hypothetical, and ‘given-that’ questions (Belnap & Steel, 1976, Harrah 1984, Walton 1998, 136). Walton notes that an answer is different from a reply. ‘An answer supplies the requested information or

commitment requested by the questioner' (1998, 137).⁴² Whatever its form, a reply does not supply that information. However, this presumes that the respondent knows the answer.

Questions are fundamental, potentially cooperative, ways of introducing new knowledge into a dialogue if the inquirer and answerer are committed to honest interaction. However, commitment and sanctions in a dialogical context can have a number of sources. Courtroom questioning, arguably a form of inquiry, can be adversarial, but by oath the witness is legally committed to answering the questions and is legally sanctioned for perjury. Questions, at the heart of information-seeking dialogues, seem to be important to virtually all dialogue types (1.9.1).

From a critical standpoint Belnap and Steel (1976) have analysed questions and answers with respect to the logical dimensions of inquiry systems that are 'expected to supply answers to the questions [asked]' (p. 143). According to the authors' approach, a 'direct answer is a piece of language that completely, just completely, answers the question' (Belnap and Steel 1976, 3). This approach, taken legal strategy in a courtroom interrogation or a database query, is not particularly useful in the present context. Not many answers qualify as direct answers. Often stories are responses to questions that provide much more information than that 'just completely' needed.

1.12.2 Questions in the Context of Belief Revision

Questions have the potential of initiating domino-style belief revision because answers are subject to revision or annulment. Consider this abbreviated dialogue:

Answering his question, I assert to my friend that the general rule A is true and is

⁴² Questions are complex. Hamblin notes that 'answers to questions may just as easily be effectively commanded, demanded, invited, suggested and so on' (1987, 27). On a counter note, answers to questions can be commands (201).

a trustworthy basis for a series of actions. Upon reflecting, she asks whether⁴³ ‘A is true of situation b’. Reflecting on this new thought, I acknowledge b is a genuine exception to A, that b revises or nullifies A, and I must revise other things I know or believe. In cases like this, the acquisition of new knowledge through questions does not require ignorance on the part of both conversationalists. ‘New’ is timely to one of the persons in the dialogue. However, questions that call into doubt too much knowledge of an answerer potentially destabilize the belief revision process and the stability of the dialogue.⁴⁴

Secondly, though Belnap and Steele posit that ‘a direct answer must provide an unarguably final resolution to the question (1976, 13), this viewpoint is clearly incompatible with the defeasibility of knowledge. It presupposes that knowledge is absolute. While the logic of questions and answers certainly bears consideration, the two problems I have noted suggest that the theory is one reference point among others for our understanding of the function of questions and answers.

1.13 Methodology: Dialogue Structure

Since every dialogue is a conversation, the terms ‘dialogue’ and ‘conversation’ are interchangeable at a non-technical level. However, section 1.10.1, implies that not every conversation qualifies as a dialogue. Chapter two will address this issue. Nevertheless, for the sake of completeness, one could posit that most conversations contain dialogical sections.⁴⁵ Conversely, the following section assumes that parts of dialogues are not

⁴³ The finite *whether question* is answerable by yes or no in this case, but does not address the infinite range of revisions to which A might be subject.

⁴⁴ ‘In such cases, given the purported manner of knowing p, one knows p only if the rest of one’s knowledge justifies p. But the test is not universal; it yields poor results if too much of one’s knowledge is simultaneously called into question’ (Williamson 2000, 10).

⁴⁵ The substantial difference between a conversation and a dialogue is hazy. A verbal interchange begun as a dialogue might turn out to be simply a conversation if the parties decide not, or cannot sustain the original intent of the interaction.

dialectical. That is, they are not argument, questions and answers, or other logical interactions.

Dialogue structure, as I define it, contains two aspects. The first aspect includes the steps that a dialogue follows that contribute to its success. While ‘dialogue structure’ normally describes these steps, I have chosen to call this aspect of a dialogue its *dialectical structure*. The second aspect of dialogue structure is rhetoric. First, I will explain dialectical structure, and then move to the second aspect of dialogue structure. In closing this section, I will suggest plausible ways that dialogue structure with rhetorical inclusions might influence belief revision.

Although dialogue type does not determine the subject matter of a conversation, theoreticians stipulate normative models for different types of dialogues. Models theoretically provide the most efficient way to change an opinion, obtain information, reach an agreement, discover the truth about something, or resolve a dispute. Theoreticians describe these models, which for the sake of clarity, which I will call dialectical, in very different ways.

Van Eemeren and Grootendorst’s persuasion dialogue, one of the simplest models, has a challenge, opening, argumentation, and closing phase (2004, 59-61). However, those authors note that the argumentation phase of a dialogue can be ‘extremely simple to extremely complex’.

Rules are fundamental to models. Similar to those in games, these rules govern how and when one is permitted to make assertions or to ask questions. Such theoretical models, while perhaps useful for reconstructing arguments in a western context, rarely describe how dialogues proceed in the western cultures for which they are designed (van

Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 31).⁴⁶ These models perhaps speak even less to the argumentative reality of dialogues in West Cameroon, that is, the ways there that people actually do dialogues. However, comparing actual dialogues in the West Cameroon context to these models may illuminate qualities of those dialogues.

Rhetoric, the theory and practice of speeches, is an example of the second aspect of dialogue structure. Conversations may contain speeches embedded in an otherwise dialectical interchange (Krabbe 2000). These speeches complicate a dialogue's structure in several ways. They often originate in the themes introduced by the argument, questions, and answers of the conversation. Complicating matters, dialectical elements such as argument patterns (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004; Perelman and Obrechts-Tyteca 1969) are generally present in rhetoric. However, different protocols govern the way a speaker uses argument patterns in dialectic and rhetoric. Dialectic, an unscripted conversational process, uses argument patterns and questions that the conversational context prompts. From this perspective, dialectic is a dynamic game.⁴⁷ In rhetorical presentations, the patterns would typically serve the purpose of a speech or text. Thus, rhetoric uses some of the same argument patterns used by dialectic, but does not typically allow for the dialogical questioning of those patterns by a hearer.

Rhetorical questions illustrate this latter point quite well. They do not actually request information; the speaker's purpose in posing this type of question is to call to mind supposed knowledge or belief. This comports well with the overall purpose of

⁴⁶ These authors call the actual way that dialogues are conducted 'argumentative reality'. I will use the term in a more specific way to include such things as the rhetoric that seems inevitably to enter into conversations.

⁴⁷ This is why Aristotle's *Topics* is difficult to understand and the practice of dialectical skills is hard to master.

rhetoric, that of preparing an audience for action advantageous to themselves by affirming their current beliefs.⁴⁸

Classic rhetorical theory has its own structural elements. Aristotle asserts in his *Rhetoric*, Book 1, that rhetoric is the ‘faculty of discovering in a particular case what are the available means of persuasion.’ These means of persuasion are set forth in three categories: ethos, pathos, and logos. A speaker establishes his credibility, his ethos, through artful presentation. Having established a credible voice in the ears of the audience, he then touches their emotions through pathos. Finally, he brings logos, argument patterns, to bear on his case. Rhetorical argumentation patterns feature narrative, enthymemes (syllogisms with an implicit premise or conclusion), and the use of examples, or rhetorical induction.

In practice, rhetorical theory dictates that these means of persuasion be used to varying degrees and ways in different situations. Aristotle’s view of rhetoric deems that different types of rhetoric are necessary on different occasions. In his view, the epideictic type is for ceremonial occasions; the place for forensic is in trials; and public events involving decision-making require political rhetoric. Modern rhetorical theorists tie the practice of rhetoric to attitude creation and change (McCroskey 1968, 32),⁴⁹ but this seems to ignore the historic connection between rhetoric and attitude strengthening. In the case of epideictic oratory, the rhetorical aim of strengthening attitudes is most evident. Less evident, but still of great importance, is the aim of producing specific cultural behaviours, which are often delayed reactions to the oration. The conversations in this

⁴⁸ On this account, strengthening a current held belief is itself not considered belief revision. If in the strengthening process, one reformulates the belief, then belief revision has occurred. This position, however, does not address what happens in political or forensic oratory.

⁴⁹ It is arguable whether one can connect rhetoric to belief revision. Part of the debate hinges on whether one admits a difference between persuading and convincing. Here rhetoric that emphasizes traditional values is in view.

collection contain both dialectic and rhetorical passages. I evaluate their dialectical structure and rhetorical content as space allows.

1.14 Methodology: Revealing Commitments

I first explain the idea of commitment that I shall use in the following analyses and then note some of the ways that commitments affect reasoning. Finally, I will address some of the possible effects of commitment on the outcome of belief revision.

Commitment is ‘being bound or obligated to a certain course of action’⁵⁰ A more precise definition of commitment is the act of ‘fulfilling through partial strategies’⁵¹ the imperative, associated with a proposition that expresses a state of being obligated or bound.

Thus, commitment is an obligation to carry out a series of actions to fulfil a goal, the object of the commitment (Walton & Krabbe 1995, 15). Commitment can be a series of actions undertaken by an individual or a collective group, who function as the subject of the commitment.⁵²

One can describe the fulfilment of a commitment in two ways. Wholehearted fulfilment occurs when one does everything one can do to achieve the object of a commitment. Extensional commitment requires accomplishing the intended goal. Though one can accomplish a goal in a wholehearted manner, it is possible to say that one can wholeheartedly fulfil a commitment even if the goal remains unreached. Commitments typically are associated with sanctions. An unfulfilled commitment

⁵⁰ The particulars of commitment that I will develop in the following pages are largely from Walton and Krabbe’s *Commitment in Dialogue* (1995), chapters one and two. Developing Charles Hamblin’s work in *Fallacies* (1970), their analysis is perhaps the most systematic available.

⁵¹ That fulfilment comes through a set of partial strategies on the assumption that fulfilling an obligation is a process accomplished by many individual steps that require one to be intellectually as well as physically involved as the need arises. ‘If at first you don’t succeed, try, and try again...’ catches the spirit of partial strategies, but not its creative implications.

⁵² Walton and Krabbe view collectives as ‘well-structured’ organizations or institutions (1995, 15), but commitments are also generated by a combination of factors such as loosely organized groups that are backed by tradition (See Walton & Krabbe 1995, 32). These latter commitments are much more complex. They are not subject to simplistic analysis.

results in a penalty, or sanction. All genuine commitments carry some form of self-imposed or external sanctions (Walton & Krabbe 1995), and the imposition of a sanction implies an unfulfilled commitment. Sanctions play important roles in all the dialogues of this collection.

A speech act such as an assertion or question is one kind of action commitment. Within an argument, this commitment might be that of defending, holding, or proving an assertion, or asking a question. This commitment, generated by a speech act, like other commitments, can be terminated (or revised) in several ways. For example, one can retract or revise an assertion, the purpose of the dialogue in which one made the statement shifts,⁵³ or the other party can concede the assertion (Walton & Krabbe 1995).

To illustrate, starting a conversation as a persuasion dialogue reflects a commitment to convince someone of a proposition. In this case, commitment is extensionally successful if the other party in the dialogue accepts the point. Wholehearted commitment is evident when one uses every available means of argumentation,⁵⁴ even if the other party does not accept the position.

The theory of persuasion dialogues, the conventional approach to apologetic methodology, features propositional commitment. However, to be extensionally successful, dialogue require a variety of commitments.⁵⁵ The commitment, at some level, to trust the dialogue partner is important to the dialogue. The choice to engage in a particular type of dialogue is, or at least should be, a mutual commitment by the participants. After choosing the dialogue purpose, their commitments to engage in

⁵³ For example, an assertion made in a persuasion dialogue carries a different significance in a negotiation dialogue.

⁵⁴ These attempts at reaching a goal are termed 'partial *i*-strategies'. *I* represents the imperative associated with the commitment. The attempts do not consist of the same actions repeated several times. They are different actions that signify the intellectual involvement of the agent.

⁵⁵ The emphasis on commitment is a dialectical interpretation of Kreeft and Tacelli's methodology for apologetics (1994, 23).

dialectic, rhetoric, or both affects the structure and success of the dialogue. Finally, a mutual commitment on the part of the participants to common rational standards is crucial to the success of a dialogue.

Belief revision occurs in a dialogue when one party accepts the point for which the other party is arguing.⁵⁶ However, in some cases, when a belief is entrenched, an agent will refuse to change their mind even in the face of a strong argument.

These entrenched beliefs (Gärdenfors and Makinson 1988) and dark-side, or implicit commitments⁵⁷ (Walton & Krabbe 1995, 11) create the possibility of a scenario where an arguer never retracts any of his prior commitments, no matter how overwhelming the arguments against them are (1995, 10). The question of why certain beliefs are entrenched will be treated in chapter eight.⁵⁸

Wholehearted commitment is also a quantitative approach to commitment, but its measurement is not so simple. Walton & Krabbe recognize that one cannot judge commitment simply based on the number of attempted partial strategies:

‘Whether a subject is living up to a commitment must be judged in light of that subject’s estimations of circumstances, strategic decisions, and deeds, not only in the actual world, but also in counterfactual situations’ (Walton & Krabbe, 1995, p. 28). In other words, circumstances, strategic decisions, and perceived causal relationships that have not yet occurred or are impossible to visualize affect an assessment of an agent’s wholehearted commitment.

1.15 Methodology: Belief Revision Theory

⁵⁶ In AMG theory, addition would have occurred.

⁵⁷ These are a ‘participant’s deeper or more fundamental commitments that she brings to the dialogue.’

⁵⁸ As noted earlier, Pollock and Gillies (2000) claim that the postulational approach will not explain belief revision without taking into consideration the arguments supporting the beliefs. This would equally apply to knowledge. Moreover, to these supporting arguments, we will add commitments.

This section further explains the nature of Belief Revision Theory and why the AGM⁵⁹ framework of belief revision is the basic template for the analyses of the research. Then I describe and question the AGM framework to the extent necessary for the reader to understand how the epistemology used here is a foundation for Belief Revision Theory (BRT) in understanding the dialogues, and developing the thesis argument. Concluding the section, an explanation of how Reason Maintenance System (RMS) provides a framework for argumentation schemes.

Belief Revision Theory is a general term that covers a variety of approaches, including AGM, to belief change. However, since AGM has occasioned the widest use and critical review of any logical framework for database management (Falappa, Kern-Isberner and Simari 2002, 2), this dissertation consistently refers to AGM as Belief Revision Theory. However, AGM suffers from many problems and limitations (Hansson 2003). For that reason, Reason Maintenance System, an adaptation of AGM, is arguably a more suitable framework for understanding the following dialogues.

1.15.1. AGM Theory: The Basics

At least five basic ideas underpin AGM's understanding of belief change. First, it claims that belief states are propositional or sentential.⁶⁰ A belief set, comparable to a worldview, contains an undefined number of belief states; a belief base contains a finite number of belief states. Belief Revision Theory limits itself to belief bases, a group of sentences (termed belief states), and the logical consequences of those sentences.

⁵⁹ A system of belief revision named for its developers, Carlos Alchourrón, David Makinson, and Peter Gärdenfors who co-authored 'On the logic of theory change: partial meet contraction and revision functions' (1985).

⁶⁰ The use of 'belief states' in AGM includes what is called 'ranking', but Friedman and Halpern suggest that the language used to describe the significant details of a belief state must be capable of expressing the relative degrees of strength in beliefs (Friedman & Halpern 1999, 2-4)

Secondly, *belief revision* (proper) ⁶¹occurs when an agent adds a new piece of information to his belief set that is inconsistent with his present belief system in such a way that the result is a new, consistent belief set. Argument from inconsistency is apparently the only allowable mechanism in AGM to accomplish this. AGM allows three types of changes in belief sets:

Expansion: A new sentence, symbolized by ϕ , is added to K , the belief system without regards to whether K is consistent.

Contraction: When confronted with ϕ , some sentences are deleted without the addition of any new sentences.

Revision: The new sentence ϕ is added to the belief system K , and some old sentences in K that are inconsistent with ϕ are deleted.

In the third place, when one changes one's beliefs, one retains as much as possible of the old beliefs. Thus, one makes a minimal change. Gärdenfors calls this 'the criterion of informational economy' (Gärdenfors 1992, 9). The fourth idea, that of epistemic entrenchment, states that 'certain pieces of our knowledge and beliefs about the world are more important than others when planning future actions, conducting scientific investigations, or reasoning in general' (1992, 17). This last principle seems to contradict the idea that all beliefs in a database have equal value. As such, this latter principle and the property of success (1.12.2) present problems for AGM.

Lastly, postulates and theorems govern the execution of each of the above three changes. Some postulates minimize the change in a belief set or base and other postulates govern the logical process of the change. However, Gärdenfors is quick to note that 'it would be a mistake to expect that only logical properties are sufficient to characterise the revision process' (1992, 2). This is a very important concession in the theory. In this work, the concession allows an inquiry into the role of commitments and other variables in the belief revision process.

⁶¹ Theories about belief change have used 'belief revision' in two senses. First, the term describes all the changes that occur to a belief base. Secondly, 'belief revision' refers to the combined processes of expansion and contraction.

AGM theorems, ‘if....then’ statements, stipulate the sequence of postulates that must be followed for each process, addition, contraction, or revision to be rational. Although this early version of Belief Revision Theory was heavily orientated toward computer and legal database management, its later developments make at least three important contributions to the development of this thesis.

First, the theory attempts to map and explain very different scenarios as ways an agent might process new knowledge, the process described earlier as cognition. Secondly, the theory stresses the conservation of knowledge on the presumption that knowledge is valuable (Gärdenfors 1990, 29; Prichard 2007). Thirdly, it posits that some beliefs or knowledge are resistant to change, that is, they are entrenched, and attempts to explain this entrenchment. It also posits that new information has the property of success in initiating a revision of current knowledge. Many theorists have questioned and suggested modifications to this property of success.

1.15.2 Questioning the Property of Success

The question of what imparts to new information the property of success is important to the apologists in the conversations, to argumentation, and, indeed, to the whole project of belief revision.⁶² After a short introduction, I will present four perspectives on this property that introduce Reason Maintenance System theory.

First, Gärdenfors’ use of the terms, beliefs and information, it seems, originated in the early view of AGM theorists that all propositions held in a database possessed equal value, and since all the propositions in that database were susceptible to revision, those propositions could be described by ‘belief’, commonly thought vulnerable to change. However, this begs the question of why ‘new’ information is both relevant to and

⁶² From an historic Christian perspective, the Augustinian view on the relationship of faith, reason, and the work of the Holy Spirit are quite relevant to this discussion. However, the scope of this project does not include that venue.

supervenes what an agent currently thinks [knows or believes] (Falappa, Kern-Isberner and Simari 2002, 1).

Secondly, the defeasibility of knowledge explains why success is possible. Under conventional circumstances, current information replaces outdated data.⁶³ This process, referred to as updating, is common in human cognition. However, it seems clear that human beings reason in far more complex ways than the AI updating of information. For instance, Pollock suggests that the suspension of judgement on new information, even if acceptable reasons support it, is reasonable in certain instances.⁶⁴

The question of success has prompted many studies on the entrenchment of beliefs, argument strength, degree of confidence, resistance to change and belief states.⁶⁵ This proliferation of issues reflects the attempts of numerous theorists to correct specific limitations of AGM (Hansson 2002, 3-5). The examination of these dialogues prompts an examination of some of these issues.

Thirdly, the use of explanation is a second perspective of how new information might achieve priority over an in-place belief set. An explanation can have two uses. Applied to an already accepted fact, an explanation aims to increase understanding. On the other hand, in the case of information not yet accepted as fact, an explanation functions as an argument. Falappa, et al. posit ‘...an explanation should be capable of inducing belief in a statement that would not be accepted without the explanation’ (Falappa, Kern-Isberner & Simari 2002). Boutilier and Becher follow a similar route in ‘Abduction as Belief Revision’ (1995). They note, ‘Abduction is the process of inferring

⁶³ In reality, the process may be much more complex. Changing one cell in a spreadsheet changes all the cells that use it as a part of their calculation.

⁶⁴ For example, a human can be irrational (J. L. Pollock [2006]2007). Pollock credits this to the phenomenon of reflexive epistemology, or practical cognition. Reflexive cognition makes it possible for a human to ‘re-order the cognitive task queue, refrain from accepting a conclusion, and correct previous errors in reasoning.’

⁶⁵ These topics are at the periphery of a large body of literature on warrant and rationalization from a wide variety of viewpoints (Toulmin 2003; Pinto 2001, 2009; Cohen 1944; Chisholm 1977; Plantinga 1993; Hansson 2003; Pollock 1995).

certain facts and/or laws that renders a sentence that explains some phenomenon or observation' (1995, 3). Their claim is that perception and/or explanation facilitate the priority ('the success') of a new belief.

It is significant that five different patterns of abduction have an important place among the sixty-five or more patterns documented in argumentation theory (Walton 2004; Walton, Reed and Macagno 2008, 329-330). Since each of the sixty-plus patterns lead to a conclusion, it is plausible that argument patterns are attempts to rationalize presumptive knowledge, thereby initiating belief change.

The third perspective on the property of success focuses on knowledge. Friedman and Halpern recognized the importance and role of knowledge in belief revision:⁶⁶

To give a sense of our concerns here, we discuss two basic ontologies. The first ontology that seems (to us) reasonable assumes that the agent has some knowledge as well as beliefs. We can think of the formulas that the agent knows as having the highest state of epistemic importance (1999, 3).

These authors retain the idea that an agent has a 'belief set', but frame that set in a more conventional framework.

'We assume that the agent observes the world using reliable sensors;⁶⁷ thus if the agent observes ϕ , then the agent is assumed to know ϕ .⁶⁸ After adding ϕ to his stock of knowledge, he may revise his belief set' (Friedman and Halpern 1999, 4).

Thus, these authors claim that relevant perceptual knowledge revises beliefs. This framework is essentially the epistemology (they call it 'ontology') adopted in section 1.7.3 of this work,⁶⁹ with one possible difference. Though knowledge is far more resistant to alteration, it is still subject to revision.

⁶⁶ Though there are of course differences, Pollock uses the term 'epistemology' in much the same way.

⁶⁷ Compare to Plantinga's study of 'cognitive equipment' (*Warrant and Proper Function* 1993).

⁶⁸ This is similar to Pollack's epistemological emphasis on perception (Pollock 1998).

⁶⁹ Friedman and Halpern note that 'just observing ϕ is not necessarily enough for acceptance [of ϕ]' (1994, 3). The comment, as well as many of their other observations in the paper, is salient for this research. However, a discussion of their ideas is out of place in this introduction.

An alternative to emphasizing the priority of knowledge over belief is to fall back on the concept of ‘degrees of belief’, that is, ‘one may believe something to various degrees’. Furthermore, one may interpret ‘degrees of belief’ two ways: ‘degrees of confidence’ and ‘degrees of resistance to change’ (Hansson 2002, 3-4). Chapter three develops this concept further.

Since these issues do not fit well into the basic AMG scenarios of belief revision (Falappa, Kern-Isberner & Simari 2002, 3), theorists have incorporated many of its concepts into frameworks that give a significant place to belief change based on arguments other than the argument from inconsistency. Reason Maintenance System (Doyle 1992) is one of those theories.

1.15.3 Reason Maintenance System (RMS)

In this section, I explain how Reason Maintenance System (RMS) builds on the basic AGM theory, how it incorporates different kinds of arguments into belief change, and its value for the dialogues in view here. This discussion refers back to AGM concepts, but it will extend to the explanatory potential that RMS has for argument schemes, and thus, the following dialogues. However, RMS does not directly address the problem of success.

AGM theory takes a coherence approach to human rationality. Its goal is to maintain a consistent set of beliefs; Reason Maintenance focuses on a ‘rules-based’ inferences from foundational propositions. While RMS does not ignore the need for consistency in a belief base or set, it views consistency as only one of the rules that establishes relationships between different beliefs (Doyle 1992, 34). One can think of these relationships as inferences as long as one does not confuse them with deductive or inductive inference.

AGM and Reason Maintenance System are conservative approaches to how people add to, subtract from, or revise the beliefs they hold. In each scenario, a rational agent retains as many beliefs as possible when he accommodates his beliefs to new information (Doyle 1992, 30).⁷⁰ However, Reason Maintenance System (RMS) is a rules-based inferential approach that emphasizes justification, not coherence. The theory recognizes two kinds of beliefs, those not justified by other beliefs and those that are, and two kinds of elements in belief sets, nodes and reasons. Nodes contain information, which can be 'beliefs, desires, rules, procedures, database elements, etc.' (Doyle 1992, 34). Reasons represent specific inference rules that hold between the nodes. Thus, this approach allows for different kinds of relationships in a belief set. For example, in certain cases non-propositional elements relate inferentially to propositions.

An Argument from Commitment exemplifies how RMS employs two types of inference (Walton, Reed, and Macagno 2008, 335).

Premise 1: a is committed to proposition A, according to the evidence of what he said or did.

Premise 2: Generally, when a is committed to A, it can be inferred that he is also committed to B.

Conclusion: In this case, a is thought to be committed to proposition B.

There are two inferential steps evident here. First, the agent makes a defeasible, pragmatic inference between an action or speech act and a propositional commitment.⁷¹ Secondly, the agent follows with an inference of consistency between a commitment to A (holding A) and a commitment to B (holding B). The analysis of an argument containing different types of inferences is problematic for AGM, because logical consistency by definition applies to a set of propositions. Even if one can judge whether

⁷⁰ 'If you want to keep the database consistent, which is normally a sound methodology, you need to revise it. Consequently, one must retract some of the beliefs in the original database. You do not want to give up all of the beliefs since this would be an unnecessary loss of valuable information' (Gärdenfors, *Belief Revision: An Introduction* 1992).

⁷¹ One might read premise one as being based on a counterfactual argument 'If one were to hold A, then one would do or say E.'

propositions A and B are consistent, strict consistency does not readily hold between actions and propositions.

It seems that the ‘inferential rules’ governing the relationship between a propositional commitment and actions, if actions are the evidence, are different from those at work in the inference between the commitment to proposition A and a commitment to B. Walton’s argument from commitment implies Pollock’s view, that practical cognition is fundamentally related to epistemic cognition (J. L. Pollock 2007). Moreover, it is consistent with Williamson’s view of the relationship between knowledge and action (2000, 6). These examples suggest that argumentation schemes are incomplete without an adequate underlying philosophy of belief revision.

RMS does not explain how new beliefs establish themselves in a node, and why those beliefs should be foundational or possess the property of success. However, in a curious way it explains entrenched beliefs. Doyle notes ‘Contraction corresponds to removing all reasons for a node’ (Doyle, 1992, 36). When multiple nodes support one node, a conclusion, through a variety of inferences (reasons), one must remove *all the supporting inferences to delete the supported node*. Chapter 8 returns to this quality in its discussion of the cumulative case.

1.16 Methodology: Interviews of the Apologists

My understanding of the interviews with the apologists matured with time. Initially, I had conceived them as simply evaluations of what had happened in the conversations. However, as my understanding of commitment and narrative deepened, the interviews became more personal, focusing on the apologist telling parts of his or her life story and accounting for the commitments that they brought to the dialogue (Seidman 1998). In conversations two and four, elements of their stories and their commitments became part of the conversation’s story and an occasions for personal growth.

1.17 The Argument of the Work

The following sections present selected evidence from each chapter supporting the conclusion that the ‘cumulative case’ is an argument composed argument patterns, many of which are imbedded in stories that are generic to West Cameroon. Secondly, a theme or an overarching narrative provides a focus for the convergence, or coming together, of those inferences. Thirdly, questioning of each of these story-inferences, a kind of negative cumulative case, leads to an understanding and revision of cumulative-case entrenchment.

1.17.1 The Background and Tools of the Argument

In chapter one, I suggest that, based on personal experience and available data, this research fills a gap in knowledge. I establish an epistemological foundation that supports the research, discuss its methodology, including its tools, and its argument, and present the possible importance of RMS for the cumulative case method of apologetics.

1.17.2 Person-to-Person Apologetics and African Conversations

Chapter two reviews perspectives on person-to-person apologetics of selected authors. It argues that each author suggests, in one way or another, the importance of cumulative case apologetics to both African and relativistic contexts, and suggest three contributions that this study of conversations in West Cameroon might make to the field of interpersonal apologetics.

1.17.3 Argument, ‘Life Scripts’, and Entrenchment

Chapter three documents the narrative and argumentative structure underpinning the entrenchment of Emmanuel’s view of the beliefs and practices of witchcraft, and his rhetorical and critical response to Ernest’s counter theses.

1.17.4 Curiosity, Questions, and Knowledge

Chapter four focuses on the process of undercutting entrenched beliefs through the process of questioning that is embodied in Teresa's story and her dialogue with Richard Tanke. The chapter, with its emphasis on the importance of questioning and plausibility, serves as an introduction to the last three dialogues, which all feature some form of questioning.

1.17.5 Rhetoric and Evidence

In chapter five, a new Christian and his mentor engage in a complex dialogue about a belief that stands in direct opposition to Christian teaching. I assert that this information-seeking dialogue transitions to information sharing, which in turn, becomes something akin to a joint exercise in speech writing. Although Walters is sceptical about the evidence for the physical resurrections, their dialogue shows that revising knowledge originating from 'cultural' testimony, or rhetoric, is difficult.

1.17.6 An African Socratic Dialogue

The fourth dialogue, in contrast, presents a different scenario in a no less difficult context. Making assertions or asking questions, the apologist does not address the evidence for the brother's beliefs, but their underlying theological foundations and moral values. Arguably the most dialectical and the most difficult to understand conversation in the collection, the apologist undercuts several of the brothers' entrenched beliefs.

1.17.7 Commitment and Identity

Following dialogue one, dialogue five presents the central importance of 'a Pragmatic Argument from Social Sources to the elder's personal identity', an argument that seems largely impervious to the issue of contradiction.

1.17.8 The Evaluation of the Theories

Chapter eight first summarizes the strengths and limitations of the theories, then presents the case for the thesis through the relationship of RMS to cumulative cases and the entrenchment. Secondly, the chapter presents the contributions this research makes to person-to-person apologetics and speculates on the future of dialogue in apologetics.

1.18 The Contributions that this Research Makes to Knowledge

- ❖ The research data is a unique presentation of examples of West Cameroonian beliefs and reasoning through the means of dialogue that fills a very important niche in the recent anthropological literature about rationality
- ❖ The research demonstrates the use of documented argument patterns in the dialogues, and illustrates the significance of the presence or absence of questions in rationality.
- ❖ The research presents both a theoretical and practical case for integrating dialogue, argumentation, and belief revision theories.
- ❖ The research suggests that dialogue is a catalyst for new knowledge, and that Belief Maintenance System models the content of informal arguments as well as the cumulative case.
- ❖ The research suggests an approach to West Cameroonian apologetics that employs cumulative case arguments related through narratives and the framework of those narratives.
- ❖ The research emphasizes the importance of iterative belief revision as a realistic process for apologetics in West Cameroon, and similar contexts.

Chapter Two: Apologetic Insights Out of Africa

2.1 One Study in Cognition: Two Dimensions

This research project makes contributions to two disciplines. As basic research, it necessarily addresses the data, theories and assumptions utilized in it. Beyond this initial interaction with the research's central foci, this work addresses the current conversation on 'person-to-person' apologetics. The term 'person-to-person' refers to those intimate situations where two persons freely share points of view, questions, and reasons for their viewpoints, and delineates the relatively narrow focus of this dissertation. Synonyms sometimes used in this dissertation for 'person-to-person' include 'conversational', or 'dialogical', but it should again be noted that these terms do not have precisely the same meaning (1.10.1). This chapter address what this study on cognition, having been done in Africa, might contribute to the ongoing development of conversational apologetics in the broader modern and relativistic contexts.

In chapter one, I proposed the integrated use of dialogue, argumentation, and Belief Revision Theory as a way to examine the cognitive dimensions of the conversations in chapters four through seven. This strategy is based on presupposition that these theories have points of contact and shared elements that combine to create a productive analytical approach to understanding important aspects of a conversation's rationality. If this supposition is correct, this research should shed light on some of the relationships between those disciplines, their uses, and their limitations in understanding conversational apologetics.

In this chapter, I suggest that this research method in its cultural context can make at least three contributions to the recent conversation about the theory and practice of person-to-person apologetics in the 21st century. This suggestion also possesses a prima facie plausibility. By definition, the practice of person-to-person apologetics contains

dialogue, or at least conversation, and argument. Moreover, the objective of these encounters is, on a rational level, to effect some change in the knowledge base and beliefs of a dialogue partner. The three contributions that I think this research makes to person-to-person apologetics are first, the clarification of the meaning and practice of dialogue; secondly, an expanded understanding of the theory and practice of informal logic; and lastly, a more flexible approach to what can be accomplished through conversational apologetics. These contributions are responses to weaknesses evident in the current apologetic literature.

Contemporary apologists, as far as this writer knows, have not utilized, nor even cited dialogue, argumentation, or belief revision theories in the development of their theoretical or pragmatic apologetics. Thus, the first task in an argument for the usefulness of these disciplines to apologetics is to account for these lacunae. The second task, which constitutes the primary objective of the chapter, is to suggest the possible contributions that the examination of five African dialogues make to current person-to-person apologetic theory and practice. I will do this in a step by step fashion.

I state and I present evidence for those weaknesses, drawing primarily from the works of Clark (1993), Stackhouse (2002), van den Toren (2011) and McGrath (2012). I explain why each weakness presents an opportunity to access the resources for the development of theory and practice of person-to-person apologetics. I then turn to the contribution that each theory might makes to dialogical apologetics,⁷² and briefly outline why I think it makes that contribution. In section 7.1, I provide reasons why West Cameroon, and the people who live there, provided an ideal context for conducting

⁷² In fact, since these theories have variables in common and are to varying degrees interrelated, all three could be said to address in some way the problems to be discussed. However, for simplicity's sake I will address each problem with one theory.

dialogues that facilitate these contributions to the current conversations about person-to-person apologetics in relativistic contexts.

In the following discussion I use the term ‘dialectics’ to refer a logical disputation or a critical examination into the truth of an opinion (Onions 1955, 500).

2.2 The Isolation of Apologetics from Relevant Disciplines

Several factors contribute to the absence of these theories in the current conversations on apologetics. First, the limiting nature of tradition and the pragmatic need to make ‘first things first’ support this separation. The fields of study employed here, situated well outside the discipline of Christian apologetics, seem extraneous to the primary concern of apologists—defending the Christian faith.

Secondly, the modern versions of these disciplines have been orientated toward activities that are alien to apologetics—like game theory, informal logic, and artificial intelligence. Modern dialogue theory was initially conceived as game theory (Walton & Krabbe 1995, 2-4). Informal logic has been used to describe and detect fallacies (Sire 2006); it does not conform to the traditional standards for apologetic arguments (Hamblin 2004, Sire 2006, Craig, 2008, pp. 52-56). Lastly, Belief Revision Theory’s dedication to the study of artificial intelligence sets it apart from apologetics.

The alienation of dialogue theory and argumentation from apologetics is not new. Aristotle’s dialectic in his *Topics*, according to Ryle, was ‘a training manual for a special pattern of disputation, governed by strict rules, which take the following shape. Two persons agree to have a battle...’ (1966, 104).⁷³ Martin Luther objected to the inclusion of dialectic into the theological curriculum at Wittenberg (Perreiah 1997, 63). What reason might Luther have had for this objection? Luther believed that those equipped for the ministry were not to be dialecticians, but proclaimers of the gospel.

⁷³ Quoted in Hill and Kagan 1995, 28.

Rhetoric, on the other hand, is just telling the story, proclaiming it. Such is the gospel, which Luther again and again defined simply as a discourse or story about Christ that grasps us as the overwhelming gift of God. It does not make a proposition to be argued, neither is it about a conversation among different parties. It belongs to a different economy. This is why there is no such thing as a dialogical sermon. It is pure deliverance in both senses of the term: it dispenses and releases in the same act; it is law and gospel (Westhelle 2005, 383).

Luther's perspective, it might be argued, significantly contributed to distance between the evangelical view of apologetics and dialectics.

However, as I have pointed out in chapter one, current interests of dialogue, argumentation, and belief revision theories extend well beyond their beginning points or historic orientations. As such, the insights of these theories are potentially helpful in vital aspects to the practice of person-to-person apologetics. The following areas of concern have been chosen on the basis of their importance and their problematic status in current apologetic literature.

2.3 The Vagueness of 'Dialogue' and 'Conversation' in Works on Apologetics

While in recent years many works on apologetics have incorporated discussions on person-to-person apologetics, most of these authors have taken for granted an understanding of dialogue and conversation on the part of the reader on the part of the reader. This is the first weakness. A number of reasons might exist for this. Prior to 1995, few books advanced our understanding of dialogue beyond Aristotle's perspective. Apologists writing about dialogue may have considered examples of conversation sufficient to explain it. Perhaps writers were negatively influenced by the viewpoint that dialogue requires one to concede one's fundamental positions or beliefs. And lastly, the presumption that everyone intuitively recognizes dialogue may have played a role in this problem. However, a number of authors recognized dialogue's value.

Notably, Peter Kreeft returned to the early Greek tradition of dialogue as a didactic tool in *The Best Things in Life* (1984). Using the Socratic Dialogue as a pre-

apologetic tool, he unearthed questions and issues related to truth and morality.⁷⁴ Others like Corduan (1993), Geisler and MacKenzie (1995), Tennent (2002), and Groothuis (2011) utilized or referred to dialogue in the course of creating apologies or teaching about apologetics, but did not explicitly define dialogue, or clarify the differences, if there are any, between dialogue and conversation.⁷⁵ However, some apologists treated dialogue or conversation in their works. From these, I discuss selected works from David K Clark (1993), John Stackhouse (2002), Benno van den Toren (2011), and Alister McGrath (2012) that illustrate varieties of this interest.

2.4 Different Views of Dialogue and Conversation in Four Apologists

David K. Clark's *Dialogical Apologetics* (1993) is the exemplary exception to this generalization. Clark is perhaps the only apologist who commits himself to a definition of dialogue. He characterizes it as 'a bidirectional, other centred communication characterised by the abandonment of dominance and control and a primary focus on cooperation' (Clark 1993, 116). Clark owes much to Paul Grice (1975, 45) and Yankelovich (Clark 1993, 167) in his emphasis on cooperation. However, Grice's ideas about conversation, as important as they are for this discussion, do not clarify the definition of dialogue. In fact, Grice claims that all cases of 'person-to-person talking' fall within the category of 'conversation'. His position, which frames the rest of this section, is worth quoting.

Our talk exchanges do not consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction. This purpose or direction may be fixed from the start (e.g., by an initial proposal of a question for discussion), or it may evolve during the exchange; it may be fairly definite, or it may be so indefinite as to leave very considerable latitude to the participants (as in a casual conversation). But at each stage, some possible

⁷⁴ Kreeft and Tacelli propose that the dialogues, as a pre-apologetic, will aid in dethroning the old [gods] to make way for the new (1984:12). That aim has much in common with the content and purpose of the dialogues in this collection.

⁷⁵ However, there are other ways of nuancing the same process. Dyrness *responds to* major challenges (1983, 9). Chang *corresponds with* the thought of Augustine and Aquinas (2000, 9).

conversational moves would be excluded as conversationally unsuitable (Grice 1975, 45).

If Grice's very influential account of conversation is the whole story, then dialogue is only a special instance on the sliding scale of conversational cooperation. Clearly Grice has his finger on an important point. Cooperation between conversationalists, varying with the conversations, is necessary for intelligent interaction. It appears that Stackhouse (2002) is also an heir to Grice's views on cooperation. In *Humble Apologetics*, he outlines guidelines for conversation, suggesting principles such as 'agree to concentrate on one matter at a time, avoiding the tactic of shifting ground as an attempt to avoid any sort of decision, let alone resolution' (Stackhouse 2002, 168). He instructs the reader to 'declare the strengths, limitations, and weaknesses of one's own warrants...and show genuine appreciation of the other person's good points'. His further instruction to 'begin by being able to summarize accurately the other person's position—to the other person's satisfaction' (Stackhouse 2002, 169). All these points emphasize cooperation.

For the moment, let us concede to Grice and Stackhouse the highly credible assumption that states all rational 'talking-between-people' requires cooperation. While the assumption would appear to rule out *non sequitur* exchanges between individuals (such as in those in *Waiting for Godot*), the vagueness of its terms (cooperation, common purpose, direction, evolve, indefiniteness) do not help in discerning the kinds of conversations that one might have, or what guidelines might differentiate a more highly developed conversation (or dialogue?) from a 'casual conversation'. Grice attempts to move this discussion about norms forward through the use of maxims, but these standards of truth, precision, and understanding apply to both word and action in some of his cases. In short, his theory is about successful communication, not what enables

one to sustain a dialogue, or recognize a dialogue or parts of a conversation that are dialogical. More is needed to facilitate these tasks.

Van den Toren provides a specific goal for the dialogues that he encourages apologists to undertake:

Knowing the force of inner drives, fears, bonds and past experiences, the apologist should be attentive and address them with the good news... Yet, the apologist will not manipulate these drives, need and fears, *but to help the other to sift through them in a responsible way in order to distinguish what leads to truth and life from what conceals and destroys* [italics, this author]. In this way the postmodern interest in relevance, rather than truth, is met and yet by showing at the same time that the only way to be relevant is not to avoid the question of truth (van den Toren 2011, 34).

However, van den Toren does not describe the type or types of dialogue that this process might entail. Nor does he outline how this cooperative ‘sifting’ might be implemented to help others. Rather he concludes that it should ‘reflect the manner in which God encounters us in Jesus Christ...In Christ God makes us discover who we really are, including the aspects of our being we would rather cover up...’ (2011, 34). To be fair to van den Toren, some of his latter points, particularly those in chapter seven, ‘Cross-Cultural Persuasion’, flesh out this understanding of apologetics practiced through the use of person-to-person dialogue. Illustrating this, he suggests, ‘Dialogue with traditional Africans, for example, would look particularly at questions of illness, healing, curses and protection—questions that are generally less urgent in a modern Western context’ (2011, 187). Taking even this specificity into consideration, van den Toren does not suggest how dialogues that ‘look particularly at questions’ would be characterized.

I now turn to the work of Alister McGrath, the final apologist featured in this section. Though McGrath (2012), as far this researcher can determine, presumes that the apologist will engage in dialogue or conversation, he does not mention it. The presumption is quite strong, however. He notes:

While the primary focus of apologetics may indeed be culture at large, we must never forget that many Christians need help with their faith. Why does God allow suffering? How can I make sense of the Trinity? Will my pets go to heaven when they die? It is important for Christians to show that they understand these concerns, and don't see them simply as arguments to be lightly and easily dismissed. We need to deal with them sensitively and compassionately, entering into the mind of the person who finds them a problem (McGrath 2012, 18).

While this understanding could not be obtained without some form of conversation, on the next page McGrath identifies the person involved as an 'audience'. 'Here, the apologist sets out to allow the truth and relevance of the Gospel to be appreciated by the audience. The audience may be a single person or a large group of people' (McGrath 2012, 19). McGrath maintains this tension between presumed conversations with individuals and presentations to audiences throughout his text

In chapter four, 'The Importance of the Audience', McGrath clearly sees the importance of Pascal-like engagements with particular cultural audiences. McGrath provides the reader with four guidelines and four questions for these engagements, but does not provide wisdom in how to discover the applications that these elements have for specific audiences. (McGrath 2012, 140).

By chapter eight, McGrath's discussion returns to conversations with individuals in his discussion of the problem of suffering and God as need-fulfilment. He notes questions that are often asked of Christianity and his answers to those questions, answers he says are models to be considered, but not necessarily emulated. He does not address the possibility that his answer might be questioned, thereby creating a dialogical situation. But we shouldn't be too hard on him. In the spirit of 1 Peter 3:15, he is concerned with answers to questions, i.e., presentations, not dialogue as it is characterized in section 1.91.

2.5 The Difficulty and a Way Forward

The apologists studied here understand and reflect on conversation and dialogue from different perspectives. While these perspectives are generally congruent, they are built

largely on personal experience. They do not build on research that provide clarification or contribute to the understanding of dialogue and conversation.

Recent dialogue research provides pragmatic norms for dialogue that are consistent with Grice's work, that differentiates dialogue from simple conversation, that provide explicit rules for dialogues, and allow for the development of new dialogue norms and purposes. However, since dialogue theory was not specifically developed for apologetic conversations, it is to be seen whether the pragmatic approach to dialogue is adaptable and useful for person-to-person apologetics. Two problems must be considered when thinking about these possible contributions.

Walton and Krabbe comment that norms for how productive conversations should take place are not to be confused with 'how participants in argumentation really behave in instances of real dialogue, or are recorded in some texts of a dialogue exchange...' (Walton & Krabbe 1995, 62). Thus, in different cultures the basic norms of conversation for each culture might affect the theoretical norms of formal conversation in unexpected ways.

Cross-cultural conversations might be affected to even a greater degree by norms of cultural formality in a particular context. Theory must take into account what is allowed by culture. The only way to determine the suitability of such a theory for use in person-to-person apologetics is to document dialogues in which an apologist attempts to conduct a purposeful conversation on the basis of culturally appropriate rules. That is the first goal of this research.

2.6 A Limited View of Informal Argument

Twentieth century apologists, in keeping with modernist ideas of justification, tended to accept deductive and inductive standards for argumentation.⁷⁶ However, since an informal argument does not claim the epistemological status of certainty, it raises the problem of argumentative strength for a single argument and for a group of informal arguments used in a cumulative case. The idea that a ‘case’ for a conclusion, a set of informal arguments, could constitute a strong apologetic argument was in large measure popularized by Basil Mitchell. He suggested in 1973 that ‘in fields other than theology we commonly, and justifiably use arguments other than those of proof or strict probability; and that, typically theological arguments are of this kind’ (Mitchell 1973, 39). However, neither Mitchell nor any other author, to this author’s knowledge, has explained how the arguments in a cumulative case work together to form a coherent whole.

Cumulative cases largely consist of informal arguments that almost entirely depend on the content of their premises.⁷⁷ While the apologists of this chapter still point to the important roles of deduction and induction (Clark 1993, McGrath 2012, 73-78, Stackhouse 2002, 153-157), they suggest the use of many kinds of informal arguments. The nature and importance of these arguments constitute the subject of the following section. After first looking at a sampling of informal arguments in our four apologists, we will make the suggestion that recent work in argumentation if adapted, might provide a common ground for many of the apologists’ arguments. This includes the utilization of those arguments in relativistic contexts, and most importantly, why and how the context affects the argument’s force. Since this force depends on the knowledge of the

⁷⁶ Craig: ‘In order to prove a proposition to be true, we present arguments and evidence which have the proposition as the conclusion. Such reasoning can be either deductive or inductive’ (2008, 52). This goal of a high, or certain, standard for proof has been the holy grail of enlightenment epistemology.

⁷⁷ This statement does not rule out the presence of deductive and inductive arguments in cumulative cases.

one who considers the argument, the continuing importance of belief and knowledge cannot be avoided.

The apologists focused on in this study agree explicitly, or indirectly, on two points: They accept the person-relative nature of argument, or the need to make argument audience specific (McGrath). They are also committed to using the cumulative case method for presenting a carefully selected set of arguments. Though their agreement in these areas does not mean that they agree on the precise meanings or implications of these concepts, some of those differences may depend on the context in which the apologist uses a specific term. However, when it comes to enumerating or characterizing the arguments that are useful for a cumulative case, each writer proposes a different set. I will first give each apologist's preferred arguments, then suggest that recent argumentation theory provides an explicit formulation for many arguments and a theoretical basis for both those arguments' strengths and criticism.

2.7 A Sampling of Recent Informal Arguments

The arguments in the following discussion often overlap, or are essentially the same arguments under different names. Though no attempt has been made here to categorize or provide an overall taxonomy for them, it will become clear to the reader that most of the arguments fall under the general categories of theoretical and practical rationality: what should I believe and what should I do.

Clark posits that knowledge can be subdivided into objective and subjective categories. Objective knowledge is independent of personal experience and is what he calls, 'total knowledge'. Clark suggests that cosmology, anthropology (the study of humankind as a whole), ethics, religious experience, and history are possible categories of knowledge within this 'total knowledge' (Clark 1993, 89). As much as it sounds like he is starting out by describing something like induction, Clark has another perspective

in mind. These facts lie outside of one's personal experience and, he claims, are believed or accepted on the basis of their assertion by various kinds of authorities (Clark 1993, 96-99). Here Clark lays out the often overlooked or ignored fact that much of our knowledge is actually 'an appeal to someone in a position to know' and is subject to the dependability of the source.⁷⁸

Clark's second type of argument is from 'sensory experience or perception' (Clark 1993, 91-93), or subjective personal experience. He notes that such experience can have profound argumentative force, particularly when it is connected to a 'wider web of belief' through which it is evaluated. Lastly, he suggests that the 'results' or consequences of a theory carry argumentative force in the evaluation of a worldview (Clark 1993, 95), but he does not further explore the theory of pragmatic rationality.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, according to Clark, the results of a worldview, which can be characterized as objective or subjective, or both, play a part in a cumulative case.

This brings us to Stackhouse's perspectives on apologetic argument. On one hand, when assessing a particular religion, he emphasizes the crucial importance of the religion's abductive, or explanatory power (Stackhouse 2002, 102-106). He suggests that this is the way that postmodern audiences weigh arguments. On the other hand, he stresses the value of specific appeals to specific audiences (Stackhouse 2002, 150-189) that consist of the appeal to subjective experience, the appeal to evidence and reasons, and the appeal to the Christian Worldview (2002, 150-160, 189). It is notable that Stackhouse includes the traditional arguments for Christianity, 'evidence and reasons' in his appeals to specific audiences, thereby allowing for modernist sensibilities in the audience or individual being addressed.

⁷⁸ McGrath concurs, 'Identify the authorities that carry weight with the audience' (McGrath 2012, 68).

⁷⁹ However, see Harman's 'Practical Aspects of Theoretical Reasoning' (2004).

In chapter one of *Mere Apologetics*, McGrath establishes two categories of rationality, truth and relevance. He introduced these terms in his definition of apologetics in *Bridge Building*, as ‘a presentation and defence of its [Christianity’s] claims to truth and relevance in the great market-place of ideas’ (McGrath 1993, 9, van den Toren 2011, 190-192).⁸⁰

Here, the apologist sets out to allow the truth and relevance of the gospel to be appreciated by the audience. The audience may be a single person or a large group of people...The gospel does not need to be made relevant to these audiences. The question is how we help the audience grasp this relevance—for example by using helpful illustrations, analogies, or stories that allow them to connect with it (2012, 19).

Relevance, which seems to be McGrath’s particular interest here, should be viewed as the quality of being practically applicable to the conditions and problems of man’s existence, or as McGrath further explains, ‘its potential to transform the human situation’ (McGrath 2012, 21). While one should not push McGrath’s metaphors too far, his language bears some thought. Relevance is to be ‘appreciated’ and ‘grasped’ by an audience, and thus is something that fulfills the desires or needs of an audience.

Though McGrath uses the same verbs for truth in this context, his argumentation tools, illustration, analogy and story, bespeak a very different argumentative frame of reference, the world of pragmatic reasoning—a world in which the use of deductive and inductive logic alone is not effective.

When McGrath returns to the task of showing the truth, he suggests a combination of two pathways. First, he joins other apologists here in emphasizing ‘that there is good argumentative or evidential base for the core beliefs in Christianity’. And secondly, he

⁸⁰ Stackhouse does not typically use the word relevance, but in passages like ‘How well does it prescribe the solution to our problems? And how much help does it give us in reaching the highest good?’ (2002, 92) his questions beg for responses of relevance.

shows that, ‘if the Christian faith is true, it makes more sense of reality than its alternatives’ (McGrath 2012, 72), or ‘that faith in God illuminates reality in a far better way than its secular alternatives’ (McGrath 2012, 79).⁸¹ The first pathway is largely the 20th century approach to proof; the second, the abductive, takes one into the realm of informal arguments and critical questions.

McGrath, in chapter 6, also unpacks a series of informal arguments as examples of how (for lack of a better word) metaphysical evidence might lead to the awareness and knowledge of God. His suggestion is that one might come into a recognition of God through a number of existential ‘clues and pointers’ such as the human longing for justice. He further asserts that each of his ten clues builds on the others, ‘giving them a collective force that transcends their individual importance (McGrath 2012, 95). This is the classic understanding of the cumulative case (Mitchell 1973, 40-41).

However, the cumulative case is in itself an informal argument. Should it be conceived to be like an inductive argument, with its ‘clues and pointers’ (McGrath) as points of evidence that count for the likelihood of the conclusion? This would be a more modernist interpretation of the concept. Or might it be conceived in other ways? Mitchell suggests that ‘the different considerations to which the Christian apologist appeals do reinforce one another...’ (Mitchell 1973, 57). But it is far from clear what ‘reinforce’ means in spite of the literary and historical examples he gives.

Benno van den Toren begins his approach to argumentation from a different perspective. His foundational argument is that mankind, who indwells creation, cannot entirely escape being subject to the elements of that creation. This subjection, which he calls ‘critical realism’ underlies streams of argument that reflect a variety of

⁸¹ Consistent with his second approach to the justification of Christian beliefs, McGrath turns to Charles S. Pierce’s work on the theory of abduction to account for the three ways that explanation serves the practice of apologetics. Pierce’s account serves McGrath’s second claim, ‘that Christianity makes more sense of reality than its alternatives’. It is a justifiable, rational belief system.

epistemological standards: coherence, plausibility, and credibility. In van den Toren's view, the contextual factors affect the value of an argument to the one hearing it. This means, in his terms, 'the need to keep culture and reality, evidence and interest, truth and relevance, and reason, will, and emotions together in view of an apologetics that deal with real life' (van den Toren 2011, 153). His informal arguments that follow are, to a degree, set in the context of real life.

Having said that, different streams of argument have different epistemological value in his cumulative case. The first example, Christian Dogmatics, presents 'the inner coherence and integrity of God's self-revelation in Christ and of the understanding of the human condition of the world [and] implies 'the self-evidential force' of revelation' [Barth] (van den Toren 2011, 143). In the second place, the proper use of scientific theory and practice presents a credible account of an objective reality that is not susceptible to a belief in 'the enormous powers of the human intellect to mould the universe according to intersubjective perspective' (van den Toren 2011, 125).

Moreover, testimony—though any particular testimony faces under cutters and defeaters—is the *prima facie* source of knowledge (van den Toren 2011, 146-147, Clark 1993). The cumulative testimony of the disciples to the cross and the resurrection stands out because of the quality of the witnesses. The improbable nature of the content of their message accentuates the probability of the truth of that message.

Furthermore, the life of the church should itself be a plausibility structure for the truth of the faith because it is, in Torrance's terms, 'the social correlate of God's self-revelation' (van den Toren 2011, 200). At its best, the inner life of the church, like the quality of a witness, should, because of its improbable nature, confer plausibility to the church's message. In this case, life argues for truth.

Lastly, he proposes that evidential apologetics, as traditionally construed, make up the balance of apologetic arguments (van den Toren 2011, 149-153). However, critical realism must attend to evidence with an eye on how evidence is affected by points of view, methods, time and place. Rephrasing van den Toren's conclusion, his point seems to be that apologetic method, whether it be a cumulative case approach, or an approach targeted toward a particular audience, should not be separated from its context.

2.8 The Way Forward: Managing Informal Arguments

Clearly the majority of the arguments cited by the apologists in the preceding discussion are informal. Some, like arguments from analogy or pragmatic significance, are explicitly informal. Van den Toren's argument from the implausibility of the church to the plausibility of the truth of the gospel is an interesting version of the argument from the impossible to the possible.⁸² Most, like arguments from authority ('a position to know'), from experience, from 'evidence to a hypothesis', or explanatory arguments, (from a hypothesis to evidence) are reducible to informal argument patterns.

Whether formal or informal, arguments are 'person-relative' (Clark 1993). This is not a new insight. Nor is it an insight limited to Clark's work (McGrath 2012, 68, Stackhouse 2002, 164, van den Toren 2011, 153), or other works on informal logic. In 1958, Toulmin argued that improprieties, impossibilities, and field dependent knowledge enter into an agent's judgement on an argument and its conclusion (Toulmin 2003, 28-26). This is to say one's knowledge, or what one thinks one knows, is evidence for or against the truth of any new proposition ($K=E$),⁸³ whether it is expressed as a premise, a conclusion, or a detached piece of information (Pollock 2006).⁸⁴

⁸² This line of argumentation says that when all possible causes are ruled out, the impossible is to be accepted as plausible.

⁸³ Williamson's thesis is that the evidence one has for the truth of a new piece of information is one's total knowledge.

⁸⁴ Pollock argues that it is sometimes appropriate to be irrational, to reject or defer judgements on conclusions for which there is substantial evidence (2006).

The ‘person relativity’ of arguments means that different persons will ask different questions about the premises of an argument or a cumulative case. Again, this would be related to the person’s knowledge, portending the fact that knowledge, informal arguments, and questions addressed to those arguments are integrally connected to the process of persuasion and conviction. However, this problem is not solely an issue for informal arguments. Theoretically, the propositions or evidence of any argument are subject to contention or correction. One instructive exception to this general approach is the so-called Kalaam argument cited by McGrath:

Major premise: Whatever begins to exist has a cause.

Minor premise: The universe began to exist.

Conclusion: Therefore the universe has a cause (McGrath 2012, 97).

William Craig did not think the major premise of the Kalaam argument to be very contentious. However to his surprise, critics of theism contested it (Craig 2008, 112ff). The bottom line is that informal arguments, and to a lesser degree, deductive arguments like the Kalaam, are in Clark’s words ‘person relative’ (Clark 1993, 112-114). In pluralistic cultures, as what is considered ‘knowledge’ becomes more fragmented and ‘person relative’, conversations become more ineffective. Apologists are generally well aware of this problem. Two sides of this problem—the problem of plausibility of arguments (Stackhouse) and the general problem of knowledge (McGrath 2012, 68)—point to the importance of questions in person-to-person apologetics. While there is certainly interest on the part of apologists in the understanding of particular persons (Stackhouse 2002, 161-164) or *ad hoc* apologetics (van den Toren 2011, 63),⁸⁵ few specifics are offered for strategies that facilitate that understanding or the *ad hoc* discovery of beginning points for apologetic conversations.

⁸⁵ ‘Thirdly, if there are no universal starting points for apologetic argumentation, the possibilities for apologetic witness and dialogue with a particular audience will always need to be discovered *ad hoc*. Thus, apologetics should inevitably be contextual and person related’ (van den Toren 2011, 63).

It seems that apologetic theorists have unintentionally made this process of discovery secondary to the ‘main event’ of delivering reasons for one’s belief. Though taken as a whole, their books on apologetic theory and practice could arguably be said to encourage the process of questioning. However, there is good reason for considering questioning, as act of understanding or discovery, more than just pragmatic necessity for the use of informal arguments in person-to-person apologetics. A person’s knowledge base, broadly construed, inexorably influences how they relate to the rationality of Christianity and the questions that they ask the apologist.

This research documents the process of discovery in five conversations in a highly pluralistic culture. However, and this is the interesting part, those conversations reveal the fact that questions of discovery become questions of inquiry when the stakes are high. While the research contributes to the conversation about the general relationship of informal argument and questioning, more importantly, it points to the need for further development of the relationship of the two in apologetics.

2.9 A Inadequate View of What Might be Accomplished in a Dialogue

I turn now to the third general contribution that this research might make to person-to-person apologetics. First, I will sketch the most important purposes that our apologists attach to an apologetic dialogue. Then I will suggest how belief revision theorists might stimulate the conversation about apologetics in contexts where forms of pluralism such as relativism, postmodernism, or varieties of polytheism dominate. In such situations, where common knowledge has contracted, the task of person-to-person apologetics becomes more difficult. ‘Knowledge’ here includes the meaning of words, what constitutes knowledge, the sources for what might be considered knowledge, and the standard(s) for a good, or strong argument.

2.10 The Goal(s) of an Apologetic Conversation in a Pluralistic Context

This section makes an important distinction between the ultimate goal of Apologetics, and the goal or goals that one might have in a particular conversation about the reasonableness of the Christian faith. This and the following section presume that the two are integrally related but quantitatively or even qualitatively different. Moreover, a particular conversation in a highly pluralistic situation does not typically, or even intentionally achieve the endpoint which apologists envision for their efforts. However, one must be careful at this junction. Most of the apologists in this brief study rephrase the objective for apologetics in different ways throughout their works. Thus the reader is advised that the following account is a suggestive, not a comprehensive description of the way they view the goals of apologetics.

Stackhouse posits that apologetics is aimed at conversion:

Apologetics, as a form of Christian discourse, must find its purpose within this overarching imperative of contributing toward people's maturation in Christ—what Christian tradition has sometimes called conversion...So in this chapter we consider the nature of conversion as part of the groundwork for a proper understanding of and practice of apologetics (2002, 67).

In Stackhouse's view, the task of apologetics is never finished since the process of maturation in Christ, which he calls 'conversion' continues throughout a person's life. Though his embedding apologetics in the process of 'conversion'⁸⁶ does shed much light on the ultimate goals of apologetic conversations, Stackhouse counsels:

Today, as in the first century, people need to know what happened and what it means for them—and what it can mean for them. Many of our neighbors also—speaking of apologetics now, and not just evangelism—need warrants to believe that this (Christian) interpretation of the past is the one to which they ought to commit themselves (2002, 135).

Clark is more specific in his discussion of the end point for specific conversations:

Almost all dialogues should end with an invitation. A good invitation engages the other, asking her to make a commitment that is neither too big nor small. Properly done, it is not offensive in the least because it expects a positive answer but allows an out (Clark 1993, 232).

⁸⁶ I would offer a disclaimer here. Despite Stackhouse's use of the theology of the Billy Graham crusades as evidence, Scripture presents teaching and examples that made a clear distinction between conversion, which involves turning away from sin (repentance) and to Christ (faith), and sanctification.

Clark is clear that in the case of a conversation with a non-Christian, the invitation is an invitation to faith in Christ (1993, 223). He does not make clear what this invitation might entail for a Christian. Adopting a marketing model for apologetics, he sees an almost seamless continuity between apologetics and evangelism.

McGrath does not quite agree with Clark, yet his language speaks of the ultimate goal of commitment: ‘Apologetics clears the ground for evangelism...Where apologetics aims to secure consent, evangelism aims to secure commitment’ (2012, 23). McGrath further explains that, ‘Apologetics is about enabling people to grasp the significance of the gospel. It is about pointing, explaining, opening doors, and removing barriers’ (2012, 43). One assumes that each of these processes has a corresponding conclusion. The pointing is accomplished, the explanation made, the door opened, and the barrier removed.

While van den Toren’s goal for apologetics is more difficult to discern, it seems bound up in his description of the apologetic challenge to proclaim ‘the Christian faith as public truth in a multicultural world’ (2011, 227). However, his goal for an individual apologetic conversation illustrates a very different approach from the preceding apologists. His goal, that a dialogue partner be able ‘*to distinguish what leads to truth and life from what conceals and destroys*’ (2011, 34), seems to refer to a more or less complex process in which the dialogue partner assumes significant responsibility.

The goals for person-to-person conversations in these accounts include the presentation of warrants for Christianity (Stackhouse), the call to commitment to Christ (Clark), the completion of a task (McGrath), and a cognitive change in the dialogue partner (van den Toren). While this author has no argument with any of these goals, they fall short of practical specificity. Most conversations undertaken in ordinary situations

are relatively brief. It is the conviction of this author that Belief Revision Theory offers discrete goals for those, and more extended apologetic conversations.

2.11 Moving Forward: Belief Revision in Apologetic Conversations

This section describes how Belief Revision Theory describes what happens in a series of dialogues, then shows how Falappa, Kern-Isberner, and Simari's contribution connect the AGM's basic revision template with apologetics.⁸⁷ Section 1.12.1 provides the background for this discussion, which I have chosen to formulate as a narrative.

The original formulation of Belief Revision Theory (AGM-1985) proposed three types of changes in an individual's belief set:

Expansion: A new sentence, symbolized by ϕ , is added to K , the belief system without regards to whether K is consistent.

Contraction: When confronted with ϕ , some sentences are deleted without the addition of any new sentences.

Revision: The new sentence ϕ is added to the belief system K and some old sentences in K that are inconsistent with ϕ are deleted.

Though the AGM model has been criticized for its simplicity, let's assume for the moment that it roughly describes what might happen in a series of apologetic dialogues where the subject is the reliability of the Bible and the focus is on the person talking with the apologist. She might walk away from the first dialogue with a new idea (a sentence symbolized by ϕ). The sentence, though initially having no immediate impact on her worldview, is filed away in her memory as a significant curiosity. For example, 'The Bible speaks of a pym shekel about 3,000 years before it was discovered by archaeologists'. In a second discussion, another similar 'sentence' is added, but this time, upon reflection, she contracts her belief that Solomon's temple did not exist. Having contracted that belief, she does not add any new belief to her belief set. She simply does not draw any extended conclusions from what she has learned (Friedman & Halpern

⁸⁷ An acronym for Alchourrón, Gärdenfors, and Makinson, the originators of AGM, the most influential Belief Revision Theory.

1999). On a further occasion, she learns a third (or many) similar sentence(s). At this point she revises her current belief that the Bible is unreliable. Of course, her worldview may as yet contain no distinctive Christian beliefs, but her attitude toward the Bible is changing (Clark 1993, 206ff), and her sources of knowledge (McGrath 2012, 68) have expanded.

To each step of this process, Falappa, Kern-Isberner, and Simari claim that an explanation (McGrath 2012, 43), a form of abductive argument that addresses the statement ‘why I should accept this sentence’ is strategic. Such an explanation encourages the conversationalist to accept the sentence into her worldview.

Three points emerge through this simple but realistic scenario. First, it shows the processional nature of how beliefs change. Secondly, it shows the importance of small changes in one’s belief set. Thirdly, it connects ordinary examples of apologetic dialogue with Belief Revision Theory. Of course, Belief Revision Theory, while maintaining this core model, developed more sophisticated models and added a number of features, like the phenomenon of irrationality (Pollock 2006), that account for the cognitive peculiarities of humans. While not addressing realities like sin that are specific to the Bible, Belief Revision Theory provides fertile soil for understanding and setting goals in dialogues.

2.12 Dialogue Research in West Cameroon

This section builds a case for why this research has the excellent potential to make a contribution to the contemporary theory and practice of person-to-person apologetics in current pluralistic societies. The word *contemporary*, with its relativistic dimensions, cannot be over emphasized. The informal investigation behind this formal research, begun in the 1980s, predated much of the current concern about how to present arguments for Christianity to people who have largely abandoned modern standards for

argument and knowledge. One might say that apologists, with their concern for the pluralism of post-Christian societies, have come to address the realities presented in this research.

The claim here is not that Cameroon is the only setting favourable to such research. Settings similar to Cameroon, in which conversations could be examined, exist worldwide. Thus, it should be quite possible to find conversations from other cultural contexts that would return productive insights from the methodology exemplified in this work.

Thus, the following discussion is not about the particular place the research is done, but about four conditions existing in Cameroon that facilitate research into person-to-person apologetics in societies where pluralism dominates: First, Cameroon is a significantly educated, multi-ethnic society. Secondly, ethnic beliefs possess a factive status. Thirdly, West Cameroonian society values social relationships. Fourthly, West Cameroon is a setting in which theoretical and practical reasoning are driven together by crucial existential concerns.

These conditions vary in their importance and the ways that they are substantiated. The first claim is widely documented. The second claim is in part derived from personal experience and inferred from works like Spenser & Spenser (1998), McVeigh (1974), and Grebe & Fon (1995). The second condition, the factive status of ethnic beliefs, states that those beliefs have the worldview status of knowledge. The third claim, that Cameroonian society is socially orientated, though supported by works like Maszrui (1993), is largely derived from personal observation. The importance of pragmatic reason essence also derived from personal observation as well as being documented by works like those of Grebe and Fon (1995).

2.13 Western Cameroon: A Significantly Educated, Multi-ethnic Society

Chapter one briefly notes Cameroon's rich diversity of peoples. Gullman documented over one hundred language groups living in the western region of Cameroon, with many of those in the southwestern region. This multi-culturalism is accentuated by large numbers of people who travel between different areas. Cameroon's literacy rate of 75% is one of the highest in Africa,⁸⁸ (CIA Factbook 2015). Thus, a large majority of those 15 years and older are thought to be able to read and write. These figures, no doubt, are enhanced by the past and present influence of France, England and Germany on the country's development, but one should note that Christian influence exercised a very powerful influence on the development of education. Lloyd Kwast notes that, as early as 1868, Alfred Saker, a pioneer English missionary, reported that though the church remained small, interest in education was growing (1971, 72). Moreover, 'In 1966 only 62 out of 744 schools were government schools [in West Cameroon]' (Kwast 1971, 59). Today this educational substrate, which is often quite sophisticated, is a source of pluralism that the apologist must not ignore. In this author's experience, education is the source of ideas and beliefs that are currently influential in the west. This author had the experience of teaching students with earned degrees in mathematics, physics, and chemistry, and who often brought to their further education very different sensibilities from one sitting beside them. However, the complexity of the situation far exceeds that of an educational matrix.

As of 2015, the CIA Factbook estimates Cameroon's religious makeup to be 40% Christian, 40% Indigenous, and 20% Muslim.⁸⁹ In fact, these labels obscure the real religious fabric of West Cameroon and are largely unproductive in describing the actual religious beliefs of a particular person. Osei-Bonsu writes of the Ghanaian context,

⁸⁸ Operation World puts the literacy rate as 67.9% (2010, 189).

⁸⁹ In this case, Operation World figures are substantially different. Christians are said to make up 53.8% of the population, Muslims 26%, and 'Ethno-religionist', 18.99%. (2010, 189).

Unlike traditional religion, 'indigenous religion' accepts the Bible as the Word of God, and accepts Jesus Christ, acknowledging him as Son of God and Saviour of the world... [However, this] indigenous religion, called the 'spiritual church' is highly reminiscent of the traditional religion...One is hard pressed to separate tradition from religion and the worship of idols, ancestors, and human beings from the worship of God (Spenser & Spenser 1998, 147).

Though the category 'spiritual church' is not, in the experience of this author, widely used in West Cameroon, its reality is very much alive there. The following conversations reveal situations much like Osei-Bonsu describes. Hence, the West Cameroonian context presents important opportunities for dialogues that discover the nature of an individual's beliefs.

The question arises whether dialogues of discovery, information-seeking, or other kinds of dialogues are practical in West Cameroon. Two observations suggest that they are useful. First, the factive status of ethnic beliefs enable West Cameroonians to discuss those beliefs with other West Cameroonians without embarrassment or chagrin (6.3). Secondly, Cameroon culture is one which widely exhibits the African practice of dialogue, or better, conversation (6.4).

2.14 The Factive Status of Ethnic Belief

To say that a belief is factive is simply to say that a belief is thought to be the way things are in the world, that the proposition or story is considered knowledge by the one who holds it. In the West Cameroonian context, this seemingly innocuous statement has remarkable implications. I implied in 1.6.2 that the perception that a belief has objective status enables agents to talk unabashedly about the belief and why it is accepted as knowledge. Moreover, it fosters an ideological situation similar to pluralism. Metanarratives about the world vary with ethnic groups. Often those stories differ and their claims about the world are not consistent. Those inconsistencies are handled with an approach that approximates the unspoken concession that what's true (or the case) for my group is not necessarily the same for yours.

2.15 The Social Nature of Cameroon

It is difficult to talk about West Cameroon without reference to interpersonal relationships. Though many general observations might be made, the following assessment is relevant to West Cameroon: ‘Since African society is fundamentally based on dialogue between individuals and discussions between communities and ethnic groups, the *deili* are the natural active agents in these exchanges’ (Mazrui 1993, 188).⁹⁰ Though the *deili*, entertainers in Mali, are not relevant to this discussion, West Cameroon is indeed a world of conversation and dialogue.

This reality is driven by dependence of ordinary Africans on each other for survival and prosperity. In one’s village the family or the clan responds to one’s needs. When one is away from home, tribal members are a safety net in time of difficulties. Another factor is the continued use of oral communication. Even though he might be able to read, the ordinary African depends on the spoken word to find out what is really happening around him. News generates a great amount of person-to-person talking. Buying and selling are social events requiring good dialogical skills because, outside of western-styled stores, all business is by negotiation. In my African experience, the Africans I knew excelled at information and negotiation dialogues. This is reflected in the dialogues of this collection.

Perhaps the most poignant factor in African social life is the importance of people. This was brought home to me when one older African told me why he was smiling. His reasons? ‘He was alive and I was there as a friend.’ Relationships and interaction are core to the meaning of life.

2.16 Reasoning Driven by Explicit Theoretical and Practical Concerns

⁹⁰ In West Cameroon, this type of exchange is encountered in negotiation dialogues. As a patron, on occasion I helped students pay the bride price, but the conversations were always conducted through an intermediary.

African life in the bush, or for that matter in the city, as I observed and participated in it, is difficult, to say the least. Living is both an opportunity and a problem. And much of the time, the problems outweigh the opportunities. While many consider the rationality of West Cameroonians opportunistic, much effort goes into solving problems. Thus, theoretical considerations are tied closely to pragmatism.

Such a connection might be thought similar to relativistic reasoning, where pragmatism has eclipsed truth. That is true in part. However, West Cameroonian pragmatism is tied to ancestors, spirits and the gods of the world. It is also explicit, allowing for an unobstructed view of the power of pragmatism and its role in rationality. This phenomenon is avoided by apologetic theorists in the West to their peril.

2.17 Moving Forward: The Significance of this Research for Western Apologetics

Sections 2.1 through 5.5 sketch the contributions that the theories used in this research might make to person-to-person apologetics in pluralistic contexts. Each contribution addresses a current weakness in apologetic theory. The African context of this project made the unique assessment of those weaknesses possible. Whether that path is productive for apologetics will be determined in the examination of the dialogues.

However, the argument of section 2.6-2.11 presents the claim that the West Cameroonian context resembles the West in ways that are crucial and productive for apologetics in the West. Pluralism abounds. Though they do not yet precisely mirror the diversity of Western cultures, standards for rationality are very diverse. The apologist is challenged with the difficulty of revising uncritically accepted factive states of mind.

The forthrightness and transparency of the following dialogues make up for the differences between West Cameroon and the West. The reasoning of those involved, some in positions of power, some just getting along, and some 'just wondering', cannot help but enrich our perspective on making a case for Christ in a pluralistic world.

Chapter Three: A Practitioner of Ethnic Medicine

3.1 Introduction

In the following dialogue, Dr. Nsom Emmanuel, a West Cameroonian witch doctor, speaks openly about his practices and the rationale for his work. Though he clearly exposes his central commitment as the dialogue draws to a close, the data shows that he consistently uses a variety of arguments throughout the dialogue. These argument patterns are fundamental to the rationality of the conversations. Moreover, most of these argument patterns are offered as justifications for his work and thus are apologetic in nature.

At several points, the doctor connects an argument pattern to long lecture-like digressions. Though these lectures illuminate his worldview,⁹¹ his argument patterns ground his entrenched beliefs. Eventually I show that the doctor's 'belief revision' primarily consists of his coming to grips with crucial reason for his beliefs and his work.

Ngam Ernest, the one who has initiated the dialogue, is a thirty-four year old Cameroonian residing in Kumba, in the Southwest Region⁹² of Cameroon. He and Emmanuel are members of the Kom⁹³ people, whose homeland lies to the North-Northeast of Bamenda in the Northwest Region. Ernest left Kom when he was fifteen, but still considers his ethnic identity to be a core part of who he is. Ernest's grandfather, like Emmanuel's grandfather, was both 'a witch doctor and an herbalist' (Ngam 2007, 38).⁹⁴ After primary school, he educated himself at the secondary school level. Though

⁹¹ The 'Principle of Humanity', (Hollis and Lukes 1982, 264-265) my approach to the passages generally assumes that what is said to be intelligible. Though Dr. Emmanuel is occasionally less than knowledgeable about the subjects of his monologues, his 'factual' errors may illustrate his commitments. Also, I presume that very few commonplace dialogues anywhere are completely coherent in the logical sense. In this context, the initial assumption of intelligibility (unless demonstrated by internal evidence to be wrong) bears unexpected insight.

⁹² In 2007 these geographical areas were called 'Provinces'.

⁹³ An acronym for 'Kingdom of the Mountains' that has become the name of the primary ethnic group of the area.

⁹⁴ Though Ernest's personal history does not enter into the dialogue, the conversation provides Ernest with the opportunity to explore his cultural beliefs.

Dr. Emmanuel addresses Ernest as ‘Reverend’, he is not ordained. And though the doctor refers to Ernest as his junior brother (145), it seems that the conversation is between approximate equals.

The Kom perspective on witch doctors has mystical and moral aspects. The Kom presume that witch doctors have mystical powers that enable them to practice witchcraft that is good or bad, depending on its social effects. In this dialogue, Ernest would question the source of Dr. Emmanuel’s mystical powers.

Interviewer: OK! Is the word or term witch doctor, is that always a bad term or what kind of term is that in the Kom...

Ernest: Witch doctor according to the Kom tradition is not considered to be bad... is not considered to be bad...

Interviewer: What would be considered to be bad in Kom?

Ernest: A person who is considered to be evil in Kom when he is doing or his deeds are against the customary law or the Kom tradition. That’s the one point and two, if his actions are poisonous to the society. That is for instance like when I talk about, eh, witch doctor, we have some who are good at destruction, we have some who are good in healing people mystically...getting from the mystical powers (Ngam 2007,46-48, 56-59).

The secondary question underlying much of the following dialogue is, ‘which kind of witch doctor is Dr. Emmanuel?’ The answer to that question has significant *ad hominem* implications for Emmanuel’s identity and arguments. The primary question, which emerges from line 185 onward, is whether Dr. Emmanuel’s practices are consistent with biblical teachings.

Nshom Emmanuel, 54, who goes by the title ‘Dr. Emmanuel’, is ill at that time of the dialogue (5, 373-374). (151ff). His family noticed that about the age of 12 he had ‘special’ powers to discern which herbs ⁹⁵ could cure certain diseases. On one occasion, he describes how he saw the future, thereby saving his grandmother’s life (162-166). He describes his formal (Western) education in this way: ‘I read philosophy and after philosophy I had to go into theology for two weeks and then mommy [grandmother] came’ (228-230). As a traditional doctor, his perspective has considerable authority in a

⁹⁵ He calls them collectively, ‘grass’, in the dialogue (153).

variety of matters. He would return to his village a year or so after this conversation and die.

Both men chose to use English in this dialogue, which takes place in the town of Kumba in May 2007, where Dr. Emmanuel's practice of cultural medicine is located and where Ernest was a student at Cameroon Baptist Seminary. Greater Kumba is a multi-tribal, multi-village urban area of about four hundred thousand people.⁹⁶ In spite of its substantial population, its inhabitants describe the urban area as a 'large village'. Ernest has scheduled this dialogue as an appointment; hence, it has the feel of a consultation. This is the second of two conversations. Unfortunately, the first was lost because of recording error. The two men have established a good relationship and each has a realistic idea about the other's positions.

After a thorough development of the first one-hundred lines of the dialogue, the format changes to summaries of the consecutive sections of the conversation. In the latter half of the dialogue, I turn to the profile approach⁹⁷ to focus on significant sections (Walton, Reed and Macagno, 2008, 30). The most important criteria for choosing a section for exposition includes the presence of argument patterns, evidence of a participant's commitments, and the presence factors related to belief revision. This method provides an informed understanding of the flow of the dialogue, its arguments and commitments. Each section typically contains the text of part of the conversation, its context and/or summary, a detailed narration of the argument, and an analysis of aspects of the conversation using the six research questions.

3.2 A Summary of lines 1-52

⁹⁶ This figure is second-hand, but comes from the regional delegate of the area through a dependable source.

⁹⁷ 'If arguments are defeasible, how are they ever to be used to *pin down a respondent's commitments*? The profile of dialogue (Krabbe, 1999) is a way of dealing with this problem. A profile of dialogue is a sequence of moves that represents only a small part of a longer sequence of dialogue. For example, it might represent a question, a reply to that question, and then a next move or two.'

When asked about his understanding of ‘African Wind’, Emmanuel tells a story about what his grandfather told him to do when he was a child. The story begins with his grandfather, who Emmanuel believes to be in a position to know about the spiritual world, giving him practical instructions about coping with the dangerous wind. Emmanuel’s story, threaded throughout this section, continues to support the grandfather’s position to know the truth about the spiritual world; and in turn, supports the grandfather’s ‘spiritual’ explanation of the wind, ‘It is African witchcraft.’ Ernest responds that the wind is a ‘natural thing’ (33) —that the destruction is a result of natural causes. Emmanuel seems to concede Ernest’s point (36) that there is cause and effect at work in the destruction (38-45). However, he uses the lack of destruction in his *quartier* as evidence for his initial position. Since Emmanuel does not retract his explanation of the wind’s destructive power, are we to conclude that he has simply *added* Ernest’s natural explanation to his own set of beliefs?

3.3 The Dialogue: Lines 1-52

Ernest: Dr. Emmanuel, good afternoon.

Emmanuel: Good afternoon, Rev. Ernest.

Ernest: I would like you to tell me what you understand about African storm, or which we call the strong wind that usually blows and destroys things. As the one that happened two days ago.

5 **Emmanuel:** Thank you I will, even though I am not feeling quite good, I will try to explain it to you. When I was a kid at home I lived with my old man, my grandfather, when at each time there was this strong wind, he asked me to take a knife and put it outside, shook it outside on the veranda. So one day when I came back from school after a strong rain and I started asking him, Why is it that this wind is always come when they are harvest they are planting maize, they are planting things, when the corn is started growing they will come and push the corn down? And so my grandfather told me, it is an occultic society down south, that the people come like this, they get our food they bring it back to themselves through the wind. So he advised me for all the plantains that were felled in the compound, never to cut one that they were on top of people. Sincerely, it was a thing that I tried to accept because each time by May, by April-May it happens every year.

10

15 And it not only destroys food it destroyed houses, it destroyed things. For example, two days ago more than three hundred houses lost their roofs. And including churches, like the apostolic church. And other schools like the school in Akoinbunji, it lost the whole of its roof. There were roofs taken from other houses and planting them on other houses that had no roofs and I think that African storm is some sort of occultic thing. We normally call it in simple English, witchcraft.

20 **Ernest:** So, you yourself, what do you truly believe as a traditional doctor? Do you accept to what they hold that...?

25 **Emmanuel:** Normal, normal. It is not a question of accepting. I have something here... I have a kind of drug here. If the wind starts like that, if I don’t want it to be coming near here, I just put it in the fire and stand it outside. You see that the wind leaves this my environment and goes...no trees shaking by my site. That same drug made na by my grandfather who showed me. Each time he did that, he showed me everything. So I believe that that is not for nothing. It is witchcraft; and truly it is witchcraft because no wind...even the Sahara desert....that you have a lot of wind that

blows...that is natural because there are no trees in the Sahara desert. But I believe where we're living in Kumba is a city, but it is a village because you have a lot of trees, mango trees, pear trees. You have flowers planted all over the town. The flowers would have been holding the strong wind from damaging but yet it damages.

Ernest: What I'm saying is that wind is a natural thing and in Africa when somebody is to construct a house and he fails to take into consideration the direction of wind because you have. Wind has its own direction that it takes and some of us lack the knowledge of how to put on a better roof. Don't you believe that can be some of the consequence?

Emmanuel: Number one that.

Ernest: ...massive destruction.

Emmanuel: (45) Truly I accept that people lack (uh) people lack the way of construction. Some people know; for those who know they do their best and here in the quarters where I live we are living in a slope sometimes when the wind is coming as how, the wind wouldn't have touched our houses because we are living on a slope. The wind would have been flying over us and that is why we have no major problem in our own area but in other areas near us their roofs, sheet of tin were taken from the roofs of houses and we had no touch around us. So it is really witchcraft.

Ernest: So according to you, you believe it is witchcraft...

Emmanuel: (interrupts) Yes, by my own point of view.

3.4 Narrative

On Walton and Krabbe's account, Ernest initiates the dialogue as an information-seeking dialogue: 'I would like you to tell me what you understand about African storm,⁹⁸ or which we call the strong wind that usually blows and destroys things. As the one that happened two days ago' (3-4).

Though an information-seeking dialogue (Walton & Krabbe 1995, 66) can take the form of an interview or an expert consultation, the latter seems to be Ernest's intention. It is notable that the information Ernest seeks is Dr. Emmanuel's understanding of the African storm, not just information (3).⁹⁹ Ernest has asked for an interview with Dr. Emmanuel, an expert in 'mystical' things who is accustomed to people coming to him for expert opinions on matters related to health and the spirit world. In this case, Dr. Emmanuel enthusiastically shares his knowledge with Ernest. It

⁹⁸ The term is used without the definite article and is viewed as more than a meteorological event. Without prejudicing the way that Ernest thinks about the recent event, his phrasing might be compared to someone making the request, 'Tell me what you know about truth.'

⁹⁹ Is information the same as understanding? On the account of some theorists, they are not the same. Berg speculates, "It is as if our one and only goal in life were to amass mounds of information, as economically as possible." Duncan Pritchard suggests that knowledge itself may not be the most valuable epistemic state. He claims that knowing may imply something further, understanding (Pritchard 2007). The point is contentious, but it does imply that belief revision could be viewed as the growth of understanding.

is possible that he viewed Ernest as ignorant, for he says, ‘I will try to explain it to you’. He begins his reasons for his explanation of the African storm by recounting an event from his youth. ‘When I was a kid at home I lived with my old man, my grandfather, when at each time there was this strong wind, he asked me to take a knife and put it outside, shook it outside on the veranda’ (6-7).

At face value this explanation doesn’t seem to be relevant¹⁰⁰ to Ernest’s question until one realizes that he is explaining why he accepts the account that his grandfather gave him of the African wind. The explanation, a story in this context, functions as an argument. However, as backing for his interpretation of the wind, his grandfather has taught him the *shaking of the knife*, a ritual that appears to *protect against the damaging force of the wind*. Though he trusts his grandfather, he asks him:

...so one day when I came back from school after a strong rain and I started asking him Why is it that this wind is always come when they are harvest they are planting maize, they are planting things, when the corn is started growing they will come and push the corn down (7-10).

A bold move on the part of the young Emmanuel. Though some Cameroonian sub-cultures do not accept children asking questions (Agbor 2010),¹⁰¹ the boy’s inquisitiveness does not offend his grandfather, who replies, ‘it is an occultic¹⁰² society down south that the people come like this, they get our food they bring it back to themselves through the wind’ (11-13). The answer seemed to be enough for the boy. However, did the boy accept the explanation as knowledge?

Dr. Emmanuel admits that his grandfather’s explanation was difficult to ‘accept’:

Sincerely, it was a thing that I tried to accept because each time by May, by April-May it happens every year and it not only destroys food it destroyed houses,

¹⁰⁰ The phenomenon of relevance will play a very important role in argument schemes. One might see it as defined by the critical questions that one might ask of a particular form of argument. Which questions must be successfully answered for the goal of the dialogue to be achieved?

¹⁰¹ Interview with Agbor Cyprian, 30 May 2010 he noted that as a child he was forbidden to ask his father a direct question. He learned to ask his questions as “What if.....” scenarios.

¹⁰² ‘Occultic’ is not, as far as I know, a standard term. However, the speakers use it—and thus I have adopted the convention.

it destroyed things; for example, two days ago more than three hundred houses lost their roofs. And including churches, like the apostolic church... (13-16).

Dr. Emmanuel's reply reflects the experience of a sceptical child who eventually saw the repetitive yearly wind as evidence for his grandfather's explanation of the event. With his conclusion, 'I think that African storm is some sort of occultic thing. We normally call it in simple English, witchcraft,' Emmanuel subtly focus the purpose of the dialogue. While Ernest initiated an 'understanding-gathering' dialogue about *African storm*, the doctor's explanation anticipated *questions* about why one might trust the grandfather's explanation. It also provided reasons for Ernest to believe the account for himself. The primary argument is from knowledge (Walton, Reed, Macagno 2008, 87), more specifically an argument from a Position to Know, most likely, from expert opinion.¹⁰³ The argument pattern has this content:

Major Premise: Source a is in a position to know about things in subject domain S containing proposition A.

Minor premise: a asserts that proposition A is true (or false).

Therefore: A is true (or false).

It is important to emphasize that Dr. Emmanuel realized that he must provide a backing¹⁰⁴ for his grandfather's interpretation of the wind. He informs Ernest that his grandfather knew how to protect the family compound against the damaging effects of the wind by the ritual of the knife, i.e., taking the knife outside and shaking it on the veranda.¹⁰⁵ The account of the ritual protection, itself an argument, provides the backing for the initial argument from Position to Know.

¹⁰³ Walton suggests that 'Being in a position to know means having a privileged access to facts or having a wide database of previous similar events, while the privileged kind of information the expert has access to represents the possible interpretations of these facts or events' (Walton, Reed and Macagno, 2008, 89). It is debatable whether Emmanuel's grandfather would have posited different interpretations of *African storm*. Thus, I will take the grandfather being in a *Position to Know*. However, the current dialogue concerns two competing explanations of the same event.

¹⁰⁴ 'Justify' as I will use it here does not refer to absolute justification.

¹⁰⁵ 'Reliability and unreliability, stability and instability, safety and danger, robustness and fragility are modal states. They concern what could easily have happened' (Williamson 2000, 123).

While Ernest accepts Dr. Emmanuel's report of the popular account of the phenomenon¹⁰⁶, he is interested in what Emmanuel believes. He asks, 'So, you yourself, what do you truly believe as a traditional doctor? Do you accept to what they hold that...?' (20-21).

Dr. Emmanuel (22) responds that African storm is not just a matter of common belief ('normal, normal'), but his understanding of African storm is the reality of the matter:

Normal, normal. It is not a question of accepting. I have something here... I have a kind of drug here. If the wind starts like that, if I don't want it to be coming near here I just put it in the fire and stand it outside. You see that the wind leaves this my environment and goes...no trees shaking by my site. That same drug made na by my grandfather who showed me. Each time he did that, he showed me everything. So I believe that that is not for nothing (22-26).

Though he does not refer to the categories of opinion and truth here (Section 1.6.1), he has something like them in mind. It is not a matter of simply accepting his perception (75ff). He claims that what he says is not opinion but the truth about how things are, and that he has the evidence to prove what he says: 'I have something here. I have a kind of drug here' (22) that prevents his living quarters from being disturbed by the wind.

His earlier argument in support of this grandfather is abductive, as a boy he reasons from effect to cause. The destructive winds came every year at the time of planting and harvesting (9). Dr. Emmanuel's considers planted seed, crops still developing, or harvested crops to be food stolen by sorcerers through the mystical wind.

The doctor continues. The 'drug' he now puts in the fire is the drug that his grandfather taught him to use, and from his perspective his reasoning is weighty.¹⁰⁷ 'So

¹⁰⁶ The idea of common knowledge breaks down into mutual knowledge and common knowledge proper. (Vanderschraaft and Sillari 2009). Mutual knowledge exists when everyone in a community knows something but each person does not know that the others know. True common knowledge has a common source such that everyone knows and everyone knows that the others know. While some common knowledge requires a singular source, in this case the precision of what is seen as knowledge allows, it seems, for multiple sources.

¹⁰⁷ If his account of how he uses 'a kind of drug' to still the winds around his compound were reliable, it would be a weighty argument. The same basic strategy is used in the testing of modern drugs,

I believe that that is not for nothing.’ He is referring to his practice, which in his view conforms to reality and is useful for protection. Thus, he comes back to his grandfather’s explanation about the winds and his conclusion: ‘It is witchcraft; and truly it is witchcraft’ (26-27).

However, Emmanuel is not quite satisfied with his example of destroyed crops. He goes further to give another reason why the recurrent winds are supernatural. He makes a statement that allows Ernest to posit an explanation for the wind’s damage that undercuts Emmanuel’s second argument. Emmanuel posits:

Because no wind...even the Sahara desert...that you have a lot of wind that blows...that *is natural because there are no trees in the Sahara desert*. But I believe where we’re living in Kumba is a city, but it is a village because you have a lot of trees, mango trees, pear trees. You have flowers planted all over the town. The flowers would have been holding the strong wind from damaging but yet it damages (26-31).

Dr. Emmanuel understands that it is natural for a ‘lot of wind’¹⁰⁸ [strong wind] to blow in places where there are no trees (27) and that such strong winds cause damage. However, there are ‘a lot of trees’ in Kumba, and as a consequence, the wind should not have caused the damage that occurred. ‘The flowers (generally referring to flowering trees) should keep the strong wind from damaging [things]’. He implies that this would be natural. *However, in spite of the trees the wind still causes damage*. According to Emmanuel, only one explanation sufficiently addresses this latter case: The damaging wind is a result of witchcraft.

However, taking Emmanuel’s use of ‘natural’, Ernest presents his position:

What I’m saying is that wind is a natural thing and in Africa when somebody is to construct a house and he fails to take into consideration the direction of wind... Don’t you believe that can be some of the consequence [cause]... [of] massive destruction? (33-35, 37).

but there are of course significant critical questions attached to the methodology that establishes correlation of cause and effect and hypothesis.

¹⁰⁸ It seems reasonable to take ‘a lot of wind’ to mean strong wind.

Ernest's response is that the wind is a natural phenomenon and the reason for the [massive] damages to houses is that people do not know how to build houses in a way that would prevent damage by the wind. He presents an alternate explanation of part of the damage that they have been talking about. Ernest's point is conceded by Dr. Emmanuel in his phrase, 'Number one that' (36), and he admits that concession in lines 39-46, which he concludes with 'Truly I accept that people lack (uh) people lack the way of construction'. However, he is not willing to concede his position about the wind. Even though he admits that his house is built on a slope,¹⁰⁹ the fact that nearby houses had damage due to the strong wind demonstrates to him that the wind is caused by 'really witchcraft' (50).

3.5 An Analysis of lines 1-52

This section reflects on the purpose of the dialogue and then the presence of argument patterns and whether or not they qualify as argumentation schemes. I then note dialogue's argumentative structure and commitments, reserving a fuller evaluation of commitment in the dialogue until section 3.7. Finally, I will examine more closely whether belief revision occurs in this section.

Begun as an 'understanding' [information] seeking dialogue, the conversation by lines 33-38 shifts to a persuasion dialogue with the primary viewpoints argued by Dr. Emmanuel and a secondary viewpoint asserted by Ernest. Thus, it has fulfilled one of the side benefits of a persuasion dialogue, of revealing positions (Walton & Krabbe 1995, 66). Recognizing his need to show why his explanation of the African wind is correct, he anticipates that Ernest, a Christian pastor, would reject his explanation. In addition, Emmanuel may still have questions about his own explanation.¹¹⁰ In either

¹⁰⁹ Building on the side of a hill that is opposite from the wind's prevailing direction protects the house from the winds full force.

¹¹⁰ Pollock speculates, '...human beings tend to have difficulties remembering the reasoning supporting a belief. When they first arrive at a belief, they may know what their reasoning was. Later,

scenario, he is compelled to persuade Ernest about the truth of his own position. Assuming Ernest is genuine in his request for Emmanuel's understanding of the phenomenon, the two participants now have different purposes in the dialogue: Ernest, understanding; and Emmanuel, the goal of persuading Ernest to accept his explanation of the wind.

Emmanuel's argument follows three lines: the argument from a position to know (the grandfather), which is supported by an abductive argumentation from effect to the best explanation of the effect, and an argument from correlation to cause. The abductive argumentation focuses on the *best* available explanation for the damage.¹¹¹ When Dr. Emmanuel speaks of trying to accept his grandfather's explanation, he talks about the wind returning year after year with much the same consequences. Based on its regularity and its consequences, the grandfather's theory seemed the best explanation of the event. The other, closely related argument, is that from a correlation to cause. This type of argument pattern emerges twice in this section, once with the shaking of the knife and later, putting the drug in the fire. Both actions *seemed* to have the same effect, preventing the damage by the wind. Emmanuel's grandfather taught both practices to him.

These are argument patterns in this segment, but they are not argumentation schemes in the technical sense used here. Argumentation schemes are formal by definition. A scheme incorporates questions that relate to an argument pattern that evaluate the argument's value. Though formal questions are largely absent in the present context, questions do play important implicit and explicit roles here. Dr. Emmanuel

they may recall the belief and use that for constructing arguments for other beliefs. However, at that time, they may be unable to recall their reasons for the belief, or they may be able to do so only with great difficulty. Insofar as the reasons are stored at all, they are stored separately from the beliefs.' (1987, 487). It is reasonable to suppose the traditionalist had given some thought to his reasoning before this conversation.

¹¹¹ It is debatable whether African storm is the best explanation for the grandfather, or whether it was simply the only explanation that tradition had posited for the wind's massive destruction.

implicitly asks ‘why?’ and ‘what?’ questions throughout the section. Why should his grandfather’s testimony be accepted? What is the current evidence for African storm? Ernest asks three explicit questions: ‘What do you understand...?’(3); ‘What do you truly believe...?’ (20); and ‘Don’t you believe that can be some of the consequence?’ (34-35). [Asking this latter question, he suggests that the wind itself is the source of the wind’s effect.] This latter question carries the presumption that the winds are natural (32), which raises significant questions as the dialogue continues. If the winds are natural, why do they cause so much destruction?

Ernest’s explanation builds on Dr. Emmanuel’s concession. He posits that wind is natural, thus the damage does not result from occultic activity. His partial strategy¹¹² follows the line of ‘natural’ cause and effect. The damage from the wind is due to people not knowing how to build their houses. Dr. Emmanuel is ambivalent about the natural explanation. He assents to the proposition’s truth [a concession], but is still committed to witchcraft as the primary cause of the damage.

Theorists conceive argument structure as a normative sequence of stages in the development of a specific type of dialogue (1.13). On Walton’s account (2008), the opening stage, argumentation stage, and the concluding stage,¹¹³ Dr. Emmanuel’s assertion of his position in line 52 ‘Yes...by my own point of view’ is the end of the opening stage of the argument and marks the transition to the argumentation stage. However, if the narration of the dialogue is correct, he begins the argument for his

¹¹² A partial strategy is one of several possible attempts (elementary or atomic actions) that could be carried out in sequential fashion with the aim of fulfilling a commitment or accomplishing a goal. (Walton & Krabbe 1995, 17).

¹¹³ Walton argues for three stages: an opening stage, an argumentative stage, and a closing stage (2008, 9-10). However, ten years earlier in 1998 he followed van Eemeren and Grootendorst in positing four stages: an opening stage, a confrontation stage, an argumentation stage and a closing stage (Walton 1998, 257). They, however, structured the stages in a different order, ‘the confrontation stage, the opening stage, the argumentation stage and the concluding stage. They further note, ‘the four stages need not always be explicitly passed through, let alone in one time in full and in the most appropriate order, but differences of opinion can only be resolved in a reasonable way if each stage of the resolution process is properly dealt with whether explicitly or implicitly’ (2004, 59-60).

explanation of the wind by line five. This blurs the categories of ‘opening stage’ and ‘argumentation stage’. If that is true, one might consider the beginning of the dialogue to be an introduction to the doctor’s primary argument.¹¹⁴ At the end of the section both positions about the African wind are on the table, and Dr. Emmanuel engages Ernest with the full force of his authority. The dialogue has reached the argument stage.

Save for his stand that the African wind is natural, Ernest’s commitments are not fully developed at this point. Though challenged, Dr. Emmanuel is committed to his grandfather’s knowledge and the practices. He demonstrates these commitments through use of the argumentation patterns to support his viewpoint.¹¹⁵ When confronted with a possible contradiction (the natural wind) to his explanation, he is unclear about how the natural and occult wind might exist together. On the surface of the dialogue, he has simply added the ‘natural’ to the ‘supernatural’, expanding his belief set, and thus raising the problem of inconsistency.

However, one must be very careful about looking for or superimposing the standard of consistency on these dialogues.¹¹⁶ Ernest presents his ‘natural’ thesis without much supporting background evidence as if he expected his explanation to convince Dr. Emmanuel. It is quite possible that his proposal was only a competing explanation.¹¹⁷ Instead of accepting Ernest’s perspective on the wind, Emmanuel focuses on the fundamental differences he has with Ernest. Thus, the doctor presents what he thinks to be more compelling evidence for the occultic nature of the storm in the next section. Is

¹¹⁴ The primary argument is moral. Bad persons are at work in the physical and spiritual worlds.

¹¹⁵ These are called partial i-strategies, which might be most easily explained through the adage, ‘If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.’ Whether the traditionalist believes that he would be under some sanction if he does not convince Ernest is unclear.

¹¹⁶ This issue of the ‘excluded middle’ has been treated from an anthropological perspective (Hiebert 1982, Williamson 2007, 31-34, 44, 290), and in a very interesting way, from a psychological-spiritual treatment (Peck 1983, 189-200). Our interest here, however, cannot extend to a substantial discussion of the subject from either of these angles.

¹¹⁷ This brings Horton’s traditionalist-modernist tension into stark relief (Horton 1967; 59 and Lukes 1982).

he simply motivated to defend his knowledge, or is some other commitment at work?

3.6 The dialogue: (54-72, 84-91)

55 **Emmanuel:** From my own point of view (listen)... By my own point of view, it is witchcraft because what I see as a traditional doctor the layman do not see. If you were me sometimes you see, when it's passing like this, these people with axes, people with cutlasses, people with hammers, people with so many things. It is not my place to tell the people what I see because I was given that by god. I did not go into any occultic society before these eyes were given to me. And so therefore people who think that the wind is passing empty like in my home town some year ago...a reverend father when the wind was passing like that...a reverend father just came out with a hammer, with a camera...snapped all the wind...even 60 some of those senior Christians came out from the photos with hammers, cutlasses, swords and the rest. It is just that I cannot do that here. I would have looked for a camera. I cannot do that. If I do that, maybe somebody who is coming here for treatment, you do not know that he's that kind of man. He will come the other time and you will see him in that kind of camera. Maybe he will die because you will not want 65 to treat that kind of man with mass destruction of other peoples' property.

Ernest: The question I want to ask you is you said one that the camera, the camera actually pictures come out of images.

Emmanuel: Yes...

Ernest: The wind is something that is not visible. How do you therefore believe that a camera can snap?

85 There's something there that I rub in your face, when you go to bed...if there's anybody that's a wizard around here...there's a drug...if there's anybody that's a wizard around here you will see he or she when they're coming out.

Ernest: Na such a thing like that, where do you think the powers is actually coming from? Do you think the powers is coming from God or from Satan?

90 **Emmanuel:** Normally, uh, the powers are coming from...God made man and gave man his own will to play over it. It can only be Satanic when you go the other....you invoke a spirit from India, maybe from other places...

(101) **Emmanuel:** It is not witchcraft. It is not a thing from Satan...because it is hand made with one voice and one mouth and one thought...one thinking that makes the drug to be strong. They say people's wishes are powers to overcome all the witchcraft to overcome all the evil. So it is not power from Satan. If you go to where we prepare this drug if you are man that has ever attempted that somebody losses his life or somebody losses his eye or anything or any part of the body by you, the drug will detect that you are not a good man...the drug will detect that you are not a good man and so we will send you away.

3.7 The Nature of the Dialogue and its Argument

Emmanuel first anticipates Ernest's question in lines 88-89 and presents an important

defence of his abilities:

If you were me sometimes you see, when it is passing like this, these people with axes...
It is not my place to tell the people when I see because I was given that by God. I didn't
go into any occultic society before there [these?] eyes were given to me (55-58).

This is an argument from origin¹¹⁸ that will play a prominent role in the rest of the dialogue. However, he does not linger on the implications of his claim. Rather he moves

¹¹⁸ What I've labelled here as 'an argument from origin' is not found in the argument schemes of Walton, Reed and Macagno. Nor is it mentioned in Walton's *Informal Logic, The New Dialectic or Fundamentals of Critical Argumentation*. According to these authors the argument from source, which could be easily confused with an argument from origin, is viewed as a knowledge-related argument.

on to further evidence for the explanation of the wind—the photos from ‘the camera’. The conversation does not provide much in the way of understanding the relationship of the reverend father (74-77) to pictures that the camera supposedly produced. Nor does the Emmanuel’s account seem complete. An account of the context of references such as ‘the father came out with a hammer, with a camera...’ is missing (61). However, Emmanuel quickly offers a disclaimer by claiming that one would not want to see the picture of an evil man in such a photograph because ‘Maybe he will die because you will not want to treat that kind of man with mass destruction of other people’s property’ (64-65). Ernest then calls the ‘spiritual camera’s’ efficacy into question by asking about its powers’ source, whether they are from God or Satan (88-89).

Emmanuel immediately retracts the idea that material pictures come from the camera and defaults to a ‘spiritual use’ of the camera, a technique that is privileged information between him and the ‘reverend father who was a Dutch’¹¹⁹ (75). However, Emmanuel does not follow-up this line of reasoning. He shifts to a broader argument that justifies his work and his interpretation of the African wind. The first part of the argument could be approximated in this way: ‘Man was created a powerful being’ (76-78), but man ‘became stubborn’ to God. So God ‘had to put man part by part’. Does this mean that God judged and divided man into two parts (groups?). His chain of thought is not entirely clear, but his conclusion is unmistakable: ‘There are people who talk...who

Sources on this account are witness, experts, and persons in a position to know. Is what I’m calling here ‘an argument from origin’ simply the conclusion of a categorical syllogism?

Premise 1: All abilities that are given by God are good.

Premise 2: This ability is an ability that is given by God.

Therefore: This ability is good.

Perhaps it is. If this interpretation is accurate, it is the minor premise of the syllogism that implicitly assumes the major premise and the conclusion. As such it would be a peculiar form of an enthymeme, a rhetorical syllogism that is missing a major premise and a conclusion. However, it might be interpreted as a positive variety of the genetic fallacy (Copi and Cohen 1990, 167), with the emphasis on the source of something being the determination of its character.

¹¹⁹ Emmanuel’s understanding reflects, almost certainly, the national origin of the priest.

only talk bad, only think evil' (80- 81). These are the people whom Emmanuel opposes with his drugs (85-87), the means that enables his patients to see such beings.

Ernest quickly challenges the idea that a drug could do something like that. 'Na such a think [thing]' could be loosely translated, 'There's no such thing.' He continues with a question, '...do you think the powers is [are] coming from God or from Satan' (88-89).

Emmanuel's answer is two-part. He briefly returns to a theme from origin, 'Normally, uh, the powers are coming from ...God gave man his own will to play over' (88-89), and then enlarges what he means by 'play over' on one level by explaining exactly what he does. He makes drugs that give people power to discern evil and he stops evil from coming into a village (90-99). The details of the explanation¹²⁰ are not as important here as its argument pattern. From one perspective, this might be an argument from ends and means:

Premise 1: x is the means to the end y.
Premise 2: y is good (in this case)
Therefore: x is good.

To put it another way, 'The drugs that he employs are good things because they are a means to good ends. There is, however, more on the doctor's mind in this monologue. He summarizes it in this way: His fundamental assumption is that 'God made man and gave man his own will to play over it'. At a minimum, it seems, playing over it refers to the making of drugs [medicine]. Nevertheless, the actions in the explanation are not mechanical; they are passionate acts of the man's will. Man's opposition to evil is a passionate community commitment:

It is not witchcraft. It is not a thing from Satan...because it is hand made with one voice and one mouth and one thought...one thinking that makes the drug to be strong. They

¹²⁰ The phenomenon is common in Cameroon. In his journeys, this author has seen evidence of such activities. However, it is rare that a traditional doctor speaks about it in the first person. The traditional doctor's description of the method, purpose and conditions of his work is remarkably candid and informative.

say people's wishes are powers to overcome all the witchcraft, to overcome all the evil.
So it is not power from Satan (103-104).

3.8 An Analysis of Lines 51-107

In analysing this section, my purpose is again to examine it in light of our six variables: dialogue type, argumentation schemes, questions, dialogue structure, commitments and belief revision. After noting that dialogues often have complex goals, I argue that the dialogue type continues to be persuasion dialogue until lines 86-87 when the dialogue becomes more like an inquiry into the source of his powers. The inquiry carries *ad hominem* implications for the Emmanuel. From that point onwards, his arguments, while still aimed at persuading Ernest, take on a defensive cast. He attempts to justify the legitimacy of his life's work. Dr. Emmanuel's argument patterns remain remarkably constant with the exception of what I will call an argument from necessity. The doctor continues to control the dialogue's content, but the questions that Ernest asks prompt changes in the dialogue's structure. Dr. Emmanuel's cumulative arguments reveal his commitment to his presuppositions about the wind, but even more so, his commitment to his view of himself and his work. Walton & Krabbe note that every dialogue type begins with an initial situation and an agreed-upon main goal.¹²¹ A successful dialogue is one that fulfils its goal.¹²² In this framework, a good argument is one that contributes to that fulfilment. I will 'call this the conventional view of dialogue'. Walton puts it this way:

Dialogue is a sequence of exchanges of messages or speech acts between two (or more) participants. Typically, however, dialogue is an exchange of questions and replies between two parties. Every dialogue has a goal and requires cooperation between participants to fulfil that goal' (Walton 2008, 3).

¹²¹ 'At the most specific level, in order to fully characterize a type of dialogue, one should lay down its primary goal and its rules. The rules guarantee, or at least facilitate, the reaching of a goal in each particular case' (Walton & Krabbe 1995, 66).

¹²² This approach is pragmatic, as opposed to semantic or syntactic, because it is not simply or exclusively the truth or falsehood of the sentence that is the object of concern. What is important is whether or how the participants in dialogue have become committed to the sentence or proposition in question in relation to its assertion or query in the context of dialogue (Walton 1989, 3).

There is an apparent tension here. A dialogue should have one goal, the fulfilment of which requires the cooperation of the participants. However, then Walton suggests that there are two goals, one on the part of each of the participants. This tension between one singular dialogue goal and the individual goals of the participants¹²³ is surfacing in the present dialogue.

The doctor argues from perception to persuade Ernest that his understanding of the wind is correct. His vision of the people in the wind is a vision, he claims ‘because what I see as a traditional doctor the layman do [es] not see’ (54-55). Like his grandfather, he now claims to be in a position to *know about the African storm through perception, albeit perception in a non-materialistic sense*. The argument pattern is classic:

Premise 1: Person P has an ϕ image (an image of a perceptible property).

Premise 2: To have an ϕ image (an image of a perceptible property) is a *prima Facie* reason to believe that the circumstances exemplify ϕ .

Therefore: It is reasonable to believe that ϕ is the case (Walton, Reed and Macagno, 2008, 345).

The critical questions associated with the argument pattern in an *argument scheme* is an undercutter which calls into doubt the reliability of the perception ϕ (Pollock 1995, 52-57). ‘These questions do not rebut the image itself; it simply call into the question whether the perception is reliable (Larrabee, 1964 111-117). Though Ernest does not undercut the doctor’s personal perception, he does call into question Emmanuel’s claim that an ordinary camera can catch images of something invisible like the wind, and by implication invisible spirits. (‘How do you therefore believe that a camera can snap...?’(69-70). Since photography is of great interest to many West Cameroonians, the contradiction would have been immediately obvious to Emmanuel, who quickly abandons the camera evidence for his explanation of the wind phenomenon.

¹²³ These individual goals might be the participant’s aims or each person’s possible side benefit. Walton & Krabbe indicated a few of the latter: ‘Develop and Reveal Positions, Build-Up Confidence, Influence Onlookers and Add to Prestige’ (1995, 66).

Furthermore, Ernest asks deeply unsettling¹²⁴ questions in lines 87-88: ‘...where do you think the powers is [are] actually coming from? Do you think the powers is [are] coming from God or from Satan?’ Even if Ernest does not intend his questions to be rhetorical, Emmanuel fully appreciates its implications.

In response, the doctor embarks on an argument pattern that does not seem to fit into any modern argumentation scheme. The scheme seems at first to be an ‘argument from design’: ‘Man was made the most intelligent animal in the world... given wisdoms and powers to overcome all... everything...over the creations of God,...’(83-85) ‘Normally, uh, the powers are coming from....God made man and gave man his own will to play over it’ (91-92).

The latter phrase ‘gave men his own will to play over it’ indicates that the practitioner of cultural medicine is not thinking about a passive design. Looking ahead, he will assert, ‘The will I have in me is from God...the eyes...normally God has made man...if you look at...if you want to know that God is powerful...God’s will is so strong that nobody can challenge’ (141-142). From his viewpoint, the active nature of this assortment of powers that God has given to him will not be denied. His reasoning may be akin to an argument from necessity,¹²⁵ but in this context, it appears to be an argument from power.

From lines 95 to 112, the doctor provides the evidence of this will in the activities of his work. The account is emotionally charged, for he ends his defence not with

¹²⁴ Because of his extended, impassioned response, I judge that these questions are unsettling to the doctor.

¹²⁵ ‘The modern claim is that universality and not objective necessity is that which is central to the concept of cause and also that which is implicit in any use of causal terminology. The philosophical problem of causation has thus largely come to be interpreted in this regularity tradition as the problem of the proper analysis of causal laws. Regularity exponents analyse laws as true, contingent, universal generalizations that are omni-spatially and omni-temporally unrestricted in scope. Purported necessary connections between the antecedent and consequent events described in the law are regarded as gratuitous’ (Levine 2009). In this case, I would interpret ‘necessity’ as the relationship between divine and human activity, not that of physical antecedent and consequent. Levine’s bibliography includes these relevant texts: Ducasse (1924), Harre & Edward (1975), Madden (1969).

himself, but seemingly with the collective will of the community: ‘because it is hand made with one voice and one mouth and one thought...one thinking that makes the drug to be strong. They say people’s wishes are powers to overcome all the witchcraft to overcome all the evil’ (104-105).

Given the mundane nature of the argumentation thus far, Emmanuel’s train of thought might seem to be out of place at this point. However, one must not forget that the debate over ‘African storm’ was from the beginning a discussion about the reality and extent of personal causation. According to the Dr. Emmanuel’s anthropology, some persons are chosen and gifted to have a role in the metaphysical world that parallels their role in the physical world. However, power over the metaphysical world is also a community effort.

His arguments have both supported and extended his grandfather’s thesis. The spiritual battle is not only against the wind. It is against the general presence of evil in the world. Ernest’s commitment thus far is only that the wind is ‘natural’, but he has signalled what is clearly on his mind: ‘Ernest: Na such a thing like that, where do you think the powers is actually coming from? Do you think the powers is [are] coming from God or from Satan? (89-90). The question also remains very much on the Emmanuel’s mind, and in the next section, he will present his defence in a forthright way.

3.9 Ernest’s Primary Argument (117-138)

- 125 **Ernest:** But actually. When actually as you believe...we know that wind is natural.
Emmanuel: Yes
- 130 **Ernest:** And with our own eyes as you’ve said...You have eyes with which you look and see those mystical things. My greatest concern here is where is the source, the source of the eyes and the source of the medicine as you have mentioned.... that you are somebody again who have also studied the Scripture. Do you hold, what do you hold that the eyes....because we have two kinds, a force is not coming from the Scriptures or not coming from the Word of God, it is coming from Satan.
- 135 **Emmanuel:** Yeah.... (It) is coming from Satan. Listen...
Ernest: How you do hold...what do you hold about it?
Emmanuel: Thank you very much. Let me clarify you there. I uphold Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour, my Lord and Saviour. Because I had lived in the monastery, studying, went into theology a bit, and before my grandmother withdrew me from there, I wanted to think that everything that is possible in the world is from God, that those impossible things are not from God but are from Satan.

3.10 A Narration of the Passage

Dr. Emmanuel ends his initial defence with the assertion that the nature or work of God is lasting. Thus, the wind does not originate from God ('It is not original by God')¹²⁶ because the construction did not last--the wind blew the roof off and the building was ruined. God has not said that you construct a thing like this and tomorrow it goes off (121-123).

In response, Ernest returns to Emmanuel's concession that the wind is natural (123), which Emmanuel does not deny (124). The student then goes on to ask a complex question, based on a contentious premise.

And with our own eyes as you've said...you have eyes with which you look and see those mystical things. My greatest concern here is where is the source, the source of the eyes and the source of the medicine as you have mentioned.... that you are somebody again who have also studied the Scripture. Do you hold? What do you...hold?...that the eyes...because we have two kinds a force is [that are] not coming from the Scriptures or not coming from the Word of God. It is coming from Satan (125-131).

Ernest first appeals to Emmanuel's knowledge of Scripture, which is the foundation for his question. Based on that knowledge, he claims that the two forces to which Dr. Emmanuel has appealed do not come from the Word of God [the Bible]. Moreover, if they do not come from [i.e., they are not found in] Scripture, they come from Satan. The latter conditional will prove to be contentious throughout the remainder of the dialogue.

I do not take Emmanuel's response, 'Yeah... (It) is coming from Satan', as a concession. Rather, it signifies a reflective pause in his thinking. When Ernest presses further about what he holds (133), the witch doctor answers with something like a cumulative case argument.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ I take 'original by God' to mean 'originates from God'.

¹²⁷ A cumulative case is composed of a group of separate arguments, when taken together, make a conclusion more plausible. This approach to proof has been compared to the kind of arguments that are

He upholds Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour (132-135). What he has inside of him has been put there by God (154-155, 160-161), because God has not made everyone the same (137-145). Moreover, he is simply a technician; he has not gotten his powers from any special group or spiritual realm. . Using his elements of his own life story Dr. Emmanuel proceeds to present a theological defence of his ability to use herbs (158), treat illnesses (158-160), and anticipate the future (163-165). He had them when he ‘got up’ (was born) and he exhibited them as a child and young person. The doctor closes the monologue with a moving, if perhaps sarcastic, challenge to Ernest: ‘So please take my eyes...give me a godly thing. I will always talk about the Bible and I will always talk about Jesus Christ as personal...my Lord and personal... (168-169).

3.11 Analysis

The dialogue has shifted from a persuasion dialogue in which the country¹²⁸ doctor has carried the proof in proving a hypothesis about the wind to the practitioner defending his identity as a ‘godly’ person. Since Emmanuel asserted that the wind is an occult phenomenon the burden of proof fell upon him to provide evidence for that viewpoint. However, Ernest’s question, ‘Do you hold, what do you hold that the eyes...because we have two kinds... a force is not coming from the Scriptures or not coming from the Word of God? It is coming from Satan’, implies rather forthrightly that Dr. Emmanuel is an agent of evil. Even though Ernest does not use the question as a part of an argument for the truth of what he has already said, this is arguably an *ad hominem* attack on the practitioner.

presented in a courtroom (Mitchell 1973, 59, 111). Much of the argumentation throughout these dialogues are an attempt at cumulative argument.

¹²⁸ ‘Country doctor’ is another way to describe someone who practices customary medicine.

In response, the Emmanuel pursues an ethotic argument from character that begins with an argument from commitment, ‘I uphold Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour my Lord and Saviour’ (134-135; 169-170), an argument with this structure:

Major premise: If arguer *a* has committed herself to proposition A at some point in the dialogue, then it may be inferred that she is also committed to proposition B, should the question of whether B is true become an issue later in the dialogue.

Minor premise: Arguer *a* has committed herself to proposition A at some point in the dialogue.

Conclusion: At some later point in the dialogue, where the issue of B arises, arguer *a* may be said to be committed to proposition B (Walton, Reed and Macagno 2008, 134).

It appears that Ernest will quickly hold the traditional doctor to propositions that he believes to follow from the man’s assertion (171-182). Ernest fervently believes that if Dr. Emmanuel is committed to Jesus Christ, he is committed to Scripture. However, this presumption becomes the source of contention. If the commitment to A, ‘Jesus Christ is my Lord and Saviour’, has unexpected consequences that the doctor did not intend, from Emmanuel’s perspective the commitment evidently supports the following statement: All situations that are permanent (‘normal’) are from God; those forces that destroy permanency (‘you construct a thing like this and tomorrow it goes off’) are from Satan. ‘I wanted to think that everything that is possible in the world is from God [and] that those impossible things are not from God but are from Satan’ (136-138).

Ernest’s inquiry about the source of the powers that the doctor claims is strategic. Loaded with possible implications, it hints that perhaps Dr. Emmanuel is an agent of Satan, or he has derived his abilities from an ‘occultic society or a special realm’ (155-156). Thus Dr. Emmanuel tells his personal story in lines 156-168. The question functions as an *ad hominem* argument. Ernest continues the argument from the commitment to Scripture as the dialogue develops.

3.12 The argument from Scripture (176-193)

Ernest: And we Christians, we rely on the word of God....

Emmanuel: Yes.

Ernest: Because it is...that is our own...

Emmanuel: Uh—huh...

Ernest: Uh....foretelling

- Emmanuel:** That is...that is your own powers...
- Ernest:** Powers...ok and we strongly believe that anything, which is of God, should be found in the Scriptures and that which is not of God....
- 185 **Emmanuel:** Please...
- Ernest:** You scarcely find it in the Scriptures...
- Emmanuel:** ...Please...let me...let me...
- Ernest:** What I want to ask is that, do you believe any... that in the whole scripture as you have yourself have studied... have you notice any passage or any portion that mentioned that a man was born and given that particular opportunity to....to be able to see things in the Spiritual realm.
- 190 **Emmanuel:** I think that I might not brainwash your words as your questions that you are asking me... sincerely I will say.... I will say... tell you the Scripture can only motivate man...

3.13 Narration and Analysis (174-193)

Using ‘we’, Ernest seems to believe that he and the doctor now have reached common ground (common knowledge) that presents the opportunity for a mutually acceptable standard in their dispute. Ernest then clarifies his presumption about their common commitment to Scripture through several assertions. First, Ernest claims that Christians rely on the word of God. Dr. Emmanuel seems to concede the point, but his concession may only be tentative until he understands what Ernest has in mind. First Ernest claims that Christians rely on the word of God’.

Faced with Emmanuel’s sensibilities, Ernest then defines the nature of Scripture as foretelling, which the witch doctor understandably interprets as power. However, Ernest hesitates at the idea of Scripture being a power and then clearly states his idea of how a Christian depends on Scripture: ‘anything which is of God should be found in the Scriptures and that which is not of God’ is scarcely found in Scripture (180-183).

Ernest aims the argument at the practices of the witch doctor because, as he further claims, the ability to see things in the ‘spiritual realm’ is not in Scripture (185-187). The implication, to which Dr. Emmanuel will strenuously object through the rest of the dialogue, is that he should not practice such things!

“Please...’ (184) appears to signify the doctor’s growing rejection of Ernest’s line of thought. He considers Ernest’s line of questioning to be ‘brainwashing’ and then immediately proceeds to present his ideas on what the Bible is and how one should read

and interpret it, a set of theories on which he will extensively elaborate as the dialogue continues to develop.

The interchange is a pivotal point in the dialogue. With the Emmanuel's confession in view, Ernest makes an assertion about the Bible, which if accepted, might lead to a revision of the witch doctor's worldview and practice. However, when Dr. Emmanuel does not concede Ernest's premise, the structure and focus of the dialogue changes considerably.

Emmanuel makes it clear that in this battle against evil, he depends on the power given to him at birth¹²⁹. Ernest counters in line 176 that '...we Christians, we rely on the word of God...' and sets forth the claim that the Christian Scriptures are essentially a closed database, an exhaustive compendium of good phenomena: Any phenomenon 'which is of God' is found in Scripture, and that which is not of God is 'scarcely found there'. Ernest does not deny the idea of seeing 'mystical' things (126-127), a position that he further concedes in lines 365-370. Rather, his attack is against Emmanuel's claim to have been born with such ability. 'Have you notice[d] any passage or any portion [of Scripture] that mentioned that a man was born and given that particular opportunity to...to be able to see things in the Spiritual realm' (188-189).

The student has launched a presumptive attack on the doctor's ethos using what amounts to an Argument from Ignorance. If Scripture does not contain a practice, it is not from God, and therefore, both the practice and by implication, its practitioner are evil. In response, Emmanuel makes several interesting attempts to redefine the nature of the Bible to counter the argument from the Bible as a closed database. It will be argued

¹²⁹ Compare Kibor's account drawn from A. Ade Adegbola, (1983), 'Witches are believed to be predominantly women helped by "devils" or "evil spirits." They acquire their witchcraft through various ways: 1) *Inheritance from mother or father* [emphasis added]; 2) Believed that witchcraft substance can be picked up, bought, or swallowed; 3) Purchased from old women who sell it at cheap prices so that the poor people can easily buy it; 4) Can be intentionally acquired from demons.'⁵

here that these attempts are essentially rhetorical creations based on cultural knowledge or values that are aimed at re-educating Ernest about the Bible. These are arguments from motivation and literary genre.

3.14 Argument from Motivation

(190)Emmanuel: I think that I might not brainwash your words as your questions that you are asking me.... sincerely I will say.... I will say... tell you the Scripture can only motivate man...when you believe-o and only motivate man to be...to go on to another step. Man has five steps in him. The first step is the baby...baby step. The second step is the teen-age step..... **(204)** You are not doing things that you used to do when you were teen-age; you're not doing things you use to do when you were a student in the college or in the high school. Immediately after high school ...the knowledge is there... you have the wisdom. Ah, to think that...the Scripture has clearly stated that everything that make up man...and has put the wisdom in man those who read the Scripture and really understand what the Scripture is talking. It is not a question of taking a part of...one part of the Scripture and start taking on it. Because people will read and give you quotations in the Bible and say this, this...say you should not do this. Go back to the Bible pastor, where you are in it. Can you give me? (I'm not questioning you, but [I want to])

(213)Ernest: ... [Yes...yes...right]

Emmanuel: I'm just giving an example....Can you give me an example where God has given command how...where....man like a human being has the right to command the Lord our God to do evil?...to do good things? To do bad things? Like I command you to stop man-made God. I command you to do this, this and that....Is there any chapter in the Bible like that?

Ernest: No....man has....man has got no power to command God because God is the supreme You cannot command the person [unclear]; you can never command the person who has created you because he is the one who influences you...

3.15 Summary/Narrative

Responding to Ernest's attack, Emmanuel refuses to accept the student's perspective on the Bible, claiming that it would be something like 'brainwashing'. Then he proposes his own theory about the Bible: 'I will say... tell you the Scripture can only motivate man...' (191). Emmanuel's account of the goal or objective of that motivation is not clear at first. He sketches a rough outline of human developmental psychology composed of such stages as a 'baby step'...a 'teen age step', and so forth. However, the stages are *ad hoc* and circular,¹³⁰ and his account prompts little initial appreciation of his strategy. Only at the end of the proposed series of stages does his objective come into more clearly

¹³⁰ The doctor combines various overlapping phenomena like age groups and types of knowledge, and then revisits a stage he has already mentioned. His subject, motivation of man is both his title and his description of each phase.

into view. The goal of growing up, and it seems, the goal of reading the Bible are one in the same... to get wisdom: 'Immediately after high schoolthe knowledge is there.... you have the wisdom. Ah to think that...the Scripture has clearly stated that everything that make up man...and has put the wisdom in man [,] those who read the Scripture and really understand what the Scripture is talking' (208-210). Thus, Scripture according to Emmanuel is not a database of do's and don'ts. It is a source of wisdom

Changing his approach, the doctor challenges Ernest's hermeneutical theory by pointing out that there are actions that one should not do that are not mentioned in Scripture, such as commanding God to do something, and by analogy he seems to import into that category the commands that are given by one person to another.

3.16 Analysis

The data of this section, unlike the first part of the dialogue, supports at least two observations about the structure of this section. Since chapter 1 posits that the elements of a dialogue's structure can include dialectical or rhetorical devices,¹³¹ Dr. Emmanuel's discourse on the stages of human maturation is perhaps the first explicit rhetorical passage in the dialogue (191-212).¹³² Coupled with this discourse is the rhetorical questions of lines 214-217 that the doctor uses to challenge Ernest's view of Scripture.

Secondly, the logical relationship, if there is any, between the discourse and the rhetorical question seems vague. They have neither a strictly inductive nor a syllogistic relationship. Nor for that matter, are they clear examples of defeasible reasoning.¹³³

¹³¹ In his analysis of Protagoras, Krabbe demonstrates the intertwining of dialectic. To reach that conclusion, he first assumes that the two are interrelated: 'All through the dialogue we have seen moves from dialectic to rhetoric and vice versa. The connection between the two seems even more intimate than we would gather from reading Aristotle. For one thing, dialectic practice has more of the character of a persuasion dialogue, and is therefore closer to rhetorical practice than we might have thought. Let us now see how exactly persuasive dialectic and rhetoric are intertwined, both at the practical and at the theoretical level' (Krabbe 2000).

¹³² The second is the account of the Bible as a novel (234-267).

¹³³ See 1.13 'The best known rhetorical arguments are ones from example(s), or rhetorical induction, and the enthymeme, the so-called rhetorical syllogism.'

Thus, it seems that there are three possible approaches to the parts of the dialogue in lines 187-217. First, they are species of reasoning¹³⁴ containing a weak inference. Secondly, they are presumptive argumentation patterns common to the dialogue's cultural context that are without parallel in current argumentation theory. The third possibility is that the Dr. Emmanuel moves the dialogue from a dialectical to rhetorical ground, that this section and the section from lines 229-265, are rhetorical attempts to challenge¹³⁵ Ernest's theory about the Bible. All three interpretations are challenging. In the first case, the narrative is culturally conditioned reflection that has the potential for becoming part of an argument. In the second case, there is not enough data to claim that there is the appearance of a new argumentation scheme here. The third hypothesis, since the passage exhibits a limited number of *standard* rhetorical characteristics, is more likely. I will argue that this passage and others to follow are rhetorical-like discourses intended re-educate Ernest by changing his understanding of the Bible.

Rhetorical structure has two central stages, that of narration and argumentation. Though stories have already played an important role in the dialectic of chapter one, this account of a person's maturation has several important characteristics that set it apart from the earlier stories about the grandfather's ideas and actions.

First, he introduces his story with his topic: He posits that Scriptures can only 'motivate a man'. If one interprets the passage as rhetoric, this would be the exordium. Then he follows with the story, the narration that consists of a series of examples. If one conceives the passage as rhetorical induction, there several considerations that count

¹³⁴ According to Walton, 'reasoning can be defined generally as a sequence of steps from some points (premises) to other points (conclusions).' He adds that these 'points normally represent propositions' (1990, p. 404). Thus, reasoning is portrayed as an abstract event without any predetermined aim, but suited to be put to a number of purposes' (Krabbe and van Laar 2007, 27-58). These latter authors make a strong case for reasoning often used outside of a structured argumentation scheme or form. Thus, the biblical quote 'Come let us reason together' does not necessarily mean the process of argumentation. Sherlock Holmes often *reasons* with Watson, but comes to no evident conclusion.

¹³⁵ Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Book II, Chap. 25, 1402b, 1403a. I focus on the epideictic rhetoric featured in chapter 1.

against this interpretation. The doctor only suggests the early stages of man's life; knowledge begins with the third step (193-194); and the fifth step is the 'spirit of understanding'. With the sixth step 'knowledge is there...you have wisdom' (206-207). Beyond that sixth step, one has a choice of two ways to understand his narration. First, the reading of the Scripture is the last part of the story: 'Ah to think that...the Scripture has clearly stated that...everything that makes up a man...and has put the wisdom in man [...] those who read the Scriptures and really understand what the Scripture is talking' (207-210). On this first account, man's maturation prepares him with the wisdom that enables him to read and know 'what the Scripture is talking'. On the second account, the narrative translates into an analogy: the goal of reading the Scripture is like [similar to] the goal of growing up, the getting of wisdom. The language used here does not give clear grounds for a firm choice of one of the two.

However, in either case Emmanuel then explicitly contrasts this wisdom, which he has yet to fully describe, with the attitude of those who 'take part of the Scripture and start talking on it', i.e., they proof-text¹³⁶ from the Scripture. (210-211): 'It is not a question of taking a part of...one part of the Scripture and start talking on it. Because people will read and give you quotations in the Bible and say this, this...say you should not do this.' By implication, he is saying that getting rules out of the Bible in this way is not or does not come from wisdom and is not consistent with the purpose that the Bible has for the development of man, i.e., Scriptures can only 'motivate a man'.

Then he changes his strategy. He says, 'go back to the Bible pastor, where are you in it. Can you give me? (I'm not questioning you, but [I want to])' and Ernest defers to his challenge, 'yes...yes...right.' This is the first explicit challenge that the Dr.

¹³⁶ 'Proof-texting' is the arbitrary use of a passage from the Bible without consideration of the context of the passage to support a particular viewpoint.

Emmanuel has made to the student, who has placed himself in a vulnerable position by claiming that one should not practice or accept a phenomenon that is not in the Bible.

Initially it seems that Dr. Emmanuel *also* gives examples of the principle that the student set forth in lines 180-183, that the things *that the Bible does not mention the things one should not do*. The actions he has in mind are negatives. One should not order God to do this or that thing. However, this actually turns out to be an appeal to common knowledge, that there are some things that we simply ‘know’ that are not in the Bible, like the example of the impossibility of commanding God.¹³⁷

Then Emmanuel changes the nature of the argument considerably when he adds the analogy: ‘Like I command you to stop man-made God. I command you to do this, this and that...’ Then he continues, ‘Is there any chapter in the Bible like that?’ (216-217). His comparison of the commanding of God to the commanding of man and then returns to question, ‘Is there any chapter in the Bible like that?’ Conceivably, he is using the question/analogy as a rhetorical mechanism *to imply* to Ernest that commanding man should also be a part of this common knowledge. Dr. Emmanuel’s consternation, in the same context, with those who use proof-texts from Scripture to command others (208-210) makes this interpretation plausible.

Allowing that the analogy is a rhetorical device, the traditional doctor’s approach seems to have a considerable impact on Ernest. Emmanuel is making the point that the Bible is not a database containing all possible dos and don’ts. This has been his point throughout the conversation, ‘If there are certain acts one should not do which are not mentioned in the Bible, why should one think that the Bible contains all the actions that one should do?’ Its absence in the Bible does not mean that one should not do it. The younger man addresses the theological part of the analogy, but does not respond to what

¹³⁷ However, see lines 305-310. The traditionalist does not offer this challenge without self-reflection. He later questions the possibility of doing such a thing.

the country doctor wants to say, that just as Scripture is silent on the imperative that man should not command God, it is also silent on the imperative that man should not command man.¹³⁸

On this account, the passages exhibit rhetorical characteristics.¹³⁹ The appeal to the story of someone growing up and the appeal to the speaker's ethos, its epideictic¹⁴⁰ emphasis, and the oratorical nature of his comments all lend support to the response being rhetorical in nature. The doctor's vigorous, if somewhat erratic, discussion of the stages of human development is rhetorical in nature. It seems that he intends his recitation of his knowledge about human experience to raise his level of authority (his ethos).¹⁴¹ The passage seems to support his traditional values about African life¹⁴², into which he reasonably fits the Christian Scriptures. While one cannot conclude this point from the text alone, the extended nature of Emmanuel's remarks, without any hint of an interest in feedback from Ernest, reflects an oratorical style.¹⁴³

Moreover, the query about 'commanding God' is almost certainly a rhetorical question. Both the conversationalists know the answer to it. Moreover, Emmanuel knows that Ernest knows the answer. Of course, one cannot command God to do

¹³⁸ For the record, there are many texts where the biblical prophet is clearly told to instruct people what to do and not to do. Moreover, it is important to realize that cultural practices are in view here. In view of their cultural setting, Emmanuel's question is remarkably significant.

¹³⁹ I default to Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in making this assessment because of both its simplicity and its foundational nature. Aristotle notes: 'With regard to the persuasion achieved by proof or apparent proof: just as in dialectic there is induction on the one hand and syllogism or apparent syllogism on the other, so it is in rhetoric. The example is an induction, the enthymeme is a syllogism, and the apparent enthymeme is an apparent syllogism. I call the enthymeme a rhetorical syllogism, and the example a rhetorical induction (*Aristotle Rhetoric*, Bk 1, Chapter 9, 1356b).

¹⁴⁰ 'The Epideictic speaker is concerned with virtue and vice, praising the one and censuring the other (*Aristotle, Rhetoric*, Bk. 1, Chap 9, 1366b). In this case, he is praising wisdom.

¹⁴¹ This could be seen to be the case in his summation of biblical history.

¹⁴² This is its epideictic emphasis.

¹⁴³ What creates the 'feel' of oratory? It is a subjective assessment, of course, but two qualities lend credence to the judgment: The remarks are delivered as an uninterrupted lecture, and contents of the small speech do not seem to be given in a way that is open to questions. Compare this with the dialectical quality of lines 409-460.

anything.¹⁴⁴ Then, as noted in the summary, he adds in the analogy ‘*like I command you to stop man-made god*’. Another interpretation of the passage focuses on analogy. Dr. Emmanuel may have in mind a three term analogy, A is not in **B** like C is not in **B**. Commanding God (A) is not in the Bible (**B**) like commanding man (C) (is not in the Bible--B). In any case, since the men know that commanding God is a forbidden act, the possible implicature¹⁴⁵ here is that commanding man is not to be done either (213). It would seem that this is a reference to his earlier comment in lines 210-211: ‘Because people will read and give you quotations in the Bible and say this, this...say you should not do this.’

Though the dialogue type retains an underlying persuasive nature,¹⁴⁶ its rhetorical flavour moves it away from a dialectical persuasion dialogue where participants have the opportunity to take turns in the conversation and offer arguments for (or against) a position that is presented.¹⁴⁷ Ernest can (it seems) only affirm the obvious answer to Emmanuel’s question as to whether a man can command God by answering ‘No’.

¹⁴⁴ However, later, in lines 305-310 Emmanuel wavers on the issue. ‘ Ah... I don’t know if man was able to command the Lord our God, I will tell Him—I will tell God destroy all the people who are, who don’t want others to live well. I would have told God like this but there is no way of commanding our God. You can even, if you want to command God, it means you can command the ten thousand angels that prowl round the walls of heaven, and he will command the saints that are around the table of dinner in heaven which is impossible—it is very—very impossible.’

¹⁴⁵ ‘An implicature is something meant, implied, or suggested distinct from what is said. Implicature can be part of sentence meaning or dependent on conversational context, and can be conventional or unconventional’ (Davis 2008). If we have implicature here, evidence for it is dependent on the context (208-210; see also lines 377-379).

¹⁴⁶ While dialectic takes the long epistemological path of persuading by the discovery of truth, rhetoric’s first aim is not discovery, but persuasion. (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Bk 1, Pt. 1)

¹⁴⁷ Another way of assessing Dr. Emmanuel’s reasoning is that of abductive reasoning. He first presents a counter hypothesis (his conclusion) to Ernest’s claim for the nature of the Bible. He posits that the Bible ‘can only motivate’ someone [presumably to attain knowledge (wisdom)], which is also the goal of human development (a secondary conclusion). He supports this secondary conclusion at length by recounting the ‘steps’ of human development.¹⁴⁷ He again argues abductively:

F is a finding or given set of facts. [The steps of human development]

E [the gaining of knowledge or wisdom] is a satisfactory explanation of F. [The steps of human development]

No alternative explanation of F given so far is as satisfactory as E [the gaining of knowledge or wisdom].

Therefore, E [The goal of attaining knowledge] is plausible, as a hypothesis, for the purpose of human life and by implication, the purpose of reading the Bible. (Walton, Reed and Macagno, 2008, 171).

The point he is making is that reading the Bible for wisdom is not the same as reading parts of the Bible to get commands. One infers that he referring to commands given to him to stop doing the

In summary, the argument remains a persuasion dialogue, but if the current analysis is correct, the structure of the dialogue has taken a rhetorical turn. The doctor does not intend the account of human growth toward knowledge and wisdom to provoke questions from Ernest. Rather, the account extols values—education, knowledge and wisdom. Reading the Bible is that which prepares one for wisdom. Alternatively, it a step along the way to wisdom or it is the final stage of wisdom.

3.17 The Literary Argument (227-238, 253-269)

Emmanuel: Let me cut you off. One thing in life. The Scripture like this. To those of us who went through the Scripture and came out prematurely. Some cannot even talk as I use to talk...as I'm talking like this. Some will not know what to say. Because at a point time I had read ...I read philosophy and after philosophy I had to go into theology for two weeks and then mommy came. But I want to think like this the Scripture the Bible is a good book for anybody who wants to study anything to read first. Read the Bible like a book like a novel.

Ernest:uh....the Bible.

Emmanuel: You read.... Let me come. Read the Bible like a novel. Eh? Irrespective of this time, this time. When you read the Bible like a novel you will now that from Genesis to Exodus is the history of the creation of God. From...that is the beginning.... that is the history of creation, that is the Old Testament. Then you will know that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John is the beginning of Christ in the world. That is first and second part of the Bible. You will know what Jesus Christ came to do here on earth for us. And you will know what is really the creation, what God really knows, really did, thought of man to make all the creations, to make man at the hem of his creation.

....
Not to take you too far because if we want to talk about the Bible, I am seated me quiet and the Bible is really part of me, I am...let me conclude here. It is unfortunate—I will say that it is unfortunate that they withdrew me out of the Church—out of the Bible studies in which I was undergoing and I am, I find myself who I am today, Ernest I am a normal human being like you and what I do here is truth—the truth, and nothing but the truth. I will not tell a lie to anybody who comes here. First of all, people say “sorcery is this—sorcery is this.” I can remember if it is not in the Book of Job that Nebuchadnezzar was punished upon because he sent away all the sorcerers and fortune tellers in his country. Gods brought in these people because there was evil and he wanted the fortune tellers and the sorcerers to tell the people exactly how to move on their steps...

Ernest: E--hum!

Emmanuel: So sorcery is not a thing started here, the Bible has started it; Jewish people who are the first Christians started the sorcery. Fortune telling is not a thing that begins now in our generation, it begins in the world. So each thing anybody is doing was time before now...

3.18 Context, Summary and Narrative

activities of his practice. Then, to further his argument against the use of texts as sources of imperatives he resorts to a straw man analogy. He seems to accept Ernest's premise about the Bible, even to the point of giving examples of that premise: There are no chapters that give one the right to command God. However, he then slips in the analogy 'like I command you to stop man-made God' in as a parallel to 'I command God to...'

This passage, as the line numbering indicates, comes close on the heels of section 3.15. The part included here shows the further, clearer development in the dialogue's structure, the practitioner's thought, and another fundamental challenge to Ernest's database view of the Bible. However, the following discussion includes only salient quotes from Dr. Emmanuel's oration, which covers 64 lines (227-291).

Section 3.2 marks a transition in the dialogue. In the first part of the dialogue, the doctor presents reasons why he thinks the strong winds are a result of occultic practices. In doing so, he shoulders the burden of proof for his position.¹⁴⁸ After Ernest's appeal to Scripture in lines 182-183, Emmanuel has set out a strategy to rebut Ernest's database view of Scripture. The battleground has moved from the theology of the country doctor to the hermeneutics of the student. Emmanuel, on this account, has become clearly rhetorical in his approach to the conversation.

In lines 231-265, he sets forth another hermeneutical approach to the Bible: 'But I want to think like this...the Scripture...the Bible is a good book for anybody who wants to study anything to read first. Read the Bible like a *novel*.' He then launches into a summary of the biblical story, one that seems informed by his Catholic background. The doctor tells something of what he knows about Bible history, but after admitting his limited knowledge (255-256), he returns to the story of Nebuchadnezzar as a justification for what he does. He pronounces the moral of the story:

I can remember if it is not in the Book of Job that Nebuchadnezzar was punished upon because he sent away all the sorcerers and fortune tellers in his country. Gods brought in these people because there was evil and he wanted the fortune tellers and the sorcerers to tell the people exactly how to move on their steps... (261-264).

¹⁴⁸ On Pinto's account this is would be unusual if the explanation of sorcery were an unchallenged presupposition. If Ernest contested the theory, Ernest would carry the burden of substantiate his challenge and demonstrate that the explanation of sorcery was presumptive. Rather, the traditionalist assumes the burden. It is possible that the explanation had been challenged in a former conversation. It should be noted (below) that the doctor, when challenging the student pastor's view of his work, shoulders the burden of persuading Ernest of his error. This section is part of that proof.

3.19 Analysis

Dr. Emmanuel's contribution is clearly rhetorical, but with a style uniquely his own. His exordium introduces his limited preparation to tell the story of the Bible,¹⁴⁹ but that is consistent with Aristotle's approach to the introduction of an oration:

You may use any means you choose to make your hearer receptive; among others, giving him a good impression of your character, which always helps to secure his attention. He will be ready to attend to anything that touches himself and to anything that is important, surprising, or agreeable; and you should accordingly convey to him the impression that what you have to say is of this nature (*Aristotle Rhetoric*, Bk. 3, Chap 14, 1415b).

The doctor's introduction is a masterpiece of garnering sympathy while at the same time, asserting his right to interpret the Bible. 'Some cannot even talk as I use to talk...as I'm talking like this. Some will not know what to say' (228-229). More importantly, it states his theme: 'But I want to think like this: The Scripture, the Bible is a good book for anybody who wants to study anything to read first. Read the Bible like a book [...] like a novel' (231-232).

Emmanuel means, of course, to read the Bible as thematic history: 'When you read the Bible like a novel you will know that from Genesis to Exodus is the history of the creation of God' (235-236). His theological tour of the Bible is useful in understanding what he sees as important in the Bible, but a discussion of his hermeneutics of the Bible is not our purpose here. He tells the story in a colourfully interpretive manner, and shows that he has reflected on the texts that he has read. He uses the Bible story about Nebuchadnezzar as rhetorical example to supports the general conclusion that he has been following throughout the dialogue.

The discourse takes an unusual turn in lines 255-256. He returns to the themes with which he began his narration of Scripture, his humility and impotunity. He poignantly rues the day when 'mommy' took him out of the Church and he testifies, 'I

¹⁴⁹ This raises the issue of the ways *ethos* functions in this cultural context, a discussion that is beyond the scope of this investigation.

find myself who I am today.’ However, he now adds the theme of solidarity: ‘Ernest, I am a normal human being like you and what I do here is truth—the truth, and nothing but the truth.’

Not to take you too far because if we want to talk about the Bible, I am seated me quiet and the Bible is really part of me, I am...let me conclude here. It is unfortunate—I will say that it is unfortunate that they withdrew me out of the Church—out of the Bible studies in which I was undergoing and I am, I find myself who I am today, Ernest I am a normal human being like you and what I do here is truth—the truth, and nothing but the truth (255-259).

After faltering a bit in telling the biblical story (229-260), Emmanuel reaches his conclusion in lines 269-271:

So sorcery is not a thing to start here, the Bible has started it, Jewish people who are the first Christians started the sorcery. Fortune telling is not a thing that begins now in our generation, it begins in the world. So each thing anybody is doing was time before now.

The doctor’s speech has displayed that which he thinks he knows. It contradicts the student’s view of the Bible and concludes that the hearer should uphold sorcery as a biblical value. This is a strongly epideictic speech that ends with his request to Ernest to record his words: ‘Pastor Ernest, so please I hope that you are not taking *this my talk*, this my word like this and not making good use of it’ (271-272). His request confirms that he has seen his discourse on the Bible as a talk worthy of record.¹⁵⁰

3.20 Ernest’s Commitments and Concession (350-370)

- 350 **Ernest:** I will keep on praying and trusting God, doing my own effort
Emmanuel: Yeah!
Ernest: Because I am winning and working for God and it is God who knows why...
Emmanuel: Yes because today you come like this, sometimes you use to come like that, I have no chance to talk to you. Is it a lie?
- 355 **Ernest:** No it is the truth.
Emmanuel: Yeh, but today I am alone. I don’t go to people’s houses to call anybody to come here. He sits, maybe I had treated him and he got better, the token I wanted from him, has not come. He did not willing to give me. He sits behind and sends somebody say “go see this man for this place, he go help you” the man will come because I will still do the same, and he goes like that but today people are saying that I am fooling people taking matchets, takings cutlass, taking fowl, taking this. I hear that but I have simply said I have not forced anybody to come to me. Yes! So thank you very much. I feel that there are more questions, begin to ask me.
- 360 **Ernest:** Eh... the central idea is for us you know as eh a believer, the Bible is always our final answer and the Bible have given nearly all solutions or all answers that can possibly be found or

¹⁵⁰ Indeed, from this researcher’s perspective the traditionalist has some significant insights—mixed into his difficulties with hermeneutics, biblical chronology, and content.

365 asked on earth and our own problem, our difficulties mostly we use to have or we use to ask is
the... get the difference between what we are doing either is it actually from God or we are
working are we working in the line of God or we are working in the light of the world. When I
talk about the light of the world, I mean like eh...actually, we believe that God can work in diverse
manners like we mentioned about eh, Rev. Fathers having eyes, and others having eyes. I think
370 eh, a situation like this, it will be necessary for us to go to Biblical studies to study the Scriptures
and to hear what the Bible actually tells us and even like the last time discussion we had and we
also suspend it because we have actually not have time to go deep into the Scripture and also find
out what...

3.21 Context and Narrative

Since his talk on the Bible, Emmanuel has covered a lot of dialectical ground. In the first place, he sees his work as different from those who

...inherit from the spirit of the queen of the coast—from India, they invoke. I don't invoke. What I do is natural. If I get up in the morning and tell you 'Ernest, today is going to be like this,' know that [it] is going to be like that (283-285).

However, Emmanuel has been sick, and when asked why he is sick, he responds:

It is my own trial, trying moments that God has given me to see how faithful and how strong I am before him. But I am proving to you that I am strong before my God. I am faithful to my people—to the people that I came. I am faithful to my God. That is why I am alive, or I would have died long before now. And so the trial moment has not ended. God knows—God knows when it is going to end. So thank you very much. I want you to go ahead (287-291).

To stimulate the conversation, Ernest reminds him, 'And what you believe so much about it, and...and the source of powers' (298). In response (299-349), the doctor ranges over a wide array of subjects, most of them relating to his own personal story. He recurses the problem of the evil of 'Rev. Pastors' and then revisits the issue of commanding God: 'Ah...I don't know if man was able to command the Lord our God, I will tell him—I will tell God [to] destroy all the people who are , who don't want others to live well. I would have told God like this but there is no way of commanding our God...it is very—very impossible' (305...310).

As a reflection on the doctor's cultural setting, the passage recounts in more detail how his grandmother took him out of the Church in order that he should enter the business that he now practices. Emmanuel is ambivalent about these turns in his life. On the one hand, he says 'I don't regret—I don't regret being a traditional doctor' (311). On

the other hand, he wistfully speculates, ‘Maybe today, I would have been a pilgrimage centre because those of us in the Catholic Church that does this they send you to where you will continue to meet [meet] people. People will continue to come there for prayers and anointing...’ (325-329).

One should not think that Emmanuel has abandoned the commitment he made in part one to persuade Ernest of the validity of his gift. Nor has he abandoned earlier argumentation patterns, in particular the argument from consequences:

The Rev. Fathers ...are not simple people. They are people like me—they can see. So the Church do [es] not...the Catholic Church do [es] not refuse those kind of people because they are the eyes to the Bible, the eyes to the Church, they are the eyes to the Christian community. They can foresee things that can come maybe to help the community (332-336).

However, as Dr. Emmanuel notes, his practice of traditional (cultural) medicine has not endeared him to the community. The community sees him as a charlatan. ‘I love my people; it is just that people don’t love me’ (334). The result is that no one comes to see him, which actually prompts him to ask Ernest, ‘If they send you to a congregation and you go and sit in the church—sit in the church for one day or two days without Christians, will you be happy to be there?’ (346-349).

Ernest’s personal commitments include, ‘I will keep on praying and trusting God, doing my own effort’ (350). Emmanuel’s disconsolation about the community’s accusations toward him stimulates him to ask for more questions from Ernest. Rather than ask questions, he recounts the issue that has played an important role in the dialogue and then makes a very important concession to the doctor’s arguments: ‘Actually, we believe that God can work in diverse [manners] like we mentioned about eh, Rev Fathers having eyes’ (368-370). Emmanuel, however, ignores Ernest’s concession.

3.22 Analysis

After the doctor's talk on reading the Bible as a novel, there is a hiatus in the dialogue's focus. On recognizing this, the doctor tells Ernest to 'go ahead', and on Ernest's prompting the dialogue returns to information-seeking. At this point, there is little or no structure; Dr. Emmanuel simply digresses on the source of his power, what he believes about it, and the practical consequence it has had in his life.

However, the monologue is not without its argumentation patterns. The argument from consequence noted above (323-326) typifies the arguments from consequences that are threaded throughout the narrative. They generally follow the pattern:

Premise: If A is brought about, good consequences will plausibly occur,
Therefore: A should be brought about' (Walton, Reed & Macagno 2008, 332).

This is a pragmatic argument—the problem with his actions, however, is that their consequences, as noted earlier (287-291), have not been the best for the doctor. He is sick, isolated from 'his people', and accused of being a fraud. It would seem that the dialogue is at a low point. The doctor again prompts Ernest to continue: 'I feel that there are more questions, begin to ask me' (362). However, as I've noted, in returning the conversation to his central thesis about the Bible, Ernest makes a significant concession (363-371):

Ernest: Eh... the central idea is for us you know as eh...a believer, the Bible is always our final answer and the Bible have given nearly all solutions or all answers that can possibly be found or asked on earth and our own problem, our difficulties mostly we use to have or we use to ask ...[to] get the difference between what we are doing either is it actually from God or we are working in the line of God or we are working in the light of the world.

When I talk about the light of the world, I mean like eh...actually, we believe that God can work in diverse manners like we mentioned about eh, Rev. Fathers having eyes, and others having eyes. I think, eh, a situation like this, it will be necessary for us to go to Biblical studies to study the Scriptures and to hear what the Bible actually tells us ...

The dialogue is evolving here. First, Ernest has significantly modified the thesis that he earlier asserted: 'We strongly believe that anything which is of God should be found in the Scriptures and that which is not of God...' (182-183).

It appears that he is now seeking a rapprochement or at least some common ground with Emmanuel. This is particularly evident in his second concession, the possibility that some people might have ‘eyes’ to see spiritual realities. However, Ernest allows the claim to be presumptive by saying that it is necessary to study the Bible to find out what it says about such things. He suggests that Bible study is a kind of dialogue in which we ask questions and hear answers. Secondly, he has agreed with the country doctor that one should not arbitrarily use the Bible as proof for some command (210-211). Rather, to discover what the Bible ‘tells us’, we must study the Scriptures.

In large measure, the arguments throughout lines 290-406 are arguments from a position to know, and the links between these arguments are largely segments of Emmanuel’s autobiography.

The commitments of the two conversationalists are becoming more explicit. The doctor’s primary commitment is his role in the community, which secondarily involves the explanations about the unseen world of evil. His commitments, though, have come under fire from those whom he feels he must serve. In a particularly moving passage, Emmanuel laments:

Somebody will ask—side talks will come and ask “you know you see all these things, why are you sick all this while?” I will—I will tell you one thing. I am not God. It is my own trial, trying moments that God has given me to see how faithful and how strong I am before Him. But I am proving to you that I am strong before my God. I am faithful to my people—to the people that came. I am faithful to my God. That is why I am alive, or I would have died long before now. And so the trial moment has not ended. God knows—God knows when it is going to end. So thank you very much. I want you to go ahead (285-291).

The criticism levied against him stems from the problem of the contradictory nature of his own situation. How is it that he who has spiritual powers to see the unseen world is sick? In other words, if he is so spiritually powerful, why then is he physically sick. The argument is not new. This challenge reminds one of the words to Jesus in Luke 4:23, ‘Physician, heal yourself’. The criticism of the doctor, as well as the proverb addressed to Jesus, are deceptively simple. The argumentation pattern does not precisely

match recognized schemes, but it is a variation of the *Tu Quoque* argument.¹⁵¹ The first premise lays down the known fact; the second premise states a presumptive rule. The third describes the physical reality. The argument concludes that the proponent's claim is false. One might visualize the argument in this way:

Premise 1 (A statement of fact): A (the proponent) claims to be able to heal diseases.
Premise 2 (The presumption): If A's claim is true, then A should not be sick.
Premise 3 (Also a statement of fact): A is sick.
Conclusion: A's claim is not true.

However, the doctor attempts to rise above the criticism. He tells Ernest, 'But I am proving to you that I am strong before my God. I am faithful to my people—to the people that came. I am faithful to my God' (288-289). However, his continued self-revelation mitigates this eloquent purpose statement.

Ernest's primary commitment is not to 'naturalism', but to the Bible. He has conceded that men might have mystical powers, but he will continue to stress the important place of the Bible throughout the rest of the dialogue (See 407-409).

3.23 Arguments from Necessity, Tradition, and Compassion (414-468)

420 **Emmanuel:** ...there are those things that the Bible doesn't want this to be, don't want this to be. By the norms of our society, the Bible doesn't want but we will do it because there is no means of living. There is a lot of evil that if I know that the Bible is prohibiting me from doing and I know I will do and defend the human, God's person. I will do it and I will simply tell God I am not...I wouldn't have done it but, it is because of this reason and situation that made me to help this man out of a situation. There is no position in the Bible that tells me to watch [wash] somebody out of evil. Is there any?

425 **Ernest:** to watch [wash] somebody...

Emmanuel: Yes! To clean somebody from evil. Is there any?

Ernest: No!

440 **Emmanuel:** So I want to tell you that the Bible—the Scripture is outing is [its] structures, its good structures in place and it is from the Scripture structures that we use in the healing people in diverse...

Ernest: But now I am very interested to hear that so... now according to you, [you] do that only to satisfy or to rescue people.

Emmanuel: Yes!

445 **Ernest:** From their problem?

Emmanuel: Yes! I don't do that because I diminish what is written in the Bible, I don't do that because I neglect what is written in the Bible.

450 **Ernest:** So I will like you to...do you think it will better for you to maintain the word of God that you have already known, to please God or do you think it will be better for you not to maintain the word of God and please men?

Emmanuel: I am not, look! There is a difference between pleasing somebody just like that and

¹⁵¹ *Tu Quoque*, 'You too'. An *ad hominem* argument that says an agent's behaviour is not consistent with his words (Hurley 1991, 116).

455 healing somebody out of...out of certain things that the Bible prohibits. You understand? I am not doing that on my own. The situations has made me to do it and before I do I say Lord I am doing this because I find this man's situation in this way and that is what I must do. Like you must do that to the Ngrafi man like the Bamilike man. You cannot fail doing that to the Bamilike man because they themselves when they bury somebody after ten years, they go and take the head—the skull...

460 **Ernest:** But now you believe, as mostly with the Bamilike people, you know how hard hearted they are towards [the] Gospel. Majority of them are unbelievers and now do you think it will be better for us to work and please the Bamilike people? Do you think that man can help God? Do think that you can, can you help God? Or can we help God?

Emmanuel: Normally!

465 **Ernest:** By doing those things that...

Emmanuel: Normally! It is not for me where I stand now. I think that I read the Bible and I know the Bible and I do what, I do this because man is subject to see whatever thing comes to him that can you know make it a possibility to live or make him a possibility to be reliable to all the actions of the society. I think that I am doing this because I am supposed to do it because sometime...

3.24 Context and Narration

After Ernest's concessions, Emmanuel presents a series of interesting observations on the Bible (379-468). However, since the observations appear to be largely an exposition on the Bible's nature without a conclusion, they seem to simply represent his understanding of the usefulness of the Bible.

The doctor begins by pointing out that wise men, to whom God gave a 'rule' (383), wrote the Bible. The rule was that man should not write about himself, his family or his brothers and sisters. Man was to write about God. 'And so, the Bible is the final say to everything that man does on earth' (385-386). Moreover, the Bible controls the anger...the minds of people not to be wicked, not to be bad gossipers. Though the Bible was plainly written, the Kom¹⁵² man is using the Bible to play a game. The Kom man will use a small phrase to say that something should not be done (383-387, paraphrase).

Dr. Emmanuel also sees the Bible as a 'trainer of trainers', (387-391) and that as soon as one starts reading the Bible ones wickedness goes off: 'The spirit of positive thinking is coming into you' (394). Moreover, he cautions that one should read the Bible in an 'idle time' so that one will not rush over the Scriptures.

¹⁵² Again, 'the Kom' is the tribe from which Ernest and the doctor come. He returns here to his objection against 'proof-texting' as a way of using scripture.

Ernest affirms the doctor's latter viewpoint and proposes that in the future they set a time to 'search the Scriptures daily'. However, Emmanuel's response is unexpected. He makes clear to Ernest that he has several Bibles which he has read, but the way he connects things to the Bible is to say, before doing something that the *Bible prohibits*, 'God, I put you before, before I do it' (417-418). There are two ways to view his position. He is inconsistent with his earlier claim that the Bible is not a rulebook. Alternatively, and more charitably, he has conceded in part to Ernest's view of Scripture. The fog of human pride enters into a conversation when it becomes apparent that one is wrong. Conversationalists do not always explicitly declare their concessions.

With this background, we pick up the current dialogue section (Lns 417ff), which at first glance, is a complex argumentation scheme that involves the goals of his work: the necessity of healing, and the necessity of performing customary rites [norms] in doing that healing. The subtexts of the argument involve the continuing debate about the authority of the Bible and the legitimacy of helping God and helping self in any available way.

I will argue that the primary scheme exhibited here is a 'modified argument from commitment', but the shape of the argument is complex because Emmanuel brings to the argument several intertwining commitments. Thus, the commitment, central to this part of the conversation, expresses itself in several argument patterns.

3.25 Analysis

This episode begins with a provocative statement from the doctor: 'By the norms of our society the Bible doesn't want but we will do it because there is no means of living' (419-420). 'Means of living' refers to gainful employment—the possible reason why Emmanuel's grandmother took him 'out of the Church.' His personal history is consistent with his comment here and in these lines:

I want to thank you sincerely and I want to tell you if you go to the Scriptures I have told you, I have to take all these things go and burn them and sit, and when I sit, that's the means which I have food that we eat...(543-545).

From this viewpoint, the reason why he does his work is his need for gainful employment.¹⁵³ However, that does not entirely explain why he practices his traditional medicine in the way he does, a way contrary to the Bible's teachings. One way to look at this problem is through the lens of commitment. He clearly articulates the conflict in his commitments in lines 421-421: *'There is a lot of evil that if I know that the Bible is prohibiting me from doing and I know I will do and defend the human, God's person.'* Even though doing what the Bible prohibits is doing evil, he chooses to do evil in order to achieve the good of people. In other words, defending the human, who belongs to God, is more compelling than obeying the Bible.

The doctor is committed to helping people. In Walton, Reed and Macagno's scheme, the first premise in an 'argument from need for help'.

Premise 1: for all x and y, y *ought to help* x, if x is in a situation where x needs help, and y can help, and y's giving help would not be too costly for y (2008, 334).

'Y' is the witch doctor who *ought to help*. 'X' is the one who is in need of help. In this dialogue, the *'ought to help'* carries the force of a categorical imperative.¹⁵⁴ After asserting this primary commitment to 'defending the human, God's person', the doctor makes his own concession to another commitment: 'I will do it and I will simply tell God I am not...I wouldn't have done it, but it is because of this reason and situation that made me to help this man out of a situation'.

What is Emmanuel saying here? To say that he is simply making an excuse to God for his actions is to trivialize his remark. Or is he simply rationalizing his need to make

¹⁵³ This commentary is in no way a judgement on Dr. Emmanuel's ethics. One familiar with the Kom culture understands the immense pressure on the males in a family to provide for the family needs.

¹⁵⁴ The observation on the Bamilike man in lines 453-458 shows Emmanuel's commitment to helping people, regardless of their tribal background or how disagreeable their respective cultures are.

a living? Excuse or not, rationalization¹⁵⁵ or not, the crux of the matter lies at a deeper level, the level of presenting an argument to God. One could see his dialogue with God as an argument from a necessary condition.

One could use such a schema in a trivial or nontrivial way. Walton, Reed and Macagno structure the argument this way for either necessary conditions (2008, 95-96):

Goal Premise: My goal is to bring about A.

Alternatives Premise: I reasonably consider on the given information that bringing about at least one of [B₀, B₁...B_n] is necessary to bring about A.

Selection Premise: I have selected one member, B_i, as an acceptable, or as the most acceptable, necessary condition for A.

Practicality Premise: Nothing unchangeable prevents me from bringing about B_i, as far as I know.

Side Effects Premise: Bringing about A is more acceptable to me than not bringing about B_i.

Conclusion: Therefore, it is required that I bring about B_i.

Though the schema is abstract, used to view Emmanuel's reasoning, it brings to life the 'necessary' dimension of his argument. Having said that he would do things prohibited by the Bible to 'defend the human',¹⁵⁶ he instantiates his case through questions¹⁵⁷, giving examples of those prohibited actions. Among his activities he will '[wash] somebody out of evil'; 'use blood from an animal to do something death to somebody';¹⁵⁸ and 'sacrifice at the occasion of a healing'. These, he points out, are not in the Bible. Here he returns to his contention that there are things not mentioned in the Bible that are right and correct and in his view, the Bible is not a compendium of knowledge that exhaustively speaks about all phenomena and actions (212-215).¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Rationalization, as used here, could imply an insincere use of reason, but the term could just as well represent the remembering of the original reasoning behind a particular statement. Whether the explanation of a statement, for example, is important, but not the issue in the text. Pollock claims that most arguments for a position are reconstructed from memory: '...When they first arrive at a belief, they may know what their reasoning was. Later, they may recall the belief and use that for constructing reasons for other beliefs. But at that time they may be unable to recall their reasons for the belief, or they may be able to do so only with great difficulty' (1987, 487). See footnote 96.

¹⁵⁶ This is largely a defence against spiritual powers that bring sanctions such as sickness, misfortune and death. A traditionalist like Dr. Emmanuel practices both 'preventative' and well as 'curative' arts.

¹⁵⁷ Here is an instance when a speaker sees the answers to questions that he asks to strengthen his presumptive argument. The presumption is that it is better to help people than to obey the Bible.

¹⁵⁸ It is not clear whether he is referring here to the aggressive use of his powers, or something else. The methodology used here, thankfully, does not demand that we know his exact meaning.

¹⁵⁹ Here we refer to Ernest's database theory of Scripture.

Why should the actions of which he speaks be necessary? He implies the answer in lines 436-437:

Emmanuel: So I want to tell you that the Bible—the Scripture is outing is [its] structures, its good structures in place and it is from the Scripture [...] its structures that we use in the healing people in diverse...

The doctor focuses on cultural practices that are significant to him. The deeds of which he has just spoken are ‘good structures...its structures that we use in [the] healing [of] people in diverse....’ It most likely refers to his culture and its structures, which he views as practices that are distinct from those of Christianity. Hence, they are ‘traditional’ and those of Christianity, ‘new’. At a minimum the pattern is simply an ‘argument from a position to know’, tradition being that which is in the position to know.¹⁶⁰ From the earlier discussion, Emmanuel, who believes in the efficacy of his words and actions, would also understand his reasoning as an ‘Argument from Ends and Means’. In either case, tradition provides the accepted, effective means for bringing about the well-being of people.¹⁶¹

However, in theory it should be possible to do for oneself what one does for others. Dr. Emmanuel finishes by affirming that he can without prejudice apply his own medicine to himself.

I think that I am doing this because I am supposed to do it because sometime... let me tell you, sometimes man, you feel that there is a situation whereby you can come out...that God does not blame man for that kind of thing. You see that the situation that where you can free yourself, eh... you can tell lies to free yourself and God will not blame you. You were in a fire and so you made that statement to free yourself, and you free yourself and go (465-472).

This self-application of the doctor’s philosophy provides Ernest with the opportunity to ask a series of strategic questions (469-482) that lead to Emmanuel’s significant challenge to the consistency of Ernest’s viewpoint. The conversation returns to a persuasion argument; the men have largely abandoned rhetoric.

¹⁶⁰ The brothers in chapter 6 will express this argument more cogently.

¹⁶¹ Note that his stand does not only apply to Kom people, but to others such as the Bamilike.

3.26 Argument and Counter Argument (473-494):

- 475 **Ernest:** OK remember the situation of Job in the Bible where he was seriously sick. God allowed it to be so. And now despite all the illness, do you remember what the wife asked him to do?
- Emmanuel:** Yes!
- Ernest:** Curse God. What did she say? What did the wife told Job to do to free himself from the situation...
- 480 **Emmanuel:** Yes, to forget about God.
- Ernest:** To forget—to curse God.
- Emmanuel:** Curse God and forget about that and so that he can free from all these things. He is sick because he is always talking God! God! God!
- Ernest:** And what was Job's reply?
- 485 **Emmanuel:** Job said 'I can never forget about my God and I can never do what is against the will of my God.'
- Ernest:** Can you now believe that it will be wrong for man to satisfy... to try to help himself, but to rely and trust God that God can solve our problems?
- 490 **Emmanuel:** Em, I will come back to where you are talking now. If God had to save man just by words eh? Where you have the seminary, there wouldn't have been a hospital, there wouldn't have been a maternity, there wouldn't have been hospitals around. But God has made His word and has made man to know His words and divert His words in different actions of life and different parts of...to play. And so I am simply doing here like a hospital... (490). But let me not...let us not go into the Bible deep because if we want to go into the Bible, it means that I can completely stop what I am doing. And then, the will of God will not permit because God has given me this.

3.27 Context and Narrative

This section follows immediately on the heels of the dialogue in section 3.25. It is in a separate section to emphasize that it is perhaps the clearest example of dialectic in the entire dialogue. Dr. Emmanuel has taken his philosophy of ministry to its logical conclusion:

I think that I am doing this because I am supposed to do it because sometime... let me tell you, sometimes man, you feel that there is a situation whereby you can come out...that God does not blame man for that kind of thing. You see that the situation that where you can free yourself, eh... you can tell lies to free yourself and God will not blame you. You were in a fire and so you made that statement to free yourself, and you free yourself and go (468-472).

Here the doctor lays down the assumption that has been implicit throughout the dialogue: the ends justify the means. One can do anything, even telling lies, to free oneself from a situation. Ernest seeks to undercut that rule by offering an exception. However, Emmanuel shows that, as a Christian, Ernest is inconsistent with his own rule (to depend only on God). He demonstrates his medical skills and then, apart from the

dialectic that has transpired, closes with a paradox: he cannot go to Scripture, which is from God, because he has been given a work by God which Scripture prohibits.

3.28 Analysis

In response to the doctor's commitment to self-help (above, 454-461), Ernest brings the example of Job to the argumentation table with several questions that evoke the account of the wife's grim reaction to her husband's plight and Job's response. The account presents the doctor with the argumentation pattern, 'An Argument from a Model', which proceeds like this:

Premise 1: Individual P is prestigious for (admired by) individual Qs.

Premise 2: P carries out acts A.

Premise 3: If P carries out A, A are worth being imitated by Qs.

Conclusion: Qs should do A.

Ernest intends P here to be Job; Qs are, *or should be*, Ernest and Emmanuel. A would be the act of trusting God in the midst of trouble. Dr. Emmanuel understands A, the action because he clearly summarizes Job's testimony: 'I can never forget about my God and I can never do what is against the will of my God.' However, the reality is that the country doctor does not accept or admire Job's way of coping with his illness.

As he has already said, he believes that 'God helps those who help themselves', an aphorism commonly heard in the Southwest region of Cameroon, and that self-help may be obtained by any means.¹⁶² After putting forth Job as an example, Ernest then makes his position explicit, that self-help, as conceived by Dr. Emmanuel, is opposed to trusting God.

In his view, Job undercuts Emmanuel's generalization about helping oneself,¹⁶³ a presumption about the nature of suffering, and man's relationship to suffering and to

¹⁶² On several occasions, students and others queried me about the truth of this traditional wisdom. It took me quite some time to understand that they were speaking about the use of sorcery to help oneself.

¹⁶³ Aristotle saw the relationship between a generalization and exception in the Topics: 'Moreover, all statements that seem to be true in all or in most cases, should be taken as a principle or accepted position; for they are posited by those who do not also see what exception there may be' (Topics, Bk. 1, Pt. 14). Toulmin's 'data—warrant—claim' argumentative structure allows for the warrant, the

God. Emmanuel does not accept Job as an example of how man should react to suffering. Instead, he employs the words of Job's wife to assert 'Curse God and forget about that and so that he can [be] free from all these things'. His claims that Job is sick because he is always talking God! God! God' to launch his counter examples to Ernest's principle of faith. Emmanuel believes that talk alone will not save man (484-488). Man needs to be practical about survival.

His counter examples seem to show the contradiction between Ernest's exhortation to depend only on God and the Christian practice of offering 'human' help to others. He uses that 'apparent' contradiction to justify his own practice. He is doing the same thing that the Church is doing; he just does not have laboratories that the hospitals have. He brings an argument of pragmatic inconsistency against Ernest's generalization, 'to trust God and not man':

If God had to save man just by words...eh? Where you have the seminary [?] there wouldn't have been a hospital, there wouldn't have been a maternity, there wouldn't have been hospitals around. But God has made His word and has made man to know His words and divert His words in different actions of life and different parts of...to play. And so I am simply doing here like a hospital. I am not going against the will of God but my own is not different because I don't have laboratories... (487-492).

Inconsistent arguments have at least two possible forms. The argument from pragmatic inconsistency has the following structure (Walton, Reed & Macagno 2008, 336):

Premise 1: a advocates argument α , which has proposition A as its conclusion.
Premise 2: a has carried out an action, or set of actions, that imply that a is personally committed to $\neg A$ (the opposite, or negation of A).
Conclusion: Therefore a's argument α should not be accepted.

The argument from inconsistent commitment, quite similar in appearance to that of pragmatic inconsistency, focuses on the commitment, rather than the argument, of a:

generalization or rule, to be challenged by a rebutter. 'If we are to take account of these features of our argument also, our pattern will become complex. Modal qualifiers (q) and *conditions of exception* or rebuttal (R) are distinct both from data and from warrant...' (Toulmin 2003. 93). Job is a rebutter to the doctor's principle of self-help. However, the doctor proposes that hospitals, etc., contradict Ernest's principle of 'faith alone'.

Initial Commitment Premise: a has claimed or indicated that he is committed to proposition A (generally, or by virtue of what he has said in the past).

Opposed Commitment Premise: Other evidence is this particular case shows that a is not really committed to A.

Conclusion: a's commitments are inconsistent.

These argument patterns appear similar to the *tu quoque* fallacy, but they differ in their epistemological framework. The classical *tu quoque* argument, on the alethic account, attacks the truthfulness of a proponent's statement because his commitment to the implications of that statement is inconsistent (Hamblin 2004). However, in a dialectical framework, the credibility of an argument is based on whether the arguer holds to the implications of his own argument (Hamblin 2004).

Is the operation of hospitals and maternity clinics a contradiction ($\neg A$) to the principle of faith exemplified in Job? The doctor proposes that they are. Moreover, are the former 'institutions' (Kom cultural practices) exceptions to the principles embedded in Job's principle of trust? Ernest clearly thinks that the two are incompatible. Under Aristotle's rules of demonstrative logic, one exception falsifies a 'true and primary' proposition. However, the rules of presumptive reasoning are different.

In the argument from pragmatic inconsistency the answers to questions such as 'Did an advocate α in a strong way indicating her personal commitment to A?' become the basis for a presumptive judgment on the argumentation pattern in the scheme (Walton, Reed & Macagno 2008, 337). This is a fundamental quality of argumentation schemes: They contain defeasible generalizations that, by definition, have exceptions. The issue is the number and kind of exceptions or additional information in view.

While exceptions and inconsistencies in themselves do not defeat an argument,¹⁶⁴ they undercut it. Though it seems that both men should deal with the exceptions to their

¹⁶⁴ The popular example of this principle, used by Walton and others, is exemplified by the argument 'Tweety is a bird'/'Birds fly'/'Tweety flies'. This kind of argument, under scrutiny, bows to

generalizations, the burden of demonstrating his generalization falls on Emmanuel, who must now account for the example of Job in his way of reasoning. Toward the end of the conversation, he will explore with Ernest the implications of Job's example (568ff). However, that exploration takes more the form of a meditation, and as interesting as it is from a cultural viewpoint, the end of the discussion does not provide a resolution to the faith and self-effort controversy. One might think that Ernest would rethink the idea of self-help in light of the doctor's argument, but he does not. His commitment is to keep Emmanuel focused on Scripture, a commitment to which Dr. Emmanuel has more objections. This second part of the dialogue closes with a discussion of the argument from social relevancy.

3.29 Argument from the Church's Example (529-543)

Emmanuel... God has planted everything, and that is why He has permitted us to use it as our food—to use it as our drugs, and to use it to heal others. If everybody knew what I know, there will be trouble because you [will] not like to do what I do. You will want to be above me and so power struggle will start. That's why God has made man, you are pastor, some Rev. Fathers, some this and that, and has given us this chance like a native doctor—traditional medicine, in traditional medicines. And so please, the Bible is saying really something and man has changed it and today you have women pastors. In the early days, no woman could come up to the pulpit to stand and talk, do you believe that?

Ernest: But that's what the Scriptures say...

Emmanuel: Yes! But changed it, the Roman Catholic Church changed it because he wanted woman to be seen in the society and that is why a woman was made a choir mistress, a woman was made a deacon, a woman was made an elder of the Church. So you simply change it and tell God, my God, I have changed this because of this, to suit the society, so I am doing this. I know some of those things are about idols, they are bound by the Bible but please I think I don't help my God—I will not help my God. I want to thank you sincerely and I want to tell you if you go to the Scriptures I have told you, I have to take all these things go and burn them and sit, and when I sit, that's the means which I have food that we eat, if I sit like that it means that I will become handicraft. I will not go back to construction or plumbing, or electricity and so on...

3.30 Context and Narration

Emmanuel continues his autobiographical narrative (489-531), reflecting on His relationship to the Roman Catholic Church and the Church fathers he has known, and on the theory and policies of his own practice. He derives justification from the Church

the fact that not all birds fly. This type of argument, though not deductive, is usually acceptable in daily conversations. Its conclusion is credible, not certain.

for his cultural practices in both conventional and unexpected ways. He claims one of the Catholic fathers did a meditation and the next morning came to his house and blessed the place where he did these things (509-510). After asserting this priestly example to justify his practices, Emmanuel returns to the central issue of the Bible's authority, which influences both his Catholic rites and his Kom culture. He does not go in for pilgrimages because he knows the Bible [does not teach them] (505-510). On the other hand, he cannot follow the Bible closely because

If you follow exactly what the Bible is talking [saying to] you will leave so many things from doing it. You will not even want to do anything like that. I will gather all these things [fetishes and charms] and put it and light a fire' (511-512). 'If you want to follow the Bible, really, whereby you have the god that is a universal God,' but he has made man in a different [way]...people with different systems of their own, anything, and then this is my work (512-515).

The two choices are clear: theism or various polytheistic systems; different people are made for different systems.

The structure of the dialogue has turned dialectical once more, but the dialectic reflects Emmanuel's inner questioning. What authority has commissioned his work? [The Church] Why does he not follow the Bible? [He would leave his work; God has not created all men to follow the Bible (The argument from diversity)]. He has again shouldered the burden of justifying his actions as a traditional practitioner (514).

He alludes to the purposeful creation of the world, and then shifts his thought back to the diversity of Rev. Fathers, pastors and cultural doctors. The idea here is that the world has an order by design and to break that order is to invite trouble. Then he turns to women's place in the order of the Church, a place of silence that he claims Scripture teaches and, at an earlier time, the Church taught. The Church once held that women should not participate in the formal worship services of the Church, but now it no longer enforces that policy. He concludes that just as the Church abandons biblical teachings to cater to society, so must he. He is simply following the example of the Church.

In lines 536-542, he reiterates what he has said on several occasions, that if he were to be obedient to all of Scripture he would end his work as a traditional doctor and have no means by which he could eat. If that were to happen, he would have to go back to construction or plumbing [plumbing] or electricity and he will not do that.

3.31 Analysis

Dr. Emmanuel's justification of his work further demonstrates the importance of the life script that lies behind a dialogue. A question lies behind each of the reasons that he gives for what he does and how he does it. On the heels of his comments about necessity and the reality of diversity (515-518), he turns as almost an afterthought to women pastors. He asserts that the Bible prohibits women from public leadership in religion (521-523), a position with which Ernest concurs, and then offers a last argument that seems to take the general form of an argument from example:

Premise: In this particular case, the individual *a* has property F and also property G.
Conclusion: Therefore, generally, if *x* has property F, then it also has property G.
(Walton, Reed & Macagno 2008, 314)

In this case the Catholic Church, which is *a*, has a divine calling F. The property G, the Emmanuel claims, is its rejection of the full teaching of Scripture. The Roman Catholic Church has changed Scripture, because 'he [it] wanted woman to be seen in the society and that is why a woman was made a choir mistress, a woman was made a deacon, a woman was made an elder of the Church' (534-537). Emmanuel's conclusion is that if the Church can reject the full teaching of Scripture, then he, as an *x* called of God, can reject the parts of Scripture that he deems necessary to reject.

In the final analysis, his long series of arguments for his cultural beliefs and his reasons for his medical practices conclude with a simple disjunctive syllogism. Either the practice of traditional medicine or [the construction trades]. / Not the construction trades. / Therefore, traditional medicine.

3.32 Concluding Reflections: Argument Patterns, Entrenchment, and the Cumulative Case

The following sections address the significance of argument patterns in the dialogue. The first section addresses the simple fact that recognizable patterns are present. The second step presents a cognitive interpretation of those patterns. The third stage of argument connects argument patterns to entrenchment. And the final stage begins a discussion of the relationship of argument patterns and entrenchment to the cumulative case, a discussion that will continue through the remainder of the dissertation.

3.32.1 The Presence of Argument Patterns

The evidence of this chapter justifies one of the presuppositions of this research. Clearly, some patterns documented by Walton, Reed & Macagno play significant roles in Ernest and Emmanuel's conversation. For example, the argument from a position to know dominates its early stages. However, one must not think that the pattern stands alone. Emmanuel's grandfather explains to the young Emmanuel the 'spiritual nature' of the wild winds. Thus, the authority of his grandfather is the platform for the pattern of abduction [or explanation].

The pattern from 'position to know' must not be thought of as absolutely authoritative. Emmanuel says that 'he tried hard to accept' (14), implying that though the grandfather's explanation carried significant plausibility, many circumstances reinforced and expanded his grandfather's explanation: the argument from the knife and the drug, variations of 'the correlation to cause', as well as his argument from perception (54-57). The point should not be belaboured here. Many other argument patterns could be cited in this and the conversations to follow in this collection.

The more important question concerns the significance of argument patterns. Though Walton, Reed, and Macagno are accurate in indicating that they are 'common types of arguments that are used in everyday discourse' (2008, 1), this description

glosses over the distinct possibility that they play a role in cognition, and are thus significant in the development of an person's world view.

3.32.2 Argument Patterns: Mechanisms for Propositional Cognition

Cognition, the stimulus for this research, (1.3) is simply the processing of new information. The information could be from the sensory inputs that are visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, or a combination of the senses. However, the discussion here is not about the sensations themselves, but about the sensory input that is translated to a proposition or propositional description.

An agent smells smoke and thinks that something is on fire, hears an inarticulate scream and perceives someone is in trouble. In a better case scenario, the agent listens to the experience of a respected firefighter and commits to remembering what the firefighter said. The argument from perception (3.3), which arguably includes sound, smell, touch, etc., is the classic expression of a proposition inferred from an experience. Something of the same dynamic happens in other informal arguments (argument patterns) like 'argument *ad populum*' or 'argument from example'. However, many informal arguments like 'argument from analogy' or 'argument from alternatives' (Walton, Reed & Macagno 2008, 318) distance the arguer from the data contained in the argument.

In either of the cases, the claim here is that an argument pattern is an inferential or reasoning template for what should be believed or done in a particular physical or intellectual context. From this perspective, argument patterns are similar to Pollock's quick and inflexible modules (2006), the difference being that they are not automatic. Their strength is dependent on the reasoner's proximity to, or estimation of, the person, experience, phenomenon, or data. Of course, an agent's experience or estimation of these things might be inaccurate, but that is only to say that argument patterns are defeasible.

Taken together, a set of argument patterns, proximately grounded in experience or involvement with the data of the arguments, has the potential to deeply entrench a belief. However, these patterns do not stand alone. They are parasitic on the rhetoric of cultural knowledge. Emmanuel demonstrates this ‘rhetoric’ in his response to Ernest’s counter theses. This entrenchment, to which the discussion turns, is of first interest to belief revision and apologetics.

3.32.3 Entrenchment: A Blessing, a Curse, or Both?

Degrees of belief is a concept often viewed from two perspectives. One perspective views it as ‘degree of resistance to change’, a dynamic concept. The other view conceives it as ‘a degree of confidence’, a static concept (Hansson 2004, 4). Though the terms ‘static’ and ‘dynamic’ are relative here, at heart, they are a matter of perspective or judgement. Entrenchment, or resistance to change, is often applied to beliefs needing to be changed. Confidence is a positive, even a factive, view of a good proposition.

Thus, from a Christian perspective one might say that Emmanuel’s belief that his grandfather’s medicine has the power to deal with the wild wind is entrenched, but he has little confidence in Ernest’s counsel to abandon his efforts ‘to help oneself’ and trust in God. Each of these viewpoints entails a way of living life, a so-called ‘life script’. Each needs attention from the Christian apologist.

3.32.4 A Cumulative Case Approach to Entrenchment

Using the above two perspectives on entrenchment, I summarize from this dialogue two tasks of person-to-person apologetics. One is simply to speak the truth to the best of one’s ability. Ernest presents a counter thesis to Emmanuel’s view of the wind and offers a different explanation for some of its damaging effects. He also presents his views on the Bible and the nature of the Christian life.

Regardless of what one might think of Ernest's views, his responses to Emmanuel introduce the element of uncertainty to his positions about the wind and his work while at the same time encouraging confidence in what he considers the normative view of the Bible and Christian living. However, Emmanuel counters the uncertainty with his own evidence, rhetorically attempts to undercut Ernest's view of the Bible, and offers arguments against Ernest's view of Christian living.

None of this could happen without a strongly (but not completely) dialogical conversation that is focused on truth, the first task; and discovery, the second task that is central to the next conversation.

Chapter Four: A Reasonable Woman Questions Tradition

4.1 The Plan of the Chapter

The following chapter documents the life of a woman who grows to be a critical thinker, and her conversation with Richard Tanke. Much of the content and all of the variables encountered in chapter three will reappear here from a very different perspective. Teresa is not a practitioner of ethnic medicine; she is its intended patient. However, like some of Dr. Emmanuel's clients, she comes to question the role of witch doctors and traditional beliefs. Her personal journey and approach as a critical thinker to the dialogue with Richard Tanke is of great interest to studies in cognition, and substantially importance to person-to-person apologetics.

While chapter three documents Ernest's inquiry into Emmanuel's views of the wind and his work, it does not present Ernest as critically engaged with his ideas. Teresa, on the other hand, is more explicitly involved and focused than Ernest in her dialogue. In addition, she has provided substantial information about the development of her worldview and commitments (Mokake 2007).

In section 4.2, I will contrast Teresa's and Emmanuel's response to their cultural traditions of witchcraft. In section 4.3, I will review a framework for her response through combining the externalist and internalist views of rationality. Section 4.4 documents the development of Teresa's dialectical skills and commitments by looking at the way she critically evaluates selected experiences of her life. In sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2, respectively, I present the narrative and analysis of the dialogue itself using the tools of chapter one. Finally, in 4.6 I will conclude the chapter with a discussion of this dialogue's insights into and implications for argumentation theory and belief revision.

4.2 Introduction

In chapter one, the younger Emmanuel accepted his grandfather's explanation of the destructive winds with some thoughtful reservation. His arguments for that explanation are both reflective and reflexive in nature. Reflectively, his arguments illuminate how he sees his practice of ethnic medicine to be rational.¹⁶⁵ Call them rationalizations if one must, but it is unlikely he spontaneously thought them up in the dialogue with Ernest. They are reflexive because he catalyses through his arguments, particularly in the latter part of the dialogue, the on-going development of his identity in the face of hardship and challenge. That identity, in spite of his claim to being a Christian, seems to be situated in his cultural script.

At the beginning of this chapter, Teresa exhibits the same kinds of reservation toward her cultural beliefs, a reservation to which the account of Dr. Emmanuel only briefly alludes. However, she chooses to reject many, but not all, of her family beliefs. Why did she disavow the traditions she was taught? The best answer to that question comes from listening to her narrative of the experiences that stimulated the rationality that she brought to the dialogue with Richard Tanke. However, before examining her narrative, we must first contrast the internalist and externalist approach to argument.

4.3 Internalist and Externalist Approaches to Argumentation Schemes

In this section, I will provide a dialogical framework for the argumentation patterns embedded in the following autobiographical narratives. I assume in my analysis of Teresa's account that there is a qualitative difference between someone telling a story with the primary purpose of making a point, and a story told to document some perception. In the first case, the story serves to convince the hearer of the point. In the second case, the narrator is a witness. The narrator's secondary purpose might also be

¹⁶⁵ His arguments might be thought to fall under the heading of 'practical reasoning', but at no point does he set a goal for his 'practice'.

to influence or convince the listener of the reality of the experience, but taken at its face value the account is simply witness testimony. Teresa's narratives are of the latter type.

The argumentation patterns at work in her stories, which relate to the night sounds, signs, and other 'things', function in different ways. These functions can be explained in the context of two perspectives on argument.¹⁶⁶ The externalist position holds that rationality is the public act of argumentation.¹⁶⁷ The other position claims that rationality is internal. While the external process occurs when two people engage in the act of reasoning about a subject, and critical reflection is the internal process, arguably the two processes are both dialogical. The chapter will present evidence for that position.

Harman, who likened the internal process to 'social interaction with oneself', has called this internal process 'belief revision' (Mackenzie 1989, 110). In other words, belief revision occurs through an inner dialogue.¹⁶⁸ Plato catches this idea in his comments in *Hippias Major*. He describes this inner dialogue as the social process of linguistic interaction, undertaken with an inner authoritative voice. (Mackenzie 1989, 104, 110-111). Perhaps Plato exaggerates the formidable nature of this inner voice, but an agent significantly challenges his or her normal way of looking at something in an internal dialogue. One is in 'two minds' about a matter (Guinness 1976). If the contrasting point of view appears to be compelling, the new view replaces the old. This can happen [immediately] on a prima facie basis, as in the case of Teresa's view of the insect, or over a period of time, as in her processing of the night sounds on the roof.

The external view of rationality involves goals, conventions, rules, critical questions, knowledge, standards, etc. that are more explicit than those *typically*

¹⁶⁶ These are but two of the many ways that rationality can be described.

¹⁶⁷ The debate between the internalist like Gilbert Harman and an externalist, like Jim Mackenzie (Walton 1990, 400) revolves around whether reasoning is the mental use of logic (the internalist) or the social process of argumentation (the externalist). Teresa's narrative suggests that reasoning is both external and internal. See Mackenzie 1985, 1989.

¹⁶⁸ Such a dialogue is implied in Williamson's description of how knowledge is revised (2000, 10).

associated with inner dialogue.¹⁶⁹ Van Eemeren's pragma-dialectical system (2004), Walton & Krabbe's system of dialogue typing (1995), and Walton, Reed and Macagno's system of argumentation schemes (2008) establish varying conventions or standards for the external process of argumentation. The comments in the following section are an attempt to understand both the internal and external dialogues that occur in Teresa's development as a critical thinker.

4.4 The Apologist's Story: An Introduction

I first provide and comment on her narrative about the period during which she abandoned a significant part of her cultural script. I will employ Hintikka's notion of dialogue as the 'questioning of nature' as an example of internal rationality and an aid to understanding how she processed the new knowledge which she acquired (Barth and Martens 1982, 55-75). Hintikka's viewpoint has two basic assumptions: Questions are fundamental to dialogue; it is possible to direct questions toward any source that might provide information (Hintikka and Hintikka 1982).

Since objects¹⁷⁰ often are the occasion for intrapersonal *and* interpersonal dialogues (MacKenzie 1989, 100), nature could be the set of all things to which questions might be addressed. This approach is consistent with the use of questions in argument schemes¹⁷¹ and enriches those argumentation patterns in unexpected ways

¹⁶⁹ The Internalist and externalist versions of this account of rationality are inextricably related. This position contrasts with an older, but still useful one like Jim Mackenzie (1985) that focuses more on the formal dimensions of logic in dialogue such as derivation and formal proof. In the following account Teresa comes to significant conclusions through largely internal reasoning. It is also reasonable to point out that to be coherent one must use some kind of standards in internal reasoning. From whence those standards come is an open question here. Does our external rational behaviour reflect our inner rationality? Or does it work both ways?

¹⁷⁰ 'Object' could apply to any physical thing, event, or proposition that becomes the subject of a query or some other type of dialogue. See Teresa's remarks on the questions about the existence of a lizard in such and such a place and time (Mokake 2007, 157161).

¹⁷¹ Argumentation schemes, as has been noted, are composed of argument patterns (schematic arguments as Walton calls them) and associated critical questions (2.6).

(Walton and Godden 2007, 278-281). Secondly, I present Teresa's change of perspectives as a textbook case of belief revision.

4.4.1 Nganga Mokake—the Apologist

Teresa Nganga Mokake was born in Vasinge, a small village outside the city of Buea, the capital of the Fako division, in the South West Region of Cameroon. Vasinge is located on the eastern slope of Mt. Fako, widely known today as Mt. Cameroon.¹⁷² She grew up in a polygamous family, the youngest child of her mother, who was the first of two wives. Teresa calls the second wife the 'maid',¹⁷³ or at times, her stepmother. Teresa notes that she grew up in what she calls a churchgoing, but not a Christian family:

Interviewer: What...Your parents, were they Christians when you were growing up?

Teresa: Uh, no, from the definition of Christianity as I know now. But when we were growing at that time my mother used to take us to church. But my father was not going to church (Mokake 2007, 22-24).

What is her current idea about who a Christian might be? She explains what she currently means by a 'Christian' and why she believes that her mother was not a Christian during her youth:

Teresa: Okay, I know that a Christian is a born-again child of God. That is, a child who has accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Saviour from death and resurrection. So when I said my mother was not a Christian [It is] because I know when my mother accepted Christ as her personal Lord and Saviour. Therefore, all the years we used to go to church I can say we were just churchgoers (Mokake 2007, 27-30).

Her father died when she was nine, and she became quite close to her mother because her 'senior brothers and sisters had all gone the way out in school' (112-113). As a child, she experienced the spiritual and family problems common to her culture (Mokake 2007, 74-78).

So all along I was grow[ing] with my mother and my mother used to tell us these stories and in the village...there is so much belief about witchcraft. And my father had two

¹⁷² Mt. Cameroon (13, 454 ft.), created by a N.-N.E. rift, is an active stratovolcano which last erupted in 2000. The activity of the volcano plays an important role in the local traditional religions (Ardener 1956; Mokake 2007, 53-65).

¹⁷³ This is probably a positional term. Second, or additional, wives in a family took over chores that were passed to them by the first wife. Trobrish (1971) documents some of the reasons why men in Cameroon take more than one wife. In light of the way the second wife is described (the 'maid') his documentation might well point to her role in Teresa's family.

wives and before my mother, my father died, my mother was accusing the maid [the other wife] to be a witch and it was alleged that those women who passed through the cult that I told you [about], most of them would end up being witches.¹⁷⁴

The cult to which Teresa alludes is the one associated with the *liengu* ritual initiation.¹⁷⁵ Since Teresa, who did not go through the initiation, is apparently conversant about some of its details,¹⁷⁶ her ‘step-mother’ [the maid, or second wife], who had passed through the ritual, did not hesitate to warn the girls of the family about it:

So my stepmother had passed through that process. So she used to warn us again about societal things, about not walking at night, late at night, not standing at road junctions, that those are areas where evil spirits are concentrating. So as a child I didn’t know; I just felt that it was just caution (Mokake 2007, 78-81).

Although she says that she ‘knows a great deal about her culture,’¹⁷⁷ Teresa makes a perceptive observation, almost as an aside, about one aspect of her early beliefs. Her stepmother (the one she calls the ‘maid’) is certainly in a position to know—but Teresa does not take her statements as an accurate description of the way things actually are. Rather, she remembers, ‘as a child, I didn’t know; I just felt that it was caution’ (Mokake 2007, 92).

¹⁷⁴ Ardener notes, ‘Witches may be of either sex and are said to leave their bodies at night and ‘eat’ people, so that they become ill and die. It is sometimes said to be the victim’s ‘things (see above) which is eaten’ (Ardener 156, 96).

¹⁷⁵ Fifty years earlier Ardener (1956, 98-100) documented three types of *liengu* or initiation processes that pointed to very strong ‘secret-society’ movements among the Bakweri women. In 2006 Teresa documents another of these societies in her account of a conversation with an older Bakundu woman, ‘I greeted this ma and I asked her which church she is attending. She told me she has no “palavers with God” meaning she does not have any problem with God. I asked her what she means by saying these [things].

‘She said she doesn’t go to church, that she has her own church which is the “Malova.” I asked her what it meant. She said it is a kind of female....members don’t go to church because they worship but the goddess of the dance. Before that, I ask if they dance [that] day and some other question. She refused to answer...

‘I left and told her I will be coming some time again. I asked her name; she refused.’

¹⁷⁶ She comments about the initiation. ‘They use to initiate young women for about 14 years old when you are frequently sick of headache they will say that you are manifesting the symptoms of that cult. There you will be taken to the forest, and then they will build a small house there for you. Only women who have had that kind of experience will be allowed to visit you and talk to you so you will be kept there for some time where taken care of and some rituals will be performed to you...when a person will go on a trance, unconscious and then the full initiation rite will take place’ (Mokake 2007, 37-43).

¹⁷⁷ Yeah, at least, I’m happy mostly becoming a Christian. I can now compare some of the things I learned as a child and then as a Christian now I am able to put them vis-à-vis because at least I know, I know I can say that I know a great deal about our culture (Mokake 2007, 22-24).

Teresa's attitude toward what her stepmother has told her is similar to that of the doctor in Kom (Chap. 3), who 'tried hard to accept', i.e., had reservations about the explanation that his grandfather had given to him concerning the wind. However, though she entertained some doubt about what her stepmother had told her, her fear conditions her doubt.¹⁷⁸ From her perspective, if one cannot know the veracity of the stories that her stepmother told her, it was prudent to pay attention to her warnings.

Teresa now narrates two later, intertwined, experiences in her youth that increased her scepticism about the witch doctors' teachings. After her father's death, the family began to hear 'something like grains'¹⁷⁹ hitting and rolling down the roof at night. Disconcerted by these night sounds, her mother visited witch doctors, who could presumably tell them the meaning of the sounds. We pick up her narrative at that point:

But when we use to go out to find out from these witch doctors, actually, they were telling us things that are happening and then you began to see people who were far off, who didn't know us. They could narrate where the compound is situated, some of the events we see, or strange things that are happening in the house and the family (Mokake 2007, 93-96).

At this point, she interrupts this primary narrative with the secondary (but strategically important) story about her mother's purported illness and the healer's ill-disguised attempt to cure it. The witch doctor claimed that her mother's illness was a part of the strange things happening to the family:

So we believed them [that strange things were happening in the house], but they told us that my mother was sick of stomach, that she had stomach problem and they [the spirits?] have placed something in her stomach. That's why she cannot eat and all those things. So the man accepting things for us to bring... (Mokake 2007, 96-98).

After the family brought the proper payment for the treatment, the witch doctor began the process of removing the thing from her stomach:

...So when the man said he was to remove the things he used a blade and cut my mother some little places on the stomach, and then used an egg, placed it on her stomach and when she said [spoke], he said the stuff, the egg will drain the stuff. And when he was

¹⁷⁸ The classic fallacy of 'Appeal to Fear' reappears in argumentation theory as 'Argument from Fear Appeal'. This was the logic of her stepmother's warning. Appeals to fear will play a greater role in her story as it unfolds.

¹⁷⁹ In further conversations, she admitted that she never knew what these things were (Mokake 2007).

trying to pour it, I saw how an insect fall from his hand—meanwhile the egg white was struggling to come out. So I knew he was telling lies (Mokake 2007, 100-104).

Perhaps the practitioner had not perfected his technique. In attempting to put [break?] the egg on her mother's stomach, he drops an insect in Teresa's sight, the insect which was supposed to be the 'thing' that he would remove from her body through the application of the egg.¹⁸⁰ Teresa's earlier scepticism about the stepmother's warnings became a 'factive state of mind' about the use of magic on this occasion. She reports, 'So I knew he was lying.' The young Teresa had witnessed with her own eyes the deception of what was supposed to have been the means that cured her mother of some unspecified [spiritual/physical] illness. It would not be an overstatement to say that Teresa used the empirical-logical method to reach new knowledge. Teresa's use of 'to know' points to the significant difference between even strong belief and knowledge.¹⁸¹ On the way home, she gives an account of what she saw to her mother:

So when we were leaving, when we left I told my mother what I saw, but being a child I was unable to say it there [in the healing ceremony]. So my mother told me that that is how those people behave, but spiritually she believes that the man has removed something. I said, 'Okay' (Mokake 2007).

There is a significant difference between the worldviews of the mother and daughter at this point. Teresa's mother seems to have the view that there are two worlds, the physical and spiritual, and that what happens in the spiritual world (the man removing something spiritual) is not necessarily dependent on, or consistent with, what appears to happen in the physical world. In other words, the physical evidence relating to his 'procedure' is irrelevant to the fact that the man removed something 'spiritual' from her. Moreover, it is not clear what physical evidence *could* have motivated Teresa's

¹⁸⁰ Something her mother, from a reclining position, was unable to see (Mokake 2007).

¹⁸¹ Even though she does not say it directly, her knowledge of the witch doctor's trickery becomes evidence in her later judgement on the practice of 'cutting' the family members. However, as we will see, Teresa did not generalize this observation into a view about all the activities of all witch doctors.

mother to accuse the man of deception.¹⁸² Whether or not the two attitudes toward the significance of physical evidence as a foundation for belief marks a generational difference between mother and daughter, Teresa's perception, which resulted in her revised belief, becomes witness testimony when shared with her mother.

Teresa does not contradict her mother on the way home because it is not culturally proper for a child to make an elder look or feel foolish. She says 'Okay', but the lesson is not lost on her. Years later, she recalls the perception as part of the evidence that convinced her that the claims of the witch doctors were not entirely genuine.

Continuing her narrative, she returns to the crisis with which her belief revision began: The night sounds on the roof. The mother summoned one, then another witch doctor(s) to solve the mystery. They discovered what they called a '*burrdle*' buried in the compound, a bundle of significant objects,:

And when this man came he didn't know where the other man had searched the thing is found in the house... But he went to the exact spot and said that is where the thing is and asked the boys around to start digging and so they dug, dug and then they brought out some little thing like an egg. I was really anxious to see. When they brought the thing, he threw some concoctions there, and then took a knife and then opened it. But the content that came out... you could not imagine could come out from that small bundle. And then we could see some things that were missing in the house inside there...so many things and I was very inquisitive.¹⁸³ And I was asking questions...this one signifies what? This one signifies what? Some of which I will share with you. There was like a padlocked that was locked. And uh his interpretation was that that was to block the progress of the children in the house. And then there was a piece of foam. This kind of stuff.¹⁸⁴ Yes, that it was the case when you just get up in the morning and you just feel tired, your body broken. And those things they all had interpretations. When he burnt them he took the soot and give us some cuts. You can see some of the sites (Mokake 2007, 114-127).

A western forensic investigation of the buried items might question their source and who buried them in the family compound, but these issues were apparently irrelevant

¹⁸² The two-world idea is entirely consistent with the commonly held belief in the area that witches can eat people's souls without immediately killing the physical body. (See Ardener's comment in footnote 5.)

¹⁸³ The exact relation between the things in the 'egg' and those things missing in the house is of no interest here. The argument that they are signs pointing to spiritual oppression is very significant in the story.

¹⁸⁴ In saying this, she picks up a piece of foam material lying at the site of the interview.

to the anxious family. What is important was the interpretation of each item. Teresa recounts that she asked questions about the significance of each item, questions to which there was no lack of answers. The two items mentioned in the narrative, the padlock and the foam seemed to afflict the family and represent those afflictions.¹⁸⁵ The effect and meaning of the padlock was the ‘blocked’ progress of the children; the foam caused *and* represented the family’s weakened physical condition. These signs presumably pointed to some person who was working against the best interest of the families.

The following sections document in detail how Teresa reasoned through the events of the insect, the burrdle, the cutting of her body, their implications for her worldview, and how she acts on those implications.

4.4.2 Analysis of the Episodes of the Insect, the *Burrdle*, and the *Cuttings*

For the purposes of analysis and comment, I will separate Teresa’s narrative into two primary argumentation streams, the incidents of the insect and the burrdle. Then I discuss her reasoning about the cuts made on her body. In reality, the three are interrelated and cumulative in their impact on Teresa, but for the sake of clarity, I will treat each separately. The episode with the insect begins with the argument from perception; the second, about the ‘burrdle’, a small package of household objects found buried inside the compound, links the argument from perception (of the night sounds) to the argument from signs (about the work of a malevolent force). In the first case, the argument from perception falsifies the claim(s) of the practitioner involved. Teresa sees evidence that the witch doctor’s claims are explicitly false. In the second case, the discovery of the ‘thing like an egg’ and its familiar contents substantiate for a limited time, the claim to gnostic powers that the witch doctor makes. Both events entailed perception; Teresa interprets the first immediately. However, she questions the second

¹⁸⁵ These objects are excellent examples of ‘homeopathic magic’ (Frazer 1922). Someone believed that he could attack the family by burying these items in the compound.

as it evolved into an argument from signs.¹⁸⁶ In either case, the substructure of the argument was perception (See section 3.7).

Prima facie reasoning is perhaps the most basic example of reasoning.¹⁸⁷ It is a kind of self-evident belief. However, in Teresa's case, her perception results in a knowledge claim. Teresa sees the insect fall from the 'healer's' hand even before the egg white 'had come out.' This evidence brought to her attention the contradiction between what the witch doctor said he would do and what he actually did. She did not doubt what she saw, for she says, 'So I knew he was telling lies.' Unlike the doctor's visions, the perception is not a spiritual one. After witnessing what happened, Teresa is *committed* to testifying to what she saw. Her perception has become the content of her 'witness testimony' (Walton 2008) that she presents to her mother as a case against the doctor.

Witness testimony is similar to the 'argument from position to know' but is not, as in Teresa's case, accompanied by a list of criteria. At its foundation, witness testimony depends on perception, but memory processes that perception. We have already noted that Teresa's perception is the foundation of an inference,¹⁸⁸ which in turn becomes the grounds for an argument from memory that is subject to misunderstanding or selectively remembering aspects of the perception.

If memory is subject to multiple problems, why is witness testimony effective? One interpretation of the plausibility of witness testimony leans heavily on the Argument from Ignorance.¹⁸⁹ This is to say that 'when testimony is given and there is no evidence

¹⁸⁶ It should be noted that 'things' become signs because someone in a position to know makes the claim that they have a particular meaning. Thus, their argumentative cumulative force is grounded in two 'associated' presumptive arguments.

¹⁸⁷ Immediate inference is also a basic form.

¹⁸⁸ It is beyond my purpose here to discuss the psychology of perception, but it should be noted that one perception (the mental picture) can have several interpretations, each one depending on knowledge of the situation observed.

¹⁸⁹ Thomas Reid wrote that human judgment is by nature inclined to accept belief on a balance of considerations (Walton 2008, 14).

offered against it, the lack of rebutting or undercutting evidence is reason for accepting it, at least on a tentative basis' (Walton 2008, 14). However, the context of Teresa's testimony is a culture in which testimony, or personal conveyance, is the ordinary vehicle of much important data. So why did Teresa's mother disregard the implications of her daughter's testimony and not have second thoughts about the witch doctors? Her mother responds to her daughter's testimony based on her own script,¹⁹⁰ which in turn probably builds on many testimonies that she uncritically accepted. The family accepted the interpretation of the items found buried in the family compound on the same basis¹⁹¹ and believed that there was someone active in the spirit world who wished the family harm.¹⁹²

The form of the Argument from Sign(s) is quite similar to a deductive pattern except for the reversal of the general and specific premises¹⁹³ and the inclusion of 'generally' into, of course, the general premise. The argument pattern begins with specific data and proceeds to a warrant, which enables an inference to a conclusion:

Specific Premise: A (a finding) is true in this situation.

General Premise: B is generally indicated as true when its sign, A, is true.

Conclusion: B is true in this situation (Walton, Reed & Macagno 2008, 229).

It would seem that the burrdle (the egg-like container) and its contents constitute the A finding in this situation. Both the whole and the items inside it function as signs. These signs point to a multiplicity of consequences (B), each an interpretation of an individual item. Collectively, the signs point to a personal force attacking the family in

It is evident that, in the matter of testimony, the balance of human judgment is by nature inclined to the side of belief; and turns to that side of itself, when there is nothing put into the opposite scale. If it was not so, no proposition that is uttered in discourse would be believed, until it was examined and tried by reason, and most men would be unable to find reasons for believing the thousandth part of what is told them (Reid 1970) [1764], 197).

¹⁹⁰ See section 3.7.

¹⁹¹ See Chapter 3 where Dr. Emmanuel claims to 'perceive' people at work in the unseen world.

¹⁹² The full narrative makes reference to strangers who from a distance were watching the place where the family lived.

¹⁹³ In a syllogism the universal premise which governs the inference to the predicate of the conclusion is first. The minor premise, which treats the particular is second. That order is reversed here.

specific ways. The Argument from Signs thus transitions into the Argument from Fear

Appeal:

Premise 1: If you do not bring about A, then D will occur.

Premise 2: D is very bad for you.

Premise 3: Therefore, you ought to prevent D if possible.

Conclusion: Therefore, you ought to bring about A (Walton, Reed and Macagno 2008, 333-334).

Finally, the appeal to fear will become an 'Argument from Sunken Costs'.

This argument is set up over time:

t_1 , with a proponent's commitment to a specific action (pre-commitment).

t_2 , when the proponent is faced with the decision whether to continue the commitment or not.

Premise 1: There is a choice at t_2 between A and non-A.

Premise 2: At t_2 I am pre-committed to A because of what I did or committed myself to at t_1

Conclusion: Therefore, I should choose A (Walton, Reed and Macagno 2008, 326-327).

Moreover, after these earlier incidents the witch doctor demanded that there was only one way to protect the family. He must cut each member of the family and rub the ashes from the burnt objects into those cuts, permanently marking their bodies. This repetitive act of disfigurement would become a crisis for Teresa:

So those things, they all had interpretation. So he burnt them. When he burnt them, he took the soot and give us some cuts. You can see some of the sites¹⁹⁴...So he cut every member of the family and used the ash and placed it on us, that it would serve like protection... Yes sir, it not actually only in my hands, all over our body we had these cuts, legs, back, and so on. And they said it was for protection, and I asked, 'How long will it be?' They said, 'We need to renew it after three months. After three months, we need to call that man to come and cut, and if not, we are exposed again' (2007, 125-137).

The arguments proceed in an approximately linear fashion. What began as an Argument from Perception (the hearing of the things on the roof) became an Argument from Signs. The initial perception was the source of uncertainty and anxiety because its meaning was unknown. The witch doctor(s) claims the position to interpret (to know)

¹⁹⁴ During the interview Teresa showed me several exposed places on her body where the cuts had been made. The soot had prevented the wounds from healing properly and had left black welts on her arms, hands, face, etc.

the significance of the items that they have discovered,¹⁹⁵ and to provide signs on the bodies of the family that will serve as protection.

It is interesting that Teresa never asserts that A, the cutting of the skin, is useless. Rather, she denies the t_1 commitment to a in argument two. Even though she is mildly disfigured (or *because* she was mildly disfigured), Teresa simply notes that she ‘was not very satisfied’. As a churchgoing Christian, she talks to her pastor about her experiences:

...so I was not very satisfied. So that’s when I went to the church pastor at that time, Rev. Emi Beng. So I talked with him [about] the experience I have had and all those things so—that’s when he told me all those things are false powers. That Jesus alone is our protector. If I believe Him—if I accept Him as my personal Lord and saviour, He will be able to cleanse me from all forms of unrighteousness, and then he will be able to protect me from all those things that a witch doctor cannot give us for protection. That is when I accepted Christ (Mokake 2002, 143-148).

At this point, we should review what we know about Teresa. Early in her life, she evidenced a commitment to the truth. She was not afraid to tell her mother what she saw. Inquisitive, she questioned the witch doctor about the things found in the compound. Moreover, she had been a ‘churchgoer’ according to her own testimony. What she had learned at church is not clear, but at a crisis point in her life, her pastor proposes three, perhaps four,¹⁹⁶ crucial premises to her. First, he declares ‘all those things are false powers.’ One must not read too much into the statement. By ‘all those things’ I take him to mean that the actions taken and items used by witch doctors are false powers. However, since he speaks of protection in the next sentence one should not take him to mean that there are no malignant powers that threaten her. Secondly, he informs her that if she accepted Jesus as her Lord and Saviour, He would cleanse her from ‘all forms of

¹⁹⁵ This is exactly the role that Dr. Emmanuel claimed in the first dialogue.

¹⁹⁶ If one separates ‘if she accepts Jesus as her Lord and Savior, He would cleanse her from all forms of unrighteousness’ into two premises, the pastor proposes four statements containing one action she must do ‘accept Jesus as her Lord and Saviour’.

unrighteousness.’¹⁹⁷ From his viewpoint, her inner problem was the most important problem.

This is quite a different solution to the problem of evil than the one proposed by the witch doctor who attended to her family, or for that matter, the ministrations of Dr. Emmanuel. Their solution to evil was an external one. Pastor Beng saw her need for ‘inner cleansing’. After that cleansing, according to the pastor, Jesus would be able to protect her from all those things that ‘a witch doctor cannot give us for protection.’

In light of the danger inherent in living, one could view Pastor Beng’s comments as simply ‘Practical Inference’, where G is ‘protection’ and A is ‘accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour’:

Major Premise: I have goal G.

Minor Premise: Carrying out this action A is a means to realize G.

Conclusion: Therefore, (practically speaking) I ought to carry out this action A. (Walton, Reed, & Macagno 2008, 323).

On Pastor Beng’s account, the Christian pattern of reasoning (argument pattern) does not have the same G as the schematic of the witch doctors. Accepting Christ not only results in protection from the spirit world, G₁, but also has a more fundamental consequence, a change in the subject’s inner life, G₂. If one presumes that her goals were realized, action A, ‘accepting Jesus as her Lord and saviour’, will have two consequences: immediate protection and future protection. From an apologetic perspective, the cleansing of her inner life, G₂, is evidence that G₁ will happen.

What happens to Teresa after this religious commitment? She is transparent about both its costs and benefits:

When I accepted Christ, I came home, I told my mother. My mother said ‘Ah! Where was the pastor when she [the mother] was sick?’ So we left it and when the three months came for us to renew the cuts, I refused. It was not easy but I stood my grounds.

¹⁹⁷ Unrighteousness here refers to the historic Christian doctrine of sin. Pastor Beng’s solution to her external problem is based on a Christian view that the most pressing problem of evil is in man. The solution to that problem, according to the pastor, could only be found in the authority (‘Lord’) and power (‘Saviour’) of Christ. Only as she submitted to Christ’s agenda could she find the security for which she was searching.

So my mother said, well! If anything happens to me, I should be responsible. And I took the challenge though I had some fears in me because she will tell you “when you are moving, somebody can do this,” you know coming from the village culture with all that mentality. It was not just accepting Christ and staying comfortable. That fright was still in me, but I realized that since then, nothing had been done to me and I am fine (Mokake 2007, 148-154).

Her commitment to her new faith revealed itself in a series of partial strategies:¹⁹⁸

She told her mother her decision; she refused to allow the witch doctor to cut her again; and she faced (until the date of the interview) her ongoing fears for what they were (Walton 1995, 21). Clearly, her goal of safety remained realized until that time when she noted that ‘nothing had been done to me and I am fine.’¹⁹⁹

In the same account of her personal development, she threads the story of the lizard together with her own story to point to the conclusion that she had arrived at in her youth:

And if I can compare with my other brothers and sisters who are still in the church and then doing those things...As we are sitting here, they can see even a lizard. They will want to find out how the lizard got here. And those people [the witch doctors] will have something for it because there are stories told in the village where...like one of the stories was that a man tied the leg and went to the witch doctor, and the witch doctor said ‘the wound on that your leg, the person who has done it says that “that wound will never get well.” and when the man loosened it, there was no wound. So you see, those witch doctors do, like what we can say, try and error. They don’t really give full truth. And so our people have entangled themselves, and then they keep wasting their money because they want an interpretation for everything in life. If you are sick, they believe it is not normal...and those kinds of things (Mokake 2007, 148-159).

Teresa presents an argument conveyed by accounts. The first premise, which is contained in the example of the lizard, is that the witch doctors are able to answer questions about everything in life.²⁰⁰ Her conclusion is that the witch doctors ‘try and error,’ and they ‘don’t really give the full truth.’ The implication of her conclusion is

¹⁹⁸ Partial strategies are those actions undertaken to fulfil a commitment. Even if one does not reach the goal of the commitment, a person is wholeheartedly committed if he exhausts all possible actions in the effort to fulfil that goal.

¹⁹⁹ However, facing her fears was more than an emotional strategy. She had been ill before this interview and recounted, ‘So I stood my grounds—I told her [her mother] “from what I have experienced God, if it means dying, ok fine and good.” So when it reached the stage where they were saying that I should go for surgery, she was very bitter with me and she was using statements like “you think your husband has money, that’s why you just want to spent the money that way.” Well, I told her that “I believe God and I know that whatever the case, God will not allow me go through surgery—He will intervene.” This is just to tell you that even after I became a Christian, we still have this battle, mostly from our own people. They still look at the past, they try to associate some of those things”’ (Mokake 2007, 192-198).

²⁰⁰ Hintikka proposes that answers in a questioning dialogue with nature sometimes have deductive force (Barth and Krabbe 1982, 55-75).

that ‘our people have entangled themselves, and then they keep wasting their money because (returning to the first premise) they want an interpretation for everything in life.’

At its centre, this argument is again one ‘From a Position to Know,’ but in this case, the one to know is a class of individuals, the witch doctors, and the subject domain is all experience:

Major Premise: Sources a_{1-n} [the witch doctors] are in a position to know all things [things in universal subject domain] containing the set of all propositions, A_{1-n} .

Minor premise: A particular a asserts that a particular A is true or false.

Conclusion: A particular A is true or false.

Three critical questions in the argumentation scheme address this argument pattern:

Critical Question 1: Is a in a position to know whether A is true or false?

Critical Question 2: Is a an honest (trustworthy, reliable) source?

Critical Question 3: Did a assert that A is true or false?

Her example of the deception of the first witch doctor indicates that out of her own observations she had asked question one. The second witch doctor was not in a position to know about the deception of the man with the bandaged leg. Moreover, earlier in her witness testimony she also accused a witch doctor of being dishonest. However, one must not think that Teresa has totally discounted the power of the witches and wizards. Recently, she has come back to the ideas of her youth in an unexpected way. When asked about her current beliefs about witches and wizards, she confesses (Mokake 2007, 167-170):

Teresa: Em...I don't know but I think they play a great deal in my worldview. Because like, when I got married, and then Paul got involved into this deliverance ministry, it opened my eyes to some of those things I had learned as a child, and as these children testify. So...personally as I can say that witches and wizard, and these people have powers—they have spiritual powers²⁰¹ but the power of God surpasses them all.

²⁰¹ What are these powers? Teresa suggests ‘Eh...I know they have powers to manipulate over people’s intelligence. They have powers to displace things, they have powers to like health...disrupt somebody’s health. They have powers to curse. Like eh... when I was sick, this time that I was down like this.’

4.4.3 Belief Revision in Teresa's Experience.

Even though Teresa places great value on evidence, it seems clear that she is not an empiricist at heart. In her final comment in the interview, (4.4.2) her acceptance of 'children's testimonies'²⁰² about spiritual powers strongly suggests her continuing commitment to unseen realities. Can one evaluate the strength of her commitments to the cultural and Christian views of the spiritual world?

Wholehearted commitment occurs when one uses all available means to accomplish a goal. This presupposes that different strategies or ways are available to the subject of the commitment. However, what if no alternatives are available? Wholehearted commitment would then be tantamount to doing the same action repeatedly. In the case with Teresa's mother, she knew of only one way to deal with evil: go to the witch doctors. However, Teresa not only witnessed, she heard about the duplicity of other witch doctors; she carried out another partial strategy available to her. She went to talk with her pastor. In that dialogue, she learned about a solution to her problem. Pastor Beng told her about Christ. The pastor outlined a solution to her problems that involved three propositions: Christ is Lord; Christ cleanses a person's inside; Christ protects from evil. This script was unlike her cultural script. Her next partial strategy was accepting Christ as 'Lord'.²⁰³ Christ assumes the strategies described by the latter two propositions. He would cleanse her inside, and he would then protect her from evil.

Teresa's acceptance of these new propositions sets her life on a different course of partial strategies that continued to the time of the interview. It seems reasonable to say

²⁰² These are testimonies of children who claimed to be influenced or abused by sorcerers or witches. Teresa still puts substantial weight on witness testimony.

²⁰³ Her responsibility was to 'commit to' the assertion, 'Jesus was lord [of everything]'. In that sense, the commitment was dialogical—but it was a dialogue with more than one person. It was a dialogue with life.

that Teresa grounded her practical reasoning in the theory that Pastor Beng proposed to her. Wallace comments:

...One possibility is to understand theoretical reflection as reasoning about questions of explanation and prediction. Looking backward to events that have already taken place, it asks why they have occurred; looking forward, it attempts to determine what is going to happen in the future.' On the other hand, practical reasoning 'typically asks, of a set of alternatives for action none of which has yet been performed, what one ought to do, or what it would be best to do. It is thus concerned not with matters of fact and their explanation, but with matters of value, of what it would be desirable to do' (Wallace 2008, 138).

From this perspective, Teresa's theoretical and practical rationality are intimately connected. The statement, 'Jesus is Lord' is the ontological foundation for two predictions: Jesus would cleanse Teresa's 'inside'; and Jesus would protect her from evil. The first prediction was subjectively judged; the latter, arguably in Teresa's view, objectively demonstrated. Williamson notes: 'One's belief in a proposition p is more robust to evidence if one knows than if one merely believes p truly; one is less likely to lose belief in p if at the start one knows p rather than merely believes p truly' (Williamson 2000, 8). This makes sense in the context of belief revision if one considers 'knowing something' a form of entrenchment.²⁰⁴ In light of Teresa's partial strategies, her commitment to these new propositions was a 'non-retractable commitment' (Walton & Krabbe 1995, 39).

However, Teresa's penchant for evidence is still apparent. She notes that since she became a Christian, 'That fright was still in me, but I realized that since then, nothing had been done to me and I am fine.' Though she still says 'that witches and wizards, and these people have powers—they have spiritual powers' (Mokake 207, 176-177), she accepts that 'the power of God surpasses them all'. She had revised her understanding of the spiritual world: The powers of which she once feared are no longer in control of

²⁰⁴ Gärdenfors suggests that an entrenched belief is one that serves as a reason for other beliefs (Gärdenfors 1990). This is precisely the way that knowledge acts (K=E) in Williamson's view. Thus, it would be reasonable to think that the more beliefs a proposition supports, the more entrenched it becomes. However, entrenchment may be more explicitly related to commitments.

her life. If her original beliefs were viewed as a network, her new knowledge transformed that one in life-altering ways.

4.5 The Dialogue with Richard Tanke

In the following sections, I initially provide a basic narration of the dialogue. I then look at the dialogue using the dialogue tools. The language of the conversation was Pidgin; the apologist herself translated the Pidgin into English and the transcription was checked by Seh Clarence, the research assistant. At significant points of the conversation, the Pidgin is included in brackets as a phonetic approximation of the actual speech. (There is no standardized spelling for Pidgin vocabulary.) The different cultural backgrounds of the participants in this dialogue are notable. Teresa is Bakweri; Richard is from either Nschang or a Bangante background.

4.5.1 The Narrative

The dialogue begins with a greeting that is typical of any polite encounter in the Southwest of Cameroon. However, Teresa almost immediately launches into a series of questions about Richard Tanke's origin and culture. He is from the Western Province [Region], but he only indicates that his name is common among the 'Nschang or Bangante people'.

Though it is generally accepted that African religions have common themes about a high God, Teresa recognizes that these views vary among different people groups. Greetings aside, she quickly moves to the primary subject of her dialogue. What are Richard's ideas about God?

- 10 **Teresa:** O.K. What do the Nschang people believe about God or perceive him?
 Richard: It depend on what you want to know about God, traditionally we have three gods, one who controls all the other gods, he is in the very big shrine where sacrifices are been offered monthly, the sacrifice can be goat, cow etc., to give blessings to the chief ruler and for everybody. And then we have other small ones like the score where we put it around the house and we visit it
15 from time to time especially in times of problems.

The two words, ‘perceive’ and ‘belief’, carry significance here. In the Pidgin, she uses ‘see’ [how wo-now thee see God]. Being able to see a god²⁰⁵ is of fundamental importance to Richard’s cultural context. Since it is very important to see a god in a physical form, probably there are representations of all their gods in their shrine. He answers that they have three gods and many small gods. There is a hierarchy in the three, for Richard talks about ‘he’, the ‘one’ who controls all the other gods. This god’s place is in the ‘very big shrine’ and people make offerings to him monthly. The purpose of these sacrifices is to ensure the well-being of the ‘chief ruler’ and the community. The ‘other small ones’ are the gods who assist the ordinary people in their problems. At this point, Teresa continues her investigation of Richard’s theology:

Teresa: Ok. These small gods that your people [have] and these other superior God, now what is the name of the name of the superior God?

Richard: Well, which of the big gods do you mean? The one who created mankind, our own god also?

20 **Teresa:** Ah! So you people know that there is a God who created mankind, then someone who...

Richard: Yes, we know that there is a God who has created mankind.

Committed to understanding the pantheon of which Richard speaks, she requests to know who the superior God is. [Pidgin: Waiti be this big superior God he own name?]. Even though Richard does not hesitate to answer, he does not understand which of the three gods she has in mind. He questions her about what she means, then answers his own question with another question: ‘The one who created mankind [?], our own god also?’ At this juncture in the conversation, the one to whom he points may not be the ‘big [superior]’ God, but the god seems to be of great importance. Richard has clarified the matter. Of the three gods, the one who created ‘mankind’ seems to be the superior God. Consistent with her own goal for the dialogue,²⁰⁶ the apologist changes the

²⁰⁵ A western critical perspective would label this a ‘tangible representation of a god.’

²⁰⁶ In an actual dialogue, the participants typically have both personal goals and side benefits. Moreover, most dialogues possess dialogue shifts, or transitions between different dialogue types. In theory, the goal of the dialogue determines its type.

direction of the dialogue:

Teresa: So which one have you met?

25

Richard: So you know that the one who makes us to be fine, when we have trouble in our farm, trouble in the family, he is the one we meet, kill a goat, make traditional rites, we are fine; so he is the one in which each time we have problem, we run to.

Since the existence of a creator God is not now Teresa's immediate concern, she asks, 'So which one have you met?' The use of 'so' does not, I think, point to the conclusion of an argument. Rather, it presumes that men have dealings with gods in one way or another. Consistent with that presumption, Richard understands 'meet' to refer to participation in ritual and sacrifice dedicated to the one who 'makes us to be fine'. In Richard's view, the motivation for worship is to get help in time of need, a motivation one might expect. What he does not say is that the god who helps them is the creator God. Teresa continues to clarify her impressions of Richard's beliefs:

Teresa: Ok! But note that he is not the one who created mankind.

Richard: We know that he is not the one who created mankind. He is the one who gives us instructions on what to do.

30

Teresa: But you like a young man who is growing, how do you imagine the one who created mankind to be?

Richard: We know that he has created us and left us alone. He has created us, done his own work, so we know that it's the god we have, he talks with us directly.

Teresa: Ah! You people pass through a god to the God almighty?

Richard: Yes

35

Teresa: But don't you believe that this almighty God sent his son to be a mediator for you and me? Or you still believe in your shrine God?

Richard: We believe in that shrine god because the day you stop going to him, you are in trouble, no matter where you go, trouble will follow you until you have made sacrifice, so he [is] the one that we are saying, without him we can do nothing.

Richard affirms Teresa's understanding of his theology. The one who helps them is not the creator God of man. The god whom they meet is the 'one who gives us instructions on what to do.' Teresa, however, does not question the god's instructions; she asks 'how do you imagine the one who created mankind to be?' This is a difficult question for Richard. His tradition only says that the God who created man left him alone and that the one they do know is the one who 'gives instructions on what to do.' This sets up a pivotal question from Teresa. 'You people pass through a god [the one who gives instruction] to the God almighty?' Richard responds that this is so. Teresa

then turns to different lines of questioning, the first about ontology and the second about the evidence for the man's beliefs:

Teresa: Now do you believe that that your traditional god exists?

Richard: He really helps us because if we stay without doing this and that, some will die, and when we don't do it, we will die.

Teresa: Now can you enlighten me how this god operates?

50 **Richard:** Our god is capable of seeing even the future of man. Then there is the chief priest who interprets the words of the god, since not everybody understands the language of the god. The chief priest, when giving sacrifices, asks the god questions about the land, families and danger coming to the land, and the god will give them information and instruction about the land. The chief priest passes the information to
55 us whom he is guiding while the guider of the god brings information from the god about the sacrifice, which is done after the rallying of the people by the chief.

Though Teresa's first question seems to imply that Richard may not believe in his god's existence, the point of the question is to find out how deeply he is committed to that existence. Richard answers that he is very committed in the face of sanctions by providing essentially an 'Argument from Fear Appeal', which is based on two presumptions: His god knows the best for the future of the people and the land. Sacrifice is necessary for the people to know how to ensure that future. Teresa does not attempt to undercut or rebut his argument at this point. Rather, she maintains her focus on information gathering. Richard briefly describes the priestly focus of his tribal religion, but does not illuminate or identify the 'guider of the god.' The picture is of a centralized cult. However, Teresa does not pursue those details in her further questions. Rather, she returns to the earlier theme of perceiving or seeing the god that he worships:

Teresa: Have you ever seen the god before? Or is it only the chief priest that sees him?

Richard: Only the chief priest goes in to speak to the god but in the shrine, we can see a small house meant for those with tough problems. Only this people go in to the small house after giving sacrificial items to the chief priest. The chief priest then goes inside the main shrine to meet with the god. Everyone can hear him performing some rituals and asking the god to help the people.²⁰⁷

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Richard recounts the remarkable picture of a people looking at a shrine that contains a 'small house' for those who have 'tough problems', and who have given

²⁰⁷ This an argument from perception (hearing) that, in so far as the villagers are concerned, is a prima facie reason to believe that the chief priest is vitally interested in the village and actually encountering a god.

‘sacrificial items’ to the chief priest. It also contains a kind of holy-of-holy place into which the chief priest goes to meet with the god, perform rituals, and ask the god for help for the people. One wonders (and this is only speculative) whether the biblical account of the tabernacle in the Pentateuch influenced the form of the tribal cult. Teresa has found the information that she will now use to construct her primary argument, an Argument from Superior Ends and Means.²⁰⁸

65

Teresa: Now that you are a Christian, the Bible tells us that Christ died on the cross and break... We can... through this, we were all made priest thereby enabling us to enter the holy of holies with no problems [We fit enter the Holy of Holies with no problem.] And the Bible tells us that we are clean through the blood of Christ on the cross, so why keep on sacrificing, how can you? (61-64)

It might seem odd, given her past, that she would see Richard as a Christian, but earlier in the dialogue, he shared with Teresa some deeply personal insights into his spiritual life:

Teresa: But don't you see that if you accept Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour. [If] You believe that he is the only way to the God almighty, even if you refuse the village god, it means nothing.

Richard: I do go madam, we are always taught about Jesus all the time, but in times of problem, I will pray once, twice, and thrice, but if I run to shrine god my problem gets finish, how then can we stop sacrificing? (40-45)

Richard has a very tedious spiritual life. He knows about Jesus and prays to him, but his ability to wait for an answer is limited. When his endurance is exhausted, he panics and (‘runs to’) the shrine for help. Teresa does not dwell on the man’s limited perseverance. She recognizes the remarkable similarity between Richard’s religion and the Jewish perspective on Christian theology in the New Testament book of Hebrews. She finds this argument on this analogy. However, the analogy is only the framework. She compares Christ’s work, described in Hebrews, to the work of the priests in Richard’s tribe. To do that, she turns to Hebrew’s argument, which claims that the

²⁰⁸ To the knowledge of this researcher, this pattern is not currently recognized in the literature. The pattern ‘Argumentation from Ends and Means’ has three variants (Walton, Reed & Macagno 2008, 325), but none of the three are comparative in the analogical sense.

metaphysical end of Christ's work is like, but superior to the practical ministry of the Old Testament High Priest. On that basis, she argues that the work of Christ is superior to the work of the tribe's chief priest since the chief priest can enter only into the presence of the tribal god. Christ has cleansed men and women so that they can enter into the creator God's presence without sacrifice. The argument pattern looks like this:

Premise 1: End *y* is a superior end when compared to end *x*.

Premise 2: Means *a*, by which end *y* is reached, is a superior means when compared to means *b*, which is the way to end *x*.

Premise 3: End *y*, which is reached by means *a*, is superior to end *x*, which is reached by means *b*.

Conclusion: End *y* and means *a* should be chosen (Walton, Reed & Macagno 2008).

However, Richard does not accept that end *y* (to enter the holy of holies in the Christian metaphysic) is superior to end *x* (to be without problems and suffering in this world). Cleansing, however Richard understands it, should reach an end in the here and now:

Richard: People say Christ's blood has cleans us and there is still suffering. So which [what?] has cleans us? Because if we are clean then news should not be heard about the death of children without been sick, suffering of the young in the village, childless couples accused that the village curse, etc. Therefore, if we were free from Christ's blood then we ought not to have these problems. On that point of view, we have decided that our god is powerful. (65-69)

Richard's argument is a practical variant of the classical Argument from Evil.²⁰⁹

He asserts that if Christ's blood had really freed them, 'then we ought not to have these problems' [The ones that he has mentioned]. However, it is obvious, as he states, that we do have these problems. Therefore, it is only reasonable to turn to 'that our god is powerful.' Teresa at this point does not accuse him of a particular fault; she wonders what could make him think that he could 'believe in the 'church' [the God of the church] and the village god. He gives a surprising answer:

70 **Teresa:** Br. Richard, therefore you do believe in the church and also in your village god, why?
Richard: Because we know that our god works together with the god they call the almighty God.

²⁰⁹ If God exists and is all-powerful, all-good and all-wise, then evil would not exist.

Evil exists.

Therefore, either God does not exist or is not all-powerful, all-wise or all-good.

Teresa: So you really believe that the other god works with the almighty God?

Richard: Yes.

Teresa: What makes you think that the almighty God works with the other god?

Richard: Because whatsoever we give, the amount is announced there.

Richard claims that the two gods work together, his god and the almighty God. Moreover, as if again to plumb his commitment to this belief, Teresa asks, ‘So you really believe that the other god works together with the Almighty God?’ His answer of ‘yes’ provokes another question from her, ‘What makes you think that the almighty God works with the other god?’ His answer is unexpected, ‘Because whatsoever we give, the amount is announced there.’

To understand his answer, one must enter into the practice of many West African Churches. Funds are often raised through donation services, when public appeals are made to all in the village. In some situations, the church publicly announces the amount that a person has given. This is apparently one of those situations. The ‘announcement’ of his contribution is evidence to Richard that his belief, the village god works with the almighty God, is true. An ‘Argument from Recognition,’ not in the literature, but might be reduced to an argument from signs that Richard seems to interpret his giving as an offering that the almighty God accepts. Teresa has one more question to ask him.²¹⁰

Teresa: So how can you reconcile the fact that Christ said, He is the way, the truth and the life, no one goes to God except through Him, yet you holds firm to the village god; therefore you don’t truly believe; do you?

Richard: We do truly believe because if we didn’t, he would not have spoken to us since he is not also with us, He is on the same side with our village god. Thus, He also sees and gives us information and instruction. If He would have been amongst us, then there would have been no need to believe in him.

Teresa’s question carries the tacit proposition that Richard is guilty of contradiction. Already, in the early part of the dialogue (5.4.1), he has conceded that he goes through the village god to reach the almighty God. Now she confronts him with

²¹⁰ The situation of the dialogue or Richard’s agenda may well have limited its length.

Jesus' words about his mediatorial role between God and man. It is at this point that she accuses him of not believing. By this, I take her to mean 'believe in what Christ did and the consequences of it'.

Richard's response in lines 81-84 is difficult to understand. Coming at the end of the dialogue, no further questions addressed to Richard clarify his viewpoint. It seems that his idea of belief is associated with his inability to see Christ; nevertheless, he 'sees' that the almighty God is 'on the same side with our village god.' Thus, somehow Christ's presence is also the source of 'information and instruction'. Does this mean that Christ and the village god are two of the three that he mentions in the beginning of the dialogue? If this interpretation is correct, neither the identity of the third, nor that god's relationship to the other two, is clarified. Teresa closes the conversation with a proper appreciation. Richard Tanke warmly reciprocates the gratitude (81-82):

Teresa: Oh! Thank you very much for giving me this information.

Richard: Thank you very much. [Thank you too plenty.]

4.5.2 The Analysis of the Dialogue

As an information-seeking dialogue, their conversation remains consistent with the initial condition of personal ignorance on Teresa's part. She knows little about Richard Tanke's worldview. She closes the dialogue on a note of appreciation, an assessment for which Richard Tanke is thankful. That said, the intention behind the dialogue is more than just information gathering. Consistent with Walton & Krabbe's taxonomy, an information-seeking dialogue might also be conceived as a didactic dialogue,²¹¹ a questioning dialogue whose secondary 'aim' is to 'pass on personal knowledge' (Walton & Krabbe 1995, 66). However, the primary aim and secondary aim would be

²¹¹ In their view, information dialogues are sub-typed into expert consultations, didactic dialogues, interview, and interrogation (1995, 75). It would seem that Teresa's goal is not to turn Richard into an expert, but a practitioner of his knowledge.

inconsistent unless the one gathering the information is committed to genuinely revealing the knowledge of the one being questioned. From the beginning of the dialogue, Teresa intends to both learn about and engage Tanke's religious beliefs. Nevertheless, she resists engaging his beliefs until she thinks she understands them.

Certainly, the Argument from Fear and the Argument from Perception play significant roles in the foundation of Richard's commitment to his village religion. The Argument from Evil, as the dialogue closes, emerges as an argument that compels his shrine sacrifices. He proposes this argument in response to Teresa's argument from 'Superior Means and Ends.' Moreover, his Argument from Recognition seems support his view of the cooperative nature of the relationship between his gods.

Since the dialogue is largely a series of questions and answers, there is no problem with the flow of information. Richard feels free to answer the questions about the religion of his people. Teresa's questions all contain presuppositions of one sort or another. For example, when she asks the name of the superior god, she assumes that Tanke's pantheon has a hierarchical structure. In addition, when she asks, 'So which one have you met?' she assumes that Richard takes part in a ritual relationship with one of his gods. Her questions guide the direction of the conversation and provide it with continuity. As the dialogue progresses, the underlying presumption that Richard is a Christian becomes more prominent. At one point Teresa says to Richard, 'Now that you are a Christian', or calls him 'Brother Richard'. She bases her approach on his account of his Christian teaching. On that presupposition, she is able to challenge him about the apparent inadequacy (from a Christian perspective) of his beliefs.

The commitments in the dialogue are clear. Teresa's commitment to interact with Richard is steady, as is Richard's commitment to his beliefs. Neither retracts their statements and Richard does not distance himself from the implications of his statements

about his gods. It is not until the end of the dialogue that Teresa's hidden commitments become visible. She is committed to worshipping and encouraging others to worship the almighty God. This commitment has shaped the dialogue, but it seems not to have initiated a revision of Richard's village beliefs.

4.6 Concluding Reflections on Belief Revision: Curiosity, Questions and Knowledge

In this section, I synthesise some observations on questions and knowledge from the narrative of Teresa's life and her dialogue with Richard Tanke. This methodological turn in this particular dialogue seems appropriate for two reasons. First, Teresa's account of her own experiences is dialogical in the broadest sense of the word. She avidly engages both physical experiences and people with questions about the matters she has encountered. Secondly, elements in her dialogue with Richard Tanke strongly reflect her past. This section suggests that she brought the crucial belief revisions that she had experienced in her life, a different view of herself and god, to her dialogue with Tanke.²¹²

I first look at the relationship between theoretical and practical rationality and then discuss Hintikka's perspective (1982) on questions. This leads to an examination of the two key questions that Teresa directed to her life experiences and the answers to those experiences that she passed to Richard Tanke.

Regardless of the species of Belief Revision Theory one adopts, be it AGM or RMS, new knowledge plays a significant role in belief change. Moreover, on other accounts, knowledge also plays a fundamental role in practical reasoning (Hawthorne 2004, Harman and Sherman 2004, Williamson 2000, 8). Thus Pollock claims that rational cognition, the processing of new information, is a feedback system

²¹² Williamson notes, '....we frequently have better epistemic access to our own immediate physical environment than to our own psychology' (2000, 5). We have noted Emmanuel's developing candour about himself and his reasons for practicing traditional medicine. Though he might have been aware of the truths about himself before the dialogue, it is also possible that what was initially tacit knowledge was made explicit during the conversation.

incorporating epistemic and practical cognition. ‘Neither can accomplish much without the other’ (2010, 178-185). In other words, ‘knowing what to believe and knowing what to do bear intrinsically on each other (Williamson 2007, Chap 5; Pollock 2006).

The question arises, ‘How does one arrive at the kind of new knowledge that impacts the process of beliefs (epistemic cognition) and behaviour (practical cognition)? In BRT, this question returns the discussion to the problem of success. However, the answer I propose does not seem to be a part of Belief Revision Theory, which envisions success to be a property of knowledge and not a characteristic of the one who knows. I propose that the quality of curiosity, the propensity to ask questions, or the desire to know is crucial to acquiring knowledge that leads to belief revision.

The importance of observation motivated by curiosity was suggested by Hintikka & Hintikka (1982, 55-75), who claimed that questioning is the act of making tacit information explicit.

Observation, in this sense, is different from mere perception. It is an act motivated by a desire to know. To observe is to explicitly or tacitly question an event or situation. Examples of the questioning nature of observation abound. A hospital admits a person for observation because they want to know whether the person exhibits atypical physical behaviour. Sherlock Holmes, Hintikka’s exemplar, made observation a way of seeing the world.

Teresa observed the events of her cultural script that played out in her family’s life. I will examine three occasions when she observed and appraised claims of others as to whether those claims were reasonable. The first incident involves the insect she saw in the witch doctor’s hand. She paid careful attention to his actions because she was curious about what he was doing. Observing his actions, and putting it together with a proposition about lying, her conclusion was ‘So I knew he was lying’. She had arrived

at the answer to the question in one situation of what she should believe. Later, when strange objects were found in her mother's compound, she responded to the situation with curiosity. 'I was anxious to see...and I was asking questions...this one signifies what' (Mokake 2007). Even later, when faced with the imperative of the repeated cutting of her body to protect her from malevolent powers, she asked the question 'what should she do'? In this latter case, her question may have really been about why the witch doctors could not protect her longer with their cuts.

Teresa is a questioner. While the knowledge she received from pastor Beng explicitly furthered her belief revision, a new purpose for her life, and new patterns of behaviour, Teresa's belief revision did not begin with the dialogue with pastor Beng. Years before that dialogue, she had developed the habit of questioning, a habit that led to a sceptical view of Bakweri country doctors, to question Pastor Beng, and to question Richard Tanke.

Chapter Five: About African Resurrections

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter documents a conversation about the common Manyu belief in the physical (perhaps metaphysical)²¹³ resurrection of humans from the dead.²¹⁴ I argue that the dialogue is primarily rhetorical with a few dialectical elements, that the initial purpose of information-seeking gradually becomes that of information sharing, which in turn, becomes something akin to a joint exercise in speech writing. Thus, the dialogue takes on an epideictic²¹⁵ emphasis grounded largely on narrative. In general, the basis of dialogue's rhetoric is that of cultural or common knowledge passed down from persons in a 'Position to Know'. In the latter part of the dialogue, Sunny's peculiar use of the Argument from Ignorance implies a concession to that knowledge. An 'induction from example', (the ghost in 'Franco'), concludes the growing rhetorical nature of the discussion. In spite of the dialogue's rhetorical content, Walter's intent in initiating the dialogue is to determine with Sunny whether they should delete the belief from their cultural script. Thus, the issue of belief revision is at the heart of the conversation. In this light, the dialogue takes on the dimension of an inquiry.

In this introduction, I lay out the background of the dialogue. In section 5.2, since the dialogue's initiator intends the conversation to be an information-seeking dialogue, I will continue the discussion of information-seeking and inquiry dialogues, and the idea of relevancy with respect to questions and answers. Then, in 5.3ff, I follow with an analysis of the dialogue. In my conclusion I will attempt to characterize this conversation

²¹³ The stories about these resurrections cite different kinds of physicality possessed by the 'resurrected' one. Thus, it is impossible to describe precisely what kind of resurrection takes place. Such variances are of no interest to the following discussion.

²¹⁴ In any case, one should not confuse the resurrection phenomenon described here with the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the dead at the Second coming of Christ. Henceforth, the idea of 'African resurrection' will be called a temporal resurrection—an event happening in time.

²¹⁵ Epideictic rhetoric is the display of qualities, appropriate for a particular audience, that are to be praised or blamed (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book I, Chapter 9).

as a type of dialogue not noted in the literature, the ‘Information-sharing’ dialogue and discuss the transcendent element in the ‘searching-premise’ that Walton claims to be in the Argument from Ignorance.

As noted in chapter one, argumentation schemes consist of argumentation patterns and critical questions directed toward the premises and/or inferences of those patterns.²¹⁶ However, questions, here thought of as tools, include both the critical questions and the types of questions that are intended simply to obtain information.²¹⁷ This is a somewhat artificial distinction. It is often difficult to know whether the conversationalist uses a question to test an argument or to gain information. However, in either case questions typically reveal the commitments or beliefs of the speaker(s).

Locating the source of this belief in temporal resurrections is difficult. In his 1956 work, *The Coastal Bantu of Cameroon*, Edwin Ardener makes no mention of the details of this particular tradition, but he does talk about the nyongo, people who ‘abstract’ the bodies of their dead for the purposes of slavery (Ardener 1956, 95). This fits the present view of the participants in this discussion that the belief originates in the Manyu Region, an area about two hundred kilometres from the coast. However, their viewpoint may not be entirely accurate since that region is on Cameroon’s western border with Nigeria. Prior to 1 October 1961, eastern Nigeria and western Cameroon were for practical purposes a contiguous cultural/political area. These regions of those countries still have much in common culturally. Thus, belief in temporal resurrections and its associated practices might well have originated in the eastern Nigeria of today.

However, the belief in temporal human resurrections has spread well beyond the Manyu region, carried by those who have left the region to seek opportunities elsewhere

²¹⁶ Many patterns take the form of the modus ponens syllogism: Major premise, minor premise, and conclusion. (Walton, Reed, & Macagno 2008, 16).

²¹⁷ However, one hardly ever obtains information in a dialogue without some supervening purpose.

in Cameroon. This dialogue supports the ideas that the belief in the resurrection of dead people began in the Manyu region, and continues to have a significant influence on those from there. Both participants, who are from Manyu villages, continually refer back to their home area where the resurrections purportedly take place. On the other hand, these men were living in Kumba at the time of the dialogue, a city about one hundred and twenty kilometres from Mamfe, the district headquarters of the Manyu area.

Agbor Ashu Walters, then a student at Cameroon Baptist Seminary-Kumba, and Sunny, then employed in an institute for agricultural research, are the participants in the dialogue. These men bring an interesting collage of education and experience to the discussion table. Walters, who had not yet earned his B.A. degree, has a technical education. A forest products company employed him before his current schooling. An analytical, even critical perspective characterized Walter's student work. Sunny earned a B.A. in Anthropology from the University of Yaoundé. At the time of the dialogue, he worked for an organization that conducts research into food crops.

In a later interview Walters, who initiates the conversation, provides an explanation of why he chose the resurrection issue²¹⁸ as his topic:

The very first thing I will say is that I have personally witnessed to Sunny about Christ but without taking into account his...his...an understanding of his entire worldview. And so I presented Christ to him, and he accepted Christ and I've been teaching him the Bible... And uh...my interest also was not only to know from Sunny some of the things that have been happening in Manyu, but to also understand how he thinks and how he sees the world (Walters 2008, 66-75).²¹⁹

Part of Walter's purposes for the dialogue is to gather news from Manyu and an understanding of 'Sunny's worldview...how he thinks and sees the world are consistent with the objective and characteristics of an 'information-seeking dialogue'. Though such

²¹⁸ The Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which occurs at the end of history, is fundamentally different from this belief. Resurrection, in the Christian view, is entering into a permanent state of transformed existence.

²¹⁹ Interview, 18 June 2008. This comports with the view that the object of our epistemological efforts is not knowledge, but understanding.

a dialogue can aim at didactic²²⁰ or consultative goals, it can also take the form, in this case, of an interview or interrogation. In theory, the initial situation entails the ignorance of the interviewer.²²¹ However, while Walter's purposes for the conversation may initially shape the dialogue, the conversation may end up as a 'mixed dialogue', one that transitions from one type to another. This dialogue has the potential of becoming a persuasion dialogue, an inquiry, or even a deliberation. As always, I use these labels provisionally. Though it might seem that information-seeking dialogues are a universal phenomenon, this dialogue, as well as others in the same context, call into question the theoretical ideal that is pictured in the question and answer approach to information-seeking. Since the participants in this conversation move beyond information-seeking to a common understanding that they are participating in an inquiry, a dialogue about the truth of the resurrection, there is potential here for divergence from the standard paradigm of an inquiry. In order to understand these paradigms (and shifts between them) it is necessary to examine by way of review (See section 1.7.3) the standard characteristics assigned by Walton & Krabbe (Walton & Krabbe, 1995; Walton 1998) to the information-seeking and inquiry types of dialogue. This we turn to in the next section.

5.2 An Information-Seeking Dialogue

Walter's and Sunny's purpose for meeting seems to make the conversation an information-seeking dialogue.²²² In such a dialogue one participant assumes, or hopes, that the other has information that he wants (Walton, 1998, 126). Thus, one requirement

²²⁰ The dialogue takes a didactic turn with Walters' challenge to Sunny to research the 'topic of devils'.

²²¹ One might question the information seeker's 'ignorance' in cases where the interviewer knows the answer to the questions, but asks it as an examination question. In this latter type of dialogue, the one asking the questions is conducting an inquiry into whether the presumption that the one taking the examination knows the answers is true.

²²² However, the one seeking the information might not disclose fully the purpose(s) of the dialogue.

of an information-seeking dialogue is the transfer of the information that satisfies the questioner's need. The main goal of the dialogue, however, can go beyond the simple act of passing of information. According to Walton, an information-seeking dialogue's ultimate goals might include 'revealing position and spreading information' (Walton & Krabbe 1995, 66), while the personal goals of the participants might include gaining, passing on, showing or hiding personal knowledge.²²³ Indeed, Walters asks Sunny where he stands on the resurrection issue (220-224).

The course of an information-seeking dialogue is largely, but not entirely, directed by the questioner. The questioner typically has more control of the conversation because he has some idea about what he knows, and thus what information he wants to know. However, it is quite possible, even probable, that the one to whom the questions are addressed might guide the dialogue by requesting clarification of questions, by giving partial answers or even simply giving replies to the questions asked.²²⁴ With this in view, the goal of information-seeking dialogues is associated with the explanatory function of reasoning.²²⁵ The results of information-seeking, of course, may or may not coincide with the discovery of truth. The discovery of truth, on theoretical accounts, is the goal of inquiry.²²⁶

5.3 Inquiry: The Verification of Propositions

²²³ According to a number of informants, a West Cameroonian is typically very cautious about sharing personal information because others might use that information against him or her.

²²⁴ In the logic of questions and answers (erotetic logic), a reply is not the same as a direct answer, which is 'what counts as completely, *but just completely*, answering the question' (Belnap and Steel 1976, 13-16). Italics are mine.

²²⁵ 'In so far as reasoning is used for sharing information, it is used to make one of the parties understand propositions or to make him understand them to a higher degree, or it is used in one of the other explanatory functions. Hence, information-seeking dialogues are characterized by the explanatory function of reasoning' (Krabbe and van Laar 2007, 35). The explanatory function of reasoning will be an important concern in the discussion of this dialogue.

²²⁶ Williamson's concept of knowledge best comports with an interviewer getting knowledge, but not necessarily truth. Perception illustrates this problem. One sees from a distance an adult slapping a child. One 'knows' what one saw, but the nature of the event is subject to further consideration. Perhaps ants were biting the child. Testimony is defeasible, subject to a differing interpretation based on additional knowledge.

In contrast to information-seeking, ‘The goal of an inquiry is to prove that a particular proposition is true or false or to show that there is insufficient evidence to prove that this proposition is either true or false’ (Walton 1998, 70). An inquiry is argumentative and cumulative. It begins with true and indisputable premises²²⁷ and works its way to a conclusion that is verified and true. In an extended inquiry, this conclusion becomes the premise, or the starting point, for the next phase of the inquiry’s argument.

Kripke views inquiry as an exercise in intuitionistic logic (Walton 1998, 72).²²⁸ This form of logic is not primarily concerned with whether a statement is true or false, but whether there is enough evidence to assert the statement. On this account, the assertability of a proposition is a substitution for truth.²²⁹ This substitution is not trivial in the present context. If the assertability of a proposition such as ‘Some people return to life after being buried’ is based on available evidence then conceivably one could never say for sure that such a thing does not happen because new evidence might affirm or deny the statement.²³⁰ In such cases, assertability does not equal truth if truth is an assessment of the way things are.

A practical empirical inquiry looks into the cause or nature of a historical event. Since the subject of the inquiry typically involves many kinds of factors, the evidence gathered would be of different kinds. Walton suggests that the empirical inquiry has

²²⁷ This is a foundationalist, not an egalitarian, view of inquiry. We will not be concerned here by infinite regress. Inquiries, in particular fields of interest, begin with the assumption of certain ‘givens’. This is true of even the most casual of inquiries. However, the intuitionist view of inquiry changes the rules of the dialogue considerably and may illuminate (in an odd sort of way) the dialogue under consideration.

²²⁸ Intuitionistic logic is concerned with reasoning based on warranted assertability (provability). Is there enough evidence to assert a statement? Mathematical systems that disregard ‘truth’ use this logical method.

²²⁹ Knowledge is the basis of assertability; i.e., one asserts a proposition because one’s general knowledge (evidence) allows one to do so. See Hamblin, *Fallacies*, 224-252. However, the difference between intuitionistic logic and Hamblin’s second category of argument, epistemic logic, is the first rule of epistemic logic (E1), ‘The premise must be known to be true’ (226). From this author’s perspective intuitionistic logic, while not primarily focused on determining truth, cannot avoid the issue of truth. See chapter 8 for a further discussion of assertability and its implications.

²³⁰ Section 5.6.9 examines the modus ponens Argument from Ignorance. The first premise of such an argument pattern is termed the ‘searching premise’ by Walton.

three stages: collecting evidence, discussion, and the reporting stage. The discussion phase is the primary dialectical phase. Participants question the evidence, and then subject the answers to the initial questions to more questions. The process continues until the inquiry deem it appropriate to write a report of their findings, which contains the assertion(s) of the investigators. Current theory thus creates a somewhat symmetrical balance between gathering evidence and reporting. However, if the three stages of an inquiry collapse into one event, and the cultural context does not allow questions posed to the evidence, the evidence becomes the report, whether or not the supposed evidence is truthful or relevant. This dialogue illustrates that dynamic.

5.4 Relating Information-seeking and Inquiry

Current argumentation theory separates information-seeking and inquiry (Walton & Krabbe 1995, 65ff). However, the separation is just that: theoretical. If information is the evidence in an inquiry, the truth or assertability of a proposition cannot be determined without information seeking. In other words, an inquiry cannot proceed without information seeking. On the other hand, information generally has a purpose or purposes that go beyond the mere possession of the information itself and the elimination of personal ignorance. The work of a reporter exemplifies the fine line between information seeking and inquiry. A reporter seeks information that will inform and benefit the community; to benefit that community the reporter discovers the need to judge, for example, whether an event is the result of a particular cause, i.e., whether a particular proposition is true. Thus, the reporter moves back and forth between information-seeking and inquiry, or investigation. The dialogue between Walters and Sunny is part information-seeking, part investigation.

5.5 The Issue of Relevancy

Walters' individual purpose for the dialogue prompts his questions and determines the relevancy of the answers to those questions. From his own account, the conversation is

an effort to explore Sunny's worldview. However, a reasonable presumption here is that he already understands and shares much of Sunny's worldview. They are from the same cultural background. From that perspective, the dialogue may turn out to be an exposé of much of Walters' own worldview. Walters is aware of this commonality (86), but is committed to discovering the specifics of Sunny's beliefs. The further commitment on Walters' part here is the determination of Sunny's commitments. That commitment creates its own level of relevancy. How he pursues this goal is a significant issue in the conversation.

5.6 The Dialogue of Agbor Walters with Sunny

In lines 1-14, the ceremonial greetings play a more important non-dialectical role in the structure of the dialogue than our theory would allow. They emphasize the importance of relationship and trust in the dialogue

5.6.1 Ceremonial Greetings

The dialogue between Walters and Sunny²³¹ begins in a way that one might expect a conversation between two long-time friends to begin, with greetings and with questions about their past activities. This initial stage of the dialogue, and Walters' forthrightness, may well be an attempt to re-establish a relationship and trust with Sunny. Trust is a factor not generally taken into consideration in dialogue theory.²³²

5.6.2 Information-Seeking (Sharing?) about Bate Bisson

Walters now explains to Sunny his initial interest in the conversation: He wants to learn about the situation of a man named Bate Bisson. Sunny agrees to that conversational

²³¹ Short for 'Sunday'. The man was born on Sunday.

²³² Walton and Godden (2005) suggest that trust and suspicion are qualities of, respectively, non-sceptical and sceptical epistemological positions. They claim that both dialectical stances are inadequate approaches to critical engagement and they suggest a middle position, one attuned how the implications of an asserted position would damage the respondent's position. It seems fair to say that Walters and Sunny trust each other in the dialogue. However, trust has unclear implications here. Walters, in the excerpt from his interview, has already declared his trust in the 'town crier', but the act of trusting here might be much more complex.

goal. Thus, it would appear for pragmatic purposes, that an information-seeking dialogue is underway. However, Walters does not immediately tell Sunny why he wants to know more about Bate Bisson, but gradually clarifies his purpose in pursuing the topic. The occasional repetitions of words or phrases in the dialogue may have several functions, but our primary interest is in repetitions that have dialectical functions like questioning. I consider the dialogue context in the attempt to determine the repetition's function.

Walters: All right, I... I came to—to find out some information from you. Em... do you know of one Bate Bisson?

Sunny: Yes! Yes.

Walters: Bate Bisson.

Sunny: Bate Bisson.

20

Walters: Tell me.

Sunny: Eeh... Bate Bisson, Mrs Bate Bisson or let me call him Mr Bate Bisson was a lecturer in Buea University, a Doctor who died and a writer. A Poet and a writer.

Walters: So what about him? I learnt that he died some time ago.

25

Sunny: Yes, he had a motor accident when he went to Yaoundé to launch the new book he wrote.

Walters: Ok! Bate Bisson is a native of where?

Sunny: From Ndekwan.

Walters: Ok! So he died in the course of that accident?

Sunny: Yes!

30

Walters: He died.

Sunny: He died and the...

Walters: And has he been buried?

Sunny: Yes.

Walters: Ok! Where was he buried? Is it in Yaoundé or in his village?

35

Sunny: In his village.

Walters: Ndekwan is where?

Sunny: In Manyu Division.

Walters: In Mamfe?

Sunny: In Mamfe.

Though Walters has said that he wants to get information from Sunny, the dialogue begins to take on characteristics of what I call here an 'information sharing dialogue in which assertions are made, and each man exchanges questions and inferences. The interchange, it appears, in effect, tells a story.²³³ The content of Sunny's answers

²³³ The story, or possibility of a story, depends on the degree to which the knowledge of each man falls into the categories of common or mutual knowledge and the degree to which they are motivated to create a composite story from their sources. In the following account little mention is made of specific sources; hence, the dependability of those sources is not in question. One of the significant exceptions to this aspect of their argumentative reality is Sunny's admission that he has not met a resurrected person.

typically does not obey Grice's sub-principle of quality. For example, his answer to Walters' question, 'Do you know of one Bate Bisson?' does not take the form of 'yes' or 'no' as Grice's sub-principle of quantity would dictate. Rather the answer takes the form of a non-linear account, which in linear form might read: *Bate Bisson was a person who held a position at Buea University with the title Doctor; He was a person who possessed the particular skills of writing and poetry; Moreover, he died and was buried in his village* (21-38).

Since Walters has already heard news of Bisson's death, there is something like a confirmatory purpose to this opening phase of the dialogue. Walters accomplishes two goals with his questions. He confirms the news of the man's death and he ascertains that Bisson was indeed from Ndekwan in the Manyu Division. He begins the next line of questioning based on this information.

5.6.3 The Resurrection of Bate Bisson?

Walters now turns to his real interest in the conversation, the temporal resurrection of the dead, and the possibility that Bisson might be an example of that phenomenon. However, his tacit commitment, to learn about Sunny's worldview, is never far below the surface of the conversation. The dialogue continues to be an information-seeking dialogue, but increasingly takes on the character of information-sharing. References to the possibility of (or lack of) evidence for the phenomenon is considered. Thus, Walters probes Sunny's status as an eyewitness. Though the difference between 'news' and 'rumour' is not made clear in the conversation, the idea that some reports, i.e., rumours, are innocuous is introduced (45-46). Walters wonders aloud about the possibility of the occurrence of such a phenomenon (48). Sunny responds that while he has no experience of meeting people who have died, he '*does believe*' (51-52) in the phenomenon based on a stories that he has heard. Sunny provides an account of a resurrection, but returns

several times to his lack of personal experience of meeting someone who has died as a source of hesitation (perhaps doubt) about the matter. His inability to give an eyewitness account of the existence of people who have come back from the dead plays an important role in this stage of the dialogue and in its argumentative patterns:

- 40 **Walters:** Ok! Did you attend the funeral programme, or you were here in town?
Sunny: No! I was here in town.
Walters: Wow! I hope as a Mamfe man, there must be some news about him? You know whenever Mamfe people die; at least there must be some news. So have you gotten any latest in town about the late Bate Bisson?
Sunny: No! Not quite.
- 45 **Walters:** I hear some news that he has travelled to Germany. That's the rumour I hear in town. Have you come across this rumour?
Sunny: I cannot say because I haven't come across such a rumour.
Walters: I was beginning to wonder how it is possible for somebody who had died and they say he is in Germany, but are these kinds of things familiar or common in the Manyu context in your area in Mamfe. When somebody dies, tomorrow or someday they say they have seen him again?
- 50 **Sunny:** Yes. I myself I have lived in Manyu. I have been hearing about it, but I haven't seen it, but I do believe. There was one time I heard...em...somebody resurrect, he resurrected and...
Walters: Somebody resurrected.
- 55 **Sunny:** And was...em...burnt. Although I wasn't there. But I was in Manyu when it happened. People were rushing there
- 65 **Walters:** Cases of people who die and come back to life are very common
Sunny: And what I don't understand is like those people appear in certain...for certain people to see them because I myself, I have lived and I move to many areas...where dark areas where you expect this types of...
Walters: Expect...
- 70 **Sunny:** ... You can suspect this type of people there but...
Walters: You have hardly met with them...
Sunny: I have hardly met with them.

5.6.3.1 Analysis

I have chosen to mark the beginning and end of this segment of the dialogue by the occurrence of two empirical questions. At the beginning Walters asks Sunny whether he had been at Bisson's funeral in Mamfe (39). An affirmative to this question would have made Sunny a significant eyewitness to the burial and events that might have happened afterwards. However, Sunny interprets Walters' 'whether' question, whether he was in Kumba or Mamfe, as two separate questions and gives an answer to each question, as if to emphasize that he was not there. The latter question, 'You have hardly met with

them?’ (72), is a sentence that I interpret as a question.²³⁴ Sunny answers, ‘I have hardly met with them (73). In other words, he has not personally met someone who has risen from the dead. One could interpret this section in at least two ways.²³⁵ The first interpretation, which I will adopt here, is that two argumentation schemes are present, an argument from popular opinion (41, 46-49, 52)²³⁶ and an Argument from Ignorance (50,65-66,70).²³⁷ My immediate emphasis here is on the latter argument, the Argument from Ignorance.

Sunny seems to have reservations about the reality of ‘resurrections’ because he has no first-hand experience of such people. No one whom he knows has died and afterwards been alive in his presence. This is an Argument from Ignorance. Walton says ‘every Argument from Ignorance starts from a lack-of-knowledge (lack of proof, lack of evidence, failure to establish) premise that is inherently negative’ (Walton 1996, 246). On this account, Sunny should deny the resurrections because there is a lack of evidence. However, Sunny’s lack of first-hand testimonial evidence contrasts with his statement of belief that such things exist (51-52). Is there a plausible explanation for this?

One can view Sunny as engaging his tradition through an argumentum *ad ignorantiam*, but the absence of evidence seems to have no impact on his belief in the tradition. Why? Walton’s continuing account of the *ad ignorantiam* argument (246ff) helps one understand Sunny’s rationality. In addition to the ‘lack of knowledge premise’,

²³⁴ Many phrases or sentences in this dialogue are, it seems, questions based on the other person’s answer. Here is an example of a repetition functioning as a question.

²³⁵ The second retains the argument from popular opinion, but interprets Sunny’s comments about not meeting a resurrected person as a critical question. However, Sunny does not seem to formulate his comments in a way that seriously question the belief.

²³⁶ An argument from popular opinion can be placed in this format:

Premise 1: Everybody in this group G accepts A.

Premise 2: This group is in a special position to know that A is true.

Conclusion: Therefore, A is (plausibly) true.

²³⁷ We will have opportunity later in the dialogue to discuss argument from popular opinion and its relationship to witness testimony. At this point, we focus our attention on Argument from Ignorance.

'There is no evidence for A',²³⁸ Walton suggests that the Argument from Ignorance contains that which he calls a 'conditional or *search* premise' in the form of '*If A were true (or false), it would be known to be true (or false)*'. Applying this to the current question, the modus ponens form of such an argument would be:

Premise 1: If they (resurrected people) were there, I would see one of them (a resurrected person).

Premise 2: But I did not see one of them.

Therefore, they are not there (do not exist).

For such an argument to be reasonably²³⁹ conclusive, according to Walton's view, one or both of two conditions must hold: The area or domain, the subject of the search thought to contain the item, must be closed and secondly, the search itself must be thorough. In other words, one searches the area thoroughly. Walton likens this to the search for a missing item in a drawer. After examining all its contents, one reaches a positive or a negative conclusion.

The second condition requires the use of several different physical tests, as in the search for a planet between Earth and Mars. After a thorough search, the absence of any evidence legitimately establishes the conclusion that a planet is not there. In the first case, the domain, the inside of the drawer, is closed. While one might assume the closure of the area in the search for a planet, the compound methodology of the search for the planet actually allows for the conclusion.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ The formula, 'evidence equals knowledge', (E=K) is fundamentally important to this argument because what one considers as knowledge, when used as evidence for judging the nature of a proposition, has the potential of elevating that proposition to the status of knowledge.

²³⁹ Reasonable, used in this way, is a loaded term. One who is proposing an Argument from Ignorance might have less rigorous conditions for their 'search' and therefore claim something that they do not actually know. This often occurs when, after a less-than-thorough search for a lost item, one proclaims that it is not there.

²⁴⁰ However, both these illustrations are essentially positivist or physical in their thrust. The 'thing' sought for can be seen or measured in some way. Ironically, an empiricist perspective fits our present context. Sunny is talking about physically meeting someone who had a verified death and burial. However, what might be the relationship of this argument scheme to a reality that is not subject to inspection and identification? The conclusion of this chapter considers this question more carefully.

In Sunny's case, it is debatable whether the domain is closed, but it is certain that his 'search' is not complete. Thus, we observe that the absence of seeing the formerly departed does not outweigh the supposition that resurrected people actually exist. There are three possibilities why this might be the case. Following the critical rigour outlined above, it is possible that Sunny recognizes the limitations of his *ad ignorantiam* argument. A second possibility is that his supposition of the existence of resurrected people is simply evidence-resistant, that no lack or absence of evidence would convince him of its falsity. It is entrenched. The third possibility, of course, is some combination of the two.

The presupposition that Sunny holds is instantiated in the story told in lines 51-64. While they recount stories like the one in these lines throughout the remainder of the dialogue, why should a story of the burning of a 'resurrected one' (59) have such a striking impact on Sunny? From a dialectical viewpoint, one finds part of the answer to this question in a separate interview with Walters. He recounts how he first heard the story:

There are some persons in our villages, key persons, persons may be of some dignity or authority, whom when they say something we...we easily accept it to be true. Uh...some sages in our community who witnessed to the burning of the corpse of this boy on the fire. They actually witnessed it and came back with such testimonies. And so there was room for us to believe.... One of them was living in my father's compound in the village. He too is of late now. He was not necessarily a sage. He was like a town crier. Town crier... whenever something happens...he summons those who are living in the same compound in the village. And most often, when those things happen, he's always there. So he's the one who comes most often and gives the report in our own house. So we get almost ...information from him (Walters 2007,138 ff.).²⁴¹

The storyteller gave to the report his position and credibility so that the story took on a credibility of the teller. This argument for the actuality of an event combines three different argument patterns: the 'argument from witness', the 'argument from authority', and the 'argument from one in a position to know' (Walton 1998; Walton, Reed &

²⁴¹ Walters mentions the roles of 'one who is always there', the witness, but he is not quite sure whether the town crier qualifies as a sage (Oruka 1991).

Macagno 2008).²⁴² In this case, the one in authority is the same as the one who is in a position to know and is, at the same time, an eyewitness. On this account, stories like the one Walters remembers draw their initial argumentative force from the simultaneous support of all three argumentative streams. In other words, argumentation patterns like these in this African context may overlap and reinforce each other, resulting in something like a cumulative argument centring on one source.²⁴³ In Walters' mind, this strongly supported the truth of what the sage or town crier, a person of authority, had to say. However, while one can abstract such an argument into several strands, it is debatable whether or not, without prompting, Walters would see these strands as separate. One might object here that the three types of argumentative schemes are artificially imposed on the setting, but that would be to miss the nature of argumentation schemes, each of which carries with it a different set of questions. One obvious criterion for someone who claims to present eyewitness testimony is the question of presence. On the other hand, one typically considers that a 'person in a position to know', knows a great deal about a particular subject. On the modern account, one subjects the qualifications of an expert to great scrutiny. However, in one African account, people view the 'expert question' in a charitable fashion. Kirby writes about how the Anufo deal with an apparently incompetent diviner (expert).

Once the problem is categorized at one of the problem-solving levels, the sacrifice is determined by the type of problem, its intensity, and duration. These are labelled by colour, by the type of animal to be sacrificed, by food- or any combination of these. Then the client is left to make the appropriate sacrifice. If the problem continues, it is assumed that something went wrong in the process, and the client simply goes to another diviner (Kirby 1992, 330).

5.6.4 Explaining the Belief

²⁴² Current theory separates the three types of argument, argument from authority, expert opinion (the position to know) and eyewitness testimony into separate streams of presumptive argumentation. Cultural contexts where the three types of argument are not differentiated change the dynamics of knowledge.

²⁴³ This is analogous to Basil Mitchell's 'cumulative case' apologetic methodology, but we do not have three witnesses, each with his own testimony. We have one witness with three different roles.

Sunny's comments about having not met a resurrected person prompts a seemingly light-hearted discussion about what one might feel or what one should do if one encountered such a being (73-98). Does Walters use these hypothetical situations to determine the degree of Sunny's emotional investment in the belief, or are those questions simply a means of gauging Sunny's current connection to the Mamfe culture? Coaxing Sunny to answer, he says 'Brother, tell me. It's an experience. You know we are all from Mamfe' (86). Though this type of question within a conversation certainly qualifies as information-seeking, it seems that Walters' strategy is to introduce the hypothetical possibility of meeting a once-dead person as a background for the next section of the dialogue. Thus he questions Sunny's commitment to the broader implications of the belief in resurrected beings. No matter how one encounters such a being, their conclusion is that one should behave as though one did not see the person.

The conversation now turns to the problem of who (or what) causes people to rise from the dead (99-122). The dialogue continues in a shared mode, with both Walters and Sunny contributing to the explanation(s) that they propose. It is noteworthy that neither man at this point is denying that such resurrection events actually happen. Rather, their interest seems to be in the questions of *why* or *how* such things take place. While their conversation carries anthropological significance, our primary interest here is in the question-answer dynamic of their discussion:

- 100 **Walters:** This issue of people dying and coming back to live has been part of our culture, you can understand. And sometimes it's like a priority in Mamfe. If your person dies and does not come back to life...there is no rumour about him or her that he/she has been seen somewhere, either in Cameroon or Nigeria or in another country, it is like that particular family is not a strong family. I don't know whether these kinds of concepts are in your own family?
- 105 **Sunny:** Yes, it's something traditional for some people...for some families let me say. They do prefer it, and they arrange for it.
- Walters:** They arrange for it?
- Sunny:** They arrange for it.
- Walters:** Tell me little bit about...
- 110 **Sunny:** I heard they use to...they give you a certain medicine for you to come out and see certain things. For somebody who is a responsible somebody who died accidentally...

Walters considers the resurrection belief deeply embedded in Mamfe culture. The reason for that cultural importance, he notes, has to do with the status of a family within society. Families who do not have rumours of 'resurrected members' attached to them (100-102) are not viewed as powerful (or 'strong')²⁴⁴ families. Walters' use of the term 'rumour' (101) may imply that at least some of the stories are cultural fabrications because, as he implies, the fundamental reason behind the resurrections is the family's desire to be viewed as a strong family.²⁴⁵ The explanation, in Walton terms, is an empathetic explanation, an explanation centred on intent or motivation and the plan and the action behind the event (Walton 2004, 52). The continuing conversation reinforces the explanation that is initially consistent with a personal view of cause and effect and presumptive argumentation. Walters would later note in lines 179-183:

As they usually do? You know in our context in Mamfe, when somebody dies, there is a cause attributed to it, something must have happened before the person dies and we usually go and find out from native or traditional witch doctors to know the cause of the death and probably who must have killed...so tell me.

This explanation is two-fold: A death has two causes, a proximate cause and a remote, probably personal cause.²⁴⁶ The proximate cause is the immediate reason for the person's death; the remote cause is the person who set in motion the forces that resulted in the proximate reason for the death. This pattern of argument is an excellent example of presumptive reasoning.

Walters then asks Sunny a question using an assertion, 'I don't know whether these kinds of concepts are in your own family' (102-103). Apparently, in his culture a profession of ignorance carries the conversational 'implicature' of a request for

²⁴⁴ The men do not fully explain what it means for a family to be 'strong'. From the dialogue, however, there are families who consider that it is disgraceful to have some member who is not properly dead (204-213). The speakers do not make a systematic comparison of the two types of families. At a minimum, there is a family class system based on the use of magic and its power.

²⁴⁵ At least that is the implication of the text for this author.

²⁴⁶ Actually, his statement is ambiguous. Does he mean that *most* deaths have remote human causation, or that the witch doctor can only say with probability who that remote cause was?

enlightenment. An implicature (Grice 1975, 44) closely parallels the idea of implication, but depends on the conversational context rather than a logical connection. The question is entirely consistent with Walters' professed purpose for the conversation. By knowing something of Sunny's family beliefs, he seems to think that he will discover how strongly Sunny believes in the phenomenon that he has already professed (51-52).²⁴⁷

However, Sunny does not give a direct answer to the question. Rather than talking about his own family, he describes how some families prefer it, and preferring it, they arrange for it. Thus, an empathetic explanation of the origin of the practice leads to an interchange about the 'how' of resurrections, that is, their cause. Sunny first refers to the practice of medicine...and 'cuts'..., then refers to herbalists' involvement in the practice. In response, Walters, while adding to the narrative, guides Sunny in a description of what causes a resurrection or some kind of transformation (118, 120). Similar to Teresa's situation in chapter 3, someone (109-110; see Ardener, below) gives the 'medicine' to the person through cuts in the skin, but in this case, it causes the subject to *come out and see some things*. Though it is not clear what this seeing has to do with a resurrection, the men seem to take it as a direct reference to such an event. This is not directly a 'how to' explanation;²⁴⁸ these men do not intend to become practitioners of the art. Nor is this an etiological explanation, a type of explanation not treated by Walton. They do not relate the ongoing reports of the phenomenon to one initial source. Their explanation may be an ontological explanation, an attempt to explain why something exists. As such, one might relate the belief to the nyongo, a cultural explanation of

²⁴⁷ Premise 1: A child holds his parents beliefs.

Premise 2: Sunny parents believe x.

Therefore: Sunny believes x.

²⁴⁸ Walton gives four types of explanations (D. N. Walton 2004, 52-55), one of which is relevant here: The empathetic type of explanation in which one person tries to explain the actions of another person by attributing goals, motives, beliefs, or other kinds of internal states to another person. Shank (1986, 39) called it the 'intent explanation'.

success described by Ardener in the 1950s that was prevalent in the southwest of Cameroon:

At the present time, the original belief in witchcraft (liemba) is overshadowed by a belief in nyongo, a special form of witchcraft not originally indigenous to the Kpe. Certain people are believed to have nyongo when they achieve worldly success, without, to the Kpe, apparent reason. They are believed to do this by causing others, especially their relatives and children, to appear to die, and then to abstract their bodies from the grave and to use them as slaves to work for them. (Ardener 1956, 7).

The nyongo of which Ardener speaks is a power similar to the power used to effect the resurrection of a person among the Manyu, but those who practiced it did not consider it witchcraft. There is a similarity in the motivation in those using the power in the older account, in which families ‘abstract their bodies from the grave to use them as slaves to work for them.’ The presumed motivation in the former account is the increase of wealth; some among the Manyu today claim that resurrected persons send money back to their families. As the mother’s attitude in Sunny’s story implies,²⁴⁹ this is not only a virtue in the culture; it is an expectation.

5.6.5 Resurrections: Pragmatic Questions

This section (123-146) is the first of several passages of the dialogue in which the two men talk about the pragmatic dimensions of resurrections. From the start, the structure of the dialogue mixes rhetorical with dialectical elements until arguably, rhetoric predominates. This should not be a surprise. Early in the dialogue, (18-34) we have noted the tendency of the dialogue to become what I have called an ‘information sharing dialogue’. The significance that one attaches to the following sections partially rests on whether one takes Walters’ questions and Sunny’s answers to be a sincere interchange. We view Walters’ intent here to be consistent with his purposes for the dialogue. He is

²⁴⁹ Sunny: ‘So as I was saying, when this man died, he was buried, he rose and went to Nigeria. So the mother use to go to Nigeria maybe to buy or I don’t know. So the mother went and met this man—he had married one Nigerian and was living in his home. So the mother went there and saw her son there. This son was giving...he use to give the mother son money and the mother most of the time and the mother most of the time coming and going like that’ (181-187).

committed to understanding Sunny's worldview and commitments. Moreover, in light of the evidence, he also seems committed to initiating a change in Sunny's beliefs.

On the other hand, Sunny's answers are composed of what he has heard, what he knows, and his speculations about the events he describes. They do not necessarily reflect his worldview or his commitments. Though Sunny and Walters' conversation consists of reporting events they consider connected to encounters with or actions of resurrected people, it remains an information-seeking dialogue in this sense: Walters poses hypothetical situations and then asks questions about the pros and cons of relationships to resurrected people in those situations. The 'What if...' question in lines 124-125 leads to Walters' pointed accusation that Sunny would be 'promoting his culture' in his response to the 'dead person'. This line of thought leads to a consideration of the fallacy of *non-causa pro causa*,²⁵⁰ whether two events that occur close in time bear a causal relationship. Section 5.4.6 addresses the second question, which probes the humanity of those who come back from the grave:

125 **Walters:** Suns, suppose one of your family dies...God forbid I am not wishing them dead, and tomorrow or after tomorrow you see him/her selling in super market, you know and offers you some money...you know, Sunny tell me your reaction.
 Sunny: Well for member of my family, the person is already member of my family; I don't think I will be afraid. I will even like to talk to the person and I will take the money...
130 **Walters:** And you do business...
 Sunny: Laughs...if it comes to that.
 Walters: Yeah I want to think that if I were placed in that position, I could take the money. Now tell me, when you will be taking the money, how do you reconcile your conscience, given that you knew that he died sometimes ago? In that case, are you just promoting your culture? Please let me just get some briefings.
135 **Sunny:** Ehem...I don't...I will take the money quite alright and the only thing I will try to avoid will be to tell people about it because if you happen to expose him the person too will feel bad about the whole thing and the person can harm you.
 Walters: Let's say you take this money with the purpose of investing on a business and along the way, some misfortune follows you, how will you explain that?
140 **Sunny:** If some misfortune follows me...
 Walters: Some bad luck...I don't know how to describe it but let's say some misfortune
 Sunny: Some misfortune can still come in as a coincidence; not necessarily meaning ehh... ehh...it must not mean that it comes through that...eh...
145 **Walters:** It is like you have studied causation—cause and effect. Yeah, the fact that misfortune came does not necessarily mean that...

²⁵⁰ *Non-causa pro causa* is the fallacy of 'false cause', which presumes a causative relationship between two events that occur close together in time. An agent interprets the first event as the cause of the second event.

Sunny: Yeah! The fact that misfortune came, does not mean that it is the reaction from the money that I took. It can still come in like that.

This passage seems to begin a rhetorical shift in the dialogue. However, this transition does not result in an oration in the fullest sense of the word. My reasons for this view are two: As the information-seeking becomes more and more ‘information-sharing’ the dialogue becomes a narrative, or storytelling. Secondly, the dialogue’s content is increasingly about the role of resurrection culture in the Manyu region. Walters makes a clear reference to this when he tells Sunny, ‘In that case are you just promoting your culture?’ (133, cf. 234-241) This shift toward the positive and negative cultural values embedded in the resurrection tradition heralds what I call a ‘rhetorical shift’ in the dialogue.

The argument underlying this interpretation of the dialogue shift is Aristotle’s view of the subject matter of epideictic rhetoric, which is essentially cultural in its content:

We must also take into account the nature of our particular audience when making a speech of praise; for, as Socrates used to say, "It is not difficult to praise the Athenians to an Athenian audience." If the audience esteems a given quality, we must say that our hero has that quality, no matter whether we are addressing Scythians or Spartans or philosophers. Everything, in fact, that is esteemed we are to represent as noble. After all, people regard the two things as much the same (Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Bk. 1 Chapter 9, 1367b).

In the Manyu context, people both praise and censor the actions of resurrected people. One could even say that the act of resurrection is itself censored. Praise and censorship are the two functions of epideictic oratory. Ironically, in Aristotle’s view, the crucial rhetorical responses to the past actions of deceased persons delineate cultural ideals and prohibitions. In a parallel way, Walters and Sunny’s comments on the actions, or the nature of the resurrected persons in their stories, reflect their own cultural values.

The section ends with Walters’ concession to Sunny’s observation that events that occur close together in time do not necessarily have a causal relationship (141-148). For the moment, Sunny has dialectically sidestepped the question of whether a resurrected

person can harm the affairs of the living, and steadied the dialogue by noting that Walters is on the verge of committing the fallacy, *non-causa, pro causa*, that two events occurring at approximately the same time have a cause and effect relationship.

5.6.6 Stories about Resurrected Persons

Walters then poses the question to Sunny about the ontological status of a resurrected person ('that kind of a person is not a real human being?'). Such people, Walters observes, do not feel free to live normal lives; they hide. Leaving behind the obvious physical difficulties of decayed human forms, Walters proposes a crucial cultural reason why people do not welcome such beings: 'They have passed through the normal process of burial.' Burial rites establish a boundary between the living and the dead. Sunny agrees—the living dead are not zombies—they are abnormal people (154ff). It seems that Sunny accepts Walters' 'outcast' theory of the abnormality of such a person, but even the actions of the outcast reflect both that which is worthy and that which is disgraceful in the culture in view. Sunny's first example is that of a young man who became involved in a cult that masqueraded itself as a Presbyterian Church. The cult asked the young man to 'sacrifice' his mother. Refusing to do that, they presume that the young man sacrificed himself. After his burial, he resurrected, returned to Nigeria, and apparently began sending money home to his mother. Going to Nigeria, she found him alive and married in that country. After the mother disrupted the marriage, she returned home and died:

150 **Walters:** That is true. There is an element of truth in what you are saying. Now but don't you think that you know, a human being died, being buried, the body must have decayed, now coming back to live. Don't you think that that kind of a person is not a real human being? Otherwise, why don't they feel free to live like other people? But they like living in hidings? Please, let's examine this.

Sunny: But if they cannot come in the midst of other people, it's just that they are...they are not welcome by others. People point fingers at them.

155 **Walters:** Now the reason, Sunny, why people will not welcome them is because they have passed through the normal process of burial...

Sunny: They are abnormal people, they are not—you will be afraid, even...coming to sleep with you, even it is your brother, even it is your mother, you will be afraid...you will not like to welcome them...??? I was told about a certain person from our village who died and he was very intelligent, studied in Nigeria...I learn he went to Nigeria...he was studying in Nigeria, he was a Christian—a Presbyterian Christian. So

160 when he went there as a new person, he will ask for the Presbyterian Church, but they went and introduced him to a church...the signboard is there Presbyterian Church but in it...

Walters: It was a cult

Sunny: Eeh! See! He was initiated [in] to that cult. See, just of a sudden, he was asked to give his own...

Walters: To offer sacrifice...

Sunny: He refused—he refused to give his mother

Walters: What happened?

175 **Sunny:** Maybe before they asked him to give his mother, you must have given some other person. So he refused his mother and so he sacrificed himself for his mother. One time he came to the village and, he was knocked down by a vehicle—out of the road, not even...out of the road and he was not even seriously knocked. He just fell and died like that. So when they went and found out as they...

180 **Walters:** As they usually do? You know in our context in Mamfe, when somebody dies, there is a cause attributed to it, something must have happened before the person dies and we usually go and find out from native or traditional witch doctors to know the cause of the death and probably who must have killed...so tell me.

185 **Sunny:** So as I was saying when this man died, he was buried, he rose and went to Nigeria. So the mother use to go to Nigeria maybe to buy or I don't know. So the mother went and met this man married—he had married one Nigerian and was living in his home. So the mother went there and saw her son there. This son was giving...he use to give the mother 'son money' and the mother most of the time coming and going like that...

At face value, the story contains an important ambiguity. Did the Presbyterian Christian die twice? Alternatively, is the death in line 133 a reference to the death in line 178? Presumably, the latter is the case. Early in the dialogue (39-65), Sunny demonstrates a propensity to tell a story in a non-linear manner.

More to the point, Sunny's narrative of the Presbyterian student could be thought of as a punctuated speech. Walters prompts the tale (153-154), comments on Sunny's narrative (177-180) and gives his own addendum to the story line (157,159). As anticipated in section 6.4.5, the story is rife with positive cultural values: The theme of intelligence and studying (158); the young man's self-sacrificial loyalty to the mother (169f, 173-174), and, the support of money for the mother (186).

How this 'punctuated story' furthers our understanding of West Cameroonian reasoning is not clear. Has the conversation moved beyond that of an information-seeking dialogue into entirely rhetorical territory? Not quite, it seems. In the next section, Walters is still committed to discovering Sunny's commitments. He first asks Sunny whether he has had a rumour of a resurrected person 'attached to his family' and then follows with a more personal question: How would he feel about becoming such a

person? ‘Let’s say there is an opportunity for you to become a resurrected person someday in the future. How do you react to this? How do you embrace it?’ Sunny is uncertain about the answer to the first question; his mother would have told him if such a thing were so. He does not answer the second question. Instead, he passes on the possibility of such an event happening to his family and the priest of the village. In any case, they share the consensus that such beings are disgraceful because they bring disorder to the village. Walters’ use of a new word in line (221) for a resurrected person, ‘devil’, significantly anticipates the closing phase of the dialogue:

215 **Walters:** Have you ever recorded in your family these kind of cases, I mean rumours about somebody of your family, whoever, maybe from generations past, somebody who died

Sunny: I think my mother would have told...she would have informed me about that, but I don’t think any has happened from my own family.

220 **Walters:** Now tell me, let’s say tomorrow in the future when we will all pass away to eternity, there is an opportunity for you...you know like we commonly say, there is a job opportunity for you somewhere in Nigeria or in some other country...yes after your death, you go there and you become a devil and you work some work and you begin to send money to your family. Let’s say there is an opportunity for you someday in the future, how do you react to this? How do you embrace it?

225 **Sunny:** You mean opportunity after life?

Walters: I mean there is an opportunity that is... I mean you die and you come back to life, becoming a devil and working money and sending back to your family to help them. Let...whether...how you will welcome the situation.

Sunny: Well...eeh...

230 **Walters:** Maybe you will be a survivor.

Sunny: I will leave that to my family because there are some families who try to block...because when they know that...because when somebody dies, they become...at times they come with...what they call the chief priest, the chief priest will only come and look at you, and will know that you will come out.

Walters: (236)Now we have just sampled some few advantages, or let’s say the positive side, I put that positive in quotes of those who die you know and come back to life, and the positivity here is that they work money, if at all and they sponsor their families, something like that. Now the other aspect of it which is on the negative side, which you have mentioned, which I want us to dwell on is the issue of the disgrace, because you say it’s disgraceful for people to hear that a member of your family dies and comes back to life. So let us examine that disgrace, what do you mean by ‘is disgraceful’? Let’s examine the disgrace and the frustration in it.

Sunny: (243)Uhum...know there are some that comes out and begin to disturb the village...everybody, very prominent in the village, you go this way...you have seen this person, how will you...you yourself you will not welcome that...you will not like to hear that your family member...

No matter what thoughts a reader might have about the subject matter of the dialogue, it seems clear the two men have attempted to consider, as Walters puts it, ‘the positive and the negative sides’ of the matter. Family status and financial benefit are on

the positive side; disruption in village life and disrepute the family potentially experiences are the negative consequences of resurrections. This makes clearer the complex nature of the dialogue. It begins as an information-seeking conversation. It then transitions to an information-sharing dialogue interrupted by moments of reflection and questioning, and ends up as largely extolling cultural values, both positive and negative, on the part of the two men (216-285). The latter part of the conversation, however, may not be purely rhetorical. It is not clear whether the men are simply extolling those values or using the accounts to weigh the evidence of an important tradition of the Manyu people. From this latter perspective, the dialogue turns into something like an intuitionist inquiry. Based on positive and negative pragmatic consequences, might one assert the fact of resurrected people? However, the men are not finished with their consideration of whether one can authentically speak of the events.

5.6.7 Two Criticisms of the Resurrection Belief.

Walters and Sunny have not yet voiced all their doubts about the tradition. In spite of the stories that underpin the accounts of resurrected people, Walters and Sunny offer what seems an inductive inquiry into the plausibility of resurrected people. However, Walters undercuts the plausibility of the belief through a critical question that carries with it an argument somewhat like that of an argument from pragmatic inconsistency:

- 265 **Walters:** I have been experiencing that in the village even when I was in early...and mid-primary school. You know we usually fear going to the bush, to the farm alone without our parents—the fear of devils, and I think that is one disadvantage with devils too. They are really abnormal human beings. And even before I settle on the point, disgrace, you once mentioned something here that I also want us to look at it a little bit critically. You said, when they die, they will rather prefer to settle in remote areas where people will not see them, because they believe they are abnormal human beings. Let’s examine how abnormal they are, Suns you mentioned that and you said...”because they know that they are abnormal human beings. Let’s examine the abnormality.
- 270 **Sunny:** Well, when I mean abnormal, if somebody—can you imagine you burry somebody in a coffin that has been nailed and that person comes out.
- 275 **Walters:** They dig six feet.
- Sunny:** Dig six feet, and you are buried...at times they...
- Walters:** Not only you are buried, they nail the box....
- Sunny:** They nail the box...How do you look at that type of a person who has come out again from that six feet?
- 280 **Walters:** It’s unbelievable...
- Sunny:** It’s unbelievable. So the person...

Walters: Is questionable

285 **Sunny:** Is questionable... and even the person himself is that type of person, only the touch of you, he can only touch you like that, and that will be all about you. They have their own power in them...they have great power in them. I don't know if the power dies for those who come out and get married...I don't know how it happens...I cannot say because some come out and get married...they go to other area and start life altogether and people don't know them there...

Walters: Son

290 **Sunny:** I don't know... maybe we are still living with some who must have come from other African countries...

Walters: And they are living here in Cameroon, even in Kumba market

Sunny: Yes!

295 **Walters:** Laughs...you see Suns, I am laughing, it's not like I am laughing at you. You have just caused me to remember something of the past. I listened from one of my uncles sometimes ago at least when I was a child that when the wife was pregnant and was labouring at the point of delivery...

305 Now, he took the wife by the side of that Indian bamboo so that the wife can stay under that Indian Bamboo for some time so that the rain will not soak her, that even it means giving birth, she can deliver there. The story is very funny, you see that he went there and met, at about 12 something in the night, he went there, and surprisingly, he met a man and a woman having sex. I mean he came to discover that there were two people whom they knew who had died, and have come back to life, enjoying themselves in such a place. Suns, do we say this is wonderful or terrible? The question I ask here is "if they had actually loved to live, why did they die in the first place?" and I don't know, are there some names that you people attribute to those who die and come back to life? I will like to know some of those names.

The text from the dialogue is included here for the purposes of context. In this segment, both Walters and Sunny reach the conclusion (280-282):

Walters: It's unbelievable...

Sunny: It's unbelievable. So the person...

Walters: Is questionable.

The dialogue (261-274) speculates on the nature of a resurrected being after a proper burial. Based on what must physically happen in the grave, the conclusion is somewhat ambiguous. Is the resurrection implausible or is it questionable that the resurrected one is a genuine person? If taken as a presumptive argument it would appear this way:

Premise One: Resurrection requires that the coffin be opened underground and...

Premise Two: No normal person could do such things....

Conclusion: Either resurrections do not occur or those who resurrect are not normal persons.

Clearly, the presumptive evidence (of what must happen for a resurrection to take place) is stacked against the actual occurrence of the event. Moreover, to call such an event mystical, which they do, presents another problem. Many of the accounts of resurrected persons tell of individuals who have lives that are indistinguishable from ordinary people. The 'script' this creates is not consistent.

Walters' second argument (291-309) involves a critical question. The story of the lovers prompts him to wonder, 'If a person has the power²⁵¹ to rise from the dead, why did he die in the first place?' To Walters their passion for each other should have been a compelling reason for them to remain 'alive'. The actual argument embodied in the critical question looks like this:

Premise 1: If a person has the power to rise from the dead, [it is presumed that] he has the power to stay alive.

Premise 2: The person does not have the power to stay alive.

Therefore: The person does not have the power to rise from the dead.

The argument does not defeat the belief in resurrection, but without a reasonable rationale for why someone should die who has a great motivation to live, the question undercuts the tradition. However, it does not falsify the belief for Sunny.

5.6.8 Epidictic Dialogue and Education

Walters has reached a point of transition in the conversation. It appears that from his side the dialogue is becoming less productive, and thus he institutes an instructional turn to their investigation. By raising the question of terminology, he seeks to look at the matter from perhaps a more orthodox Christian perspective. Thus, he seizes 'devil', one of the names for a resurrected person. However, he is not just interested in words. He says, 'My brother, it is interesting. Yeah, I will like us to consider talking about who a devil is, or who the devil is because you see something, a devil and the devil' (322-323). A dialogue about 'the devil' will take them far beyond the current subject. When asked about some of the names people attribute to those who die and come back to life, Sunny is perplexed:

310 **Sunny:** Well I don't know, I haven't asked... I don't know...

Walters: Because some people call it, ghost.

Sunny: Ok, I thought you were talking...

Walters: No! I mean an English name that another man can understand.

Sunny: Yah! They call it ghost.

315 **Walters:** Is there any other name?

²⁵¹ Magic equals power in traditional thought. It may be a power that one person has over another. On the other hand, it could be a power given to someone through a charm, substances rubbed into cuts in the flesh (120), or the power that comes through the possession of an idol.

Sunny: They call it ghost...

Walters: Some people call it devil.

Sunny: Uhum!

320 **Walters:** Let's say, somebody says "devil". What is the impression that comes into your mind? When somebody just says "devil." What comes into your mind in that first instance?

Sunny: Yes, first thing that comes from my mind is eeh...having died and come back.

Walters: Having died, and come back to life?

Sunny: Eeh...

325 **Walters:** My brother, it is interesting. Yeah, I will like us to consider talking about who a devil is, or who the devil is, because you see something, a devil and the devil. I want that we handle this in our next session—in our next session.

It is important to note that Walters does not tell him to study his Bible to find the answer to the question. He tells him, 'From your background knowledge of...you know... from your childhood interaction, religion, or whatever. I don't know where you get your sources, but 'just pray toward that' (329-332). Walters seems to propose that the next dialogue, while continuing to gather information about Sunny's beliefs, be more of an inquiry into the difference between 'devils' and the 'devil' and thus an opportunity to teach his disciple.

5.6.9 Ghosts and the Search for Evidence

If Walton's analysis of the Argument from Ignorance is correct, then one would expect that a person, who presumes that something exists, but lacks evidence for that thing's existence, would continue to search for evidence for it.²⁵² This dialogue recounts that Sunny strongly presumes that resurrections do occur. Though he has not encountered a formerly deceased person, he recounts the evidence that he saw in his youth for such a phenomenon—evidence in the form of a non-African film. This seemingly fanciful reference brings us face to face with rhetorical induction:

340 **Sunny:** I will just like to comment on the point that devils or ghost is a universal something, it's not something only attributed to the African context...

Walters: It is universal.

Sunny: It is universal.

Walters: My brother, you are logical eel...I thought you...

345 **Sunny:** No, I have watched films where a ghost was eel...a Western film, not the Nigerian type, whether they call it...the title should be Franco...

Walters: Unum!

²⁵² This of course does not mean that the thing exists. To make such a statement would be tantamount to a theory of precognition, the ability to see events before they occur.

Sunny: A ghost was disturbing the society...

Walters: Uhum!

Sunny: And there were, they have been trapping all...doing all what to catch the person, he was so mysterious that eeh...you might be complaining about this person. It's just so funny that when people are planning to catch him, he appears immediately you are leaving to your house. I mean when you come into a plan.

350

In Aristotle's perspective, a syllogism with a suppressed premise, conclusion,²⁵³ or example serve rhetoric well (Aristotle *Rhetoric*, Bk II, Chap. 20, 1393a). Our concern here is not so much with the enthymeme, but the power of the example. Aristotle does not think that induction is useful in a speech, but posits that an example can presumptively take the place of induction. For example, in arguing for a course of political action, an actual example proves most useful because 'in most respects the future will be like what the past has been'. Aristotle wrote that example:

...the nature of induction, which is the foundation of reasoning. This form of argument has two varieties; one consisting in the mention of actual past facts, the other in the invention of facts by the speaker (Aristotle *Rhetoric* Bk II, Chap. 20, sect. 1393a).

One might consider Sunny's mention of the ghost in the movie naïve. However, at the end of the dialogue, it embodies the searching premise in the Argument from Ignorance. Sunny still remains committed to the presumption, that the resurrected dead do exist.

5.7 The Apologetic Issue(s) at Stake in this Dialogue

What bearing does this dialogue have on person-to-person apologetics? The answer to that question leads us to Walters' concern. He is not simply about obtaining biographical information. Nor is he only interested in Sunny's worldview. In lines 151ff, he is intent on revealing Sunny's commitment to the cultural story of temporal resurrection. If left intact, such a commitment presents a formidable undercutting of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection from the dead. That in turn would have significant implications for a theistic understanding of God. For example, Christians believe that the power to create

²⁵³ These 'suppressed propositions' are often culturally accepted statements that make the argument plausible or credible without being subject to examination.

life belongs to God alone. The Manyu belief challenges the uniqueness of God's omnipotence. The resurrection belief also presents a very different script for a Christian's personal eschatology. The possibility of living a second life, of course, is not open to every person in Manyu, but the supposed fact that it exists undercuts the historic biblical understanding of death and judgement.

However, Walters' cultural connection complicates this task. The belief has also played a significant role in his life. He is not only engaging Sunny's commitments; he is dealing with his own questions. Walters' investigative or polemical purpose for this conversation is unfinished at the end of the dialogue.

The problem of the temporal resurrection points to the ongoing relationship of apologetics and discipling a person who has already added to his belief base orthodox propositions about the person and work of Jesus Christ.

5.8 Concluding Thoughts on Belief Revision: Rhetoric and Evidence

In this section, I comment on the role of cultural knowledge as rhetoric and the difficulty of respectfully evaluating and revising traditional beliefs.

This dialogue presents a complex, significant scenario to the reader who will examine its contents on its own terms. The dialogue features the cultural knowledge and arguments that Walters and Sunny heard as children. Hence, sections of the dialogue recount the stories that they first learned from presumably trusted members of their families and communities (155ff, 262ff, and 290ff).

Generations handed down many of these stories, thought to be knowledge, uncritically and authoritatively. Agbor Cyprian reports that sometimes his father responded to his questions with tradition:

But there are some of those things that he might not say anything about them and just tells you this is how it has been. That's how my father taught me. And that's why I'm teaching you this way, and that's how it is. And that's how we're supposed to take it (Agbor 2008a, 70-72).

Polanyi noted the power of this early education:

This assimilation of great systems of articulate lore by novices of various grades is made possible only by a previous act of affiliation, by which the novice accepts apprenticeship to a community which cultivates this lore, appreciates its values and strives to act by its standards. (1962, 207).

This articulate lore can be accurately described as rhetoric of the epideictic kind.

The stories and examples that speakers intend to reinforce the values and standards of those listening are rhetoric.

The problem with rhetoric is its emphasis on self-evidence, the quality of being the case because it seems reasonable to me. In short, rhetoric distances it from the kind of evidence featured in induction, and at best turns to example as a form of rhetorical induction. Examples can be a form of inductive proof, but a generalization based on *one example* is lacking.

Rhetoric depends on rational self-evidence. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca note:

It is to be observed that where rational self-evidence comes into play, the adherence of the mind seems to be suspended to a compelling truth, and no role is played by the processes of argumentation... Thus, maximally efficacious rhetoric, in the case of a universal audience, is rhetoric employing nothing but logical truth (1969, 32).

One might question the degree to which the Manyu stories of resurrection incorporate logical truth, but that is not the point here. Since the stories are essentially tied to testimonial evidence and rumour, and since the audience is not a universal audience, the rhetoric is thus spun using only local reasoning.

In this dialogue the lore suggests the possibility [of a good life] after life (84, 304) to the hearer. The good life incorporates positive cultural values. The resurrected son is a responsible son. This may to some degree explain why Sunny is attracted to the belief.

However, the purpose and content of the stories is not my concern here. My focus is on the men's attempts to call childhood knowledge into question. While they do criticize the resurrection claims as abnormal (147ff, 269) unbelievable (Lns 275ff), and

one story inconsistent (303-304), they have no prima facie evidence for the truth or falsity of the phenomenon.

The challenge of revising beliefs and values embedded in layers of didactic rhetoric learned from childhood is daunting. Complicating that difficulty, as Polanyi points out, is the reality that children typically receive the rhetoric of lore through relationships they trust (1962). The stories are identified with an admired uncle or a good father. Emmanuel's apprenticeship to his grandfather's beliefs and practices exemplifies this phenomenon. To disavow the stories is to fracture the relationship with the one who told them. Teresa experiences that with her mother when she refuses to have her body cut again by the witch doctors.

As a model of how humans revise their beliefs, BRT seems two dimensional and time bound. In Walters and Sunny's case, the process has a three-dimensional quality,²⁵⁴ with time providing the third dimension for stories from the past and claims from places inaccessible to conventional evidential tests. Sorting out the truth from testimonies from the past is no small feat in a setting where knowledge has been handed down through people.

²⁵⁴ Pollock (2002[2001]) factors time, evidence and testimony into a matrix-like model of belief revision.

Chapter Six: A New Question about Old Traditions

6.1 Introduction

Vinan Paul initiated the following conversation in August 2007 in the village of Babanki, Northwest Region of Cameroon. Initially Paul engages a young man named Sylvester, but at line 277 Celestin, Sylvester's twin brother, enters the discussion. The dialogue begins with a question about the gods' existence, and then focuses on one particular god called *Keng*. Their conversation about this god boils down to a dialogue on tradition that finally focuses on tradition's morality, and hence the extent of its authority. As a matter of convention, in this dialogue all references to a creator (as in Christian theology) will be capitalized. Other references to local deities will be spelled with a small 'g'. In ambiguous cases, the default spelling will be 'God'.

Paul's explicit goal for the dialogue is belief revision. He first seeks to replace the brothers' view that man created God with the idea that God created man. He then argues against the presumption that tradition (their god) is greater than the Christian God. Finally, he seeks to revise their belief that all tradition is good.

Paul sustains a dialectical approach through these topics. Initially, the subject is the nature of the gods' existence (16-142). Do the gods exist because man exists, or does man exist because God exists? From about line 143 to ~209 the focus is on *Keng*. Paul, the apologist, takes pains to determine the significance of *Keng* in Sylvester's worldview. This leads to a protracted discussion about the nature and value of tradition, a theme that pervades the remainder of the dialogue. However, in line 332 Paul presents the thesis that God is greater than tradition, and Sylvester and Celestin respond that God gives tradition. A detailed narrative begins around line 393 about a pastor who went to the United States (~399) and returned to Cameroon only to go mad after preaching against tradition (454-456). Through this example, the brothers intend to demonstrate

that tradition is more powerful than the Bible. The rhetorical significance of the story is not lost on Paul and from line ~489 the brothers continue to expound on the various powers of tradition for both good and ill. Paul recognizes that they have asserted a premise that he can use in his argument against their wholehearted commitment to tradition. From line 537, Paul develops the position that one should not hold to cultural evil, and the dialogue ends with one of the brothers reconsidering his view of tradition and its significance.

The dialogue is challenging and interesting for a variety of reasons. At many points, the English is colourfully idiomatic and at times very difficult to understand. For example, variants of 'to come out' mean 'to express oneself' or perhaps 'take a position'. Implicature sustains much of the conversation. For example, the intelligibility of the argument is sustained by the one who completes the meaning of the one who has just spoken:

275 **Sylvester:** Fine, because your parents didn't do it for you...that's your forefathers...your fore fathers didn't do it for your father, and your father right now has that right...he will still ask you to fall under his children...
 Celestin: In order not that family...family...family...eeh...e-e-e-em
 Paul: Curses?
 Celestin: Voila!

We will analyse in detail the first part of the dialogue through line 142, then briefly summarize (and analyse) the later sections in an effort to give as concise an account as possible of the whole dialogue. Since only excerpts of the text of those sections are included as background evidence for the discussions, the reader who wishes to follow the entire flow of the conversation should consult the full dialogue in Appendix Three..

This dialogue is perhaps the most explicitly dialectical in this collection of conversations. The apologist seeks to build on the questions and assertions of the others. Knowledge and belief revision play particularly important roles in this dialogue and set

it apart from the other dialogues of this collection, which often end without conclusions and suggestions for action based on those conclusions.

Unfortunately, the recording, and consequently the printed text, begins after the conversation has begun. Paul has already told Sylvester that he wants to do some research (51). Thus, the dialogue, like the one of Walters and Sunny, begins with the aim of seeking information. Responding to Paul, Sylvester suggests that Paul search out ‘old parents’ of sixty years to find out what he wants to know.²⁵⁵ Paul, however, insists that he wants to know what Sylvester, a young man, thinks about the gods... ‘and us’, an indeterminate reference, perhaps, to Christians.

Though both parties agree upon information-seeking as the purpose of the dialogue, the conversation quickly exhibits the dialectical qualities of a complex critical discussion (Walton 2008, 47) in which one participant proposes a thesis and another, an anti-thesis.

From Sylvester’s remark in line 17, Paul apparently begins the conversation on an emotional note. While strong emotional overtones characterize an eristic dialogue, the transcription does not provide evidence necessary to characterize the whole dialogue as eristic.

Paul: We are talking about traditional gods.

Sylvester: What did you want to know about traditional gods because I know that they definitely come from our fore fathers that you have.

Paul: Uhum!

Sylvester: A young generation like us...

5 **Paul:** Yes!

Sylvester: Cannot give you a details.

Paul: Yes, cannot give you...

Sylvester: Couldn’t see it is good to go and meet a father—when I talk of a father which is sixty something that can give something that can easily...

10 **Paul:** Yeah! It is very interesting but my problem here is having to talk with different age groups, right, that of a father, the old parents—you know women of about sixty years...yea! I have discussed with some of them. So I want to have levels of different age groups. Right? What do you as a young man thinks about those various gods, and what do you think about us...

Sylvester: Calm down...calm down.

²⁵⁵ David Ambola sought the knowledge of an ‘older parent’ in an earlier chapter. The differences between that conversation and the one under consideration are instructive.

Paul is from the Babanki people in the village of Babanki. Although he left home at the age of 13 to pursue his secondary education in Bamenda, his maternal grandfather taught him Babanki traditions in his childhood. Thus, Paul is conversant with much of the cultural ground covered in this dialogue (See 250-256). He recounts:

When...because I grew up with him...and when...he was a man who had a problem with the leg, so, and he was a lover of songs...a lover of children. So he told my dad that it is good for him to send us to come and be with him so that we can be helping him since he could no more work. We can be helping him to do one thing or the other... there so...we will carry him out and in, then while at times when he is fine, he sings us good songs, he narrate us stories...(Vinan 2007, 94-98).

Paul was deeply attached to the old man and described the death of his grandfather in a terse, but moving account:

And finally the day he died, he first of all sent me somewhere, I went, came back and we had to carry him out, carry...there he gave up...and he gave up. And so that is somebody who has really impacted my life (Vinan 2007, 100-102).

The grandfather played an important role in Paul's early education. He communicated to his grandchildren the Babanki history and culture through songs and stories. The old man was the embodiment of the past for Paul and his siblings. The story that bears most on this discussion is the one that his grandfather told him about the German occupation of and colonial influence on the area. In the same interview, he recounts his grandfather's narrative of the German colonial influence:

...when the white man came, he came with his own religion...he came with his own talks, he had to wipe out some of these things and the cultures have died down. Like formerly, they were burying their chiefs with two widows,²⁵⁶ but when the whites came, when the Germans came, they had to talk to them and that was being changed from there to another thing and so it has influenced a lot...it has cost them a lot of influence (Vinan 2007, 44-48).

²⁵⁶ The theme of burial traditions becomes as an important theme in the dialogue (573ff.). Paul uses such traditions to demonstrate that not all traditions should be obeyed. It is significant that Paul refers to the local burial customs when challenging Sylvester and Celestin about the evil in their culture (5835ff).

The cultural influence of the Germans, however, went far deeper than that of simply prohibiting certain cultural practices. The Germans brought a new rationality to the Babanki culture. Recounting his grandfather's assessment of that influence Paul continues:

...It's true he...he...he appreciated what they did...yeah...on the other hand he...like ...he ...since he was somebody who was so tied with culture—with tradition. He was like saying that the coming of the Germans have changed the mentality of the young—the young ones who are growing...so, so the young one now they reason differently from the way they were reasoning (Vinan 2007, 51-54).

What change in rationality did the German colonialists bring? The grandfather connects it to the increase of questions from young people and the knowledge obtained through those questions. At an earlier time, only people 'of a certain age' could ask questions. According to the grandfather, the Germans somehow encouraged children to ask questions, thereby accelerating the growth of knowledge

Because a child...now a child is very inquisitive to know more about things they thought it was only for...it was reserved only for people in a certain age...yeah! So when a little child is very inquisitive, he says, Oh, young man you reason more than your age...so wait when you grow up, you will know more. So that is from...eeh! That was the perspective of his own idea (Vinan 2007, 60-63).

One might guess that the old man was talking not only about Babanki children in general, but his grandson in particular. As a child, Paul asked many questions about his culture, questions that became a characteristic of his own personal pilgrimage. In particular, Paul continues to ask questions about the spirit world:

Interviewer: So you are really searching for proof?

Paul: Oh! Yeah. I am still searching for proof.

Interviewer: That's interesting. You think any evidence...do you think that there's any evidence that will falsify the spirit world? Do you think you will ever come upon any proof that the spirit world doesn't exist in the way it's supposed to do?

Paul: Eeh...until...that's a question I will answer when I will come finally at the end of my research. Yeah...yeah! Because I still think there are things to say and there are more things to find. Yeah! And by the time I will find it then that's when I will be able to come out with an adequate answer... (Vinan 2007, 178-185).

Well-versed in the Babanki culture and folklore, Paul continues to ask questions about his tradition. Since Sylvester says that he is from Bamenda, (24) a provincial

capital about thirty kilometres from Babanki, Paul presumes that he is conversant with Babanki traditions (246-247). In fact, as we learn in lines 379-382, Sylvester and his brother are of Oku extraction, specifically from the Kejem kekwo culture belonging to the people in the Njinikom area, not far from where the Babanki people live. The importance of cultural knowledge, and the accusations of cultural ignorance, play a significant role in the interaction of Paul and the brothers.

6.2 A Debate about the Existence of God

In this section, I analyse Paul and Sylvester's argument in detail, breaking the analysis of lines 15-144 into four stages (6.2.1-6.2.4). While Paul initiated the dialogue as an information-seeking conversation, the dialogue will transition quickly to a complex persuasion dialogue.

Sylvester is not reluctant to address Paul's interest in learning about what he and his twin brother Celestin believe about their ethnic gods. Thus, we move quickly from our analysis of dialogue type to the participants' use of questions and answers. Paul has asked (13-14) 'What do you as a young man think about those various gods, and what do you think about us...' Sylvester's answer addresses both the multiplicity (18-19) and the specificity (25-26) of the community's gods, and then how the gods began to exist. Sylvester's explanation of 'why' the gods exist proves to be the opening thesis of the dialogue:

Paul: Yea!

Sylvester: The traditional gods.

Paul: Uhum! Well...

20 **Sylvester:** What I will like to tell you is the traditional gods...the traditional gods came... because when you see, we have tribes.

Paul: Uhum!

Sylvester: You see, this person comes from this tribe...

Paul: Uhum.

25 **Sylvester:** I come from Bamenda... which tribe? You say it. Ok. Right now! ...You have illness, go to the Doctor, the doctors says it is good to go to the traditional Doctor. Maybe it's coming out from family, or they need you. They need your parents to go to where your mother came from and give something that...that...that...all those things. I can even say that... what? I can even say that without the traditional men, we the young generation, we cannot survive.

The substance of the dialogue develops quickly in these opening lines. Sylvester, not limiting his cultural understanding to his own tribe, broadens the discussion to include the role of ‘tribes’, which eventually includes the Babanki, Kom, Oku, and Bansa (Nso), peoples. The views expressed by Sylvester and Celestin are often global in scope, just as Sylvester’s reference to the traditional doctors in Bamenda also suggests a global theory of how West Cameroonian ethnic religions operate. Finally, his view that young men cannot survive without the work of men educated in cultural healing practices indicates the importance of this discussion to him.

6.2.1 A Backward Argumentation Scheme (16-61)

My analysis here centres on Sylvester’s initial explanation of the gods’ existence. His conclusion asserts that without man the gods do not exist. Thus, the existence of man, his multiple problems, and the existence of many tribes explain why there are many gods. However, Sylvester does not clarify this point until line 88.

Sylvester first posits that man-made gods (in the plural) exist because more than one tribe exists. This account of the existence of a plurality of gods appears at first glance to be a simple observation: Many tribes result in many gods. It is a self-evident explanation of their current religious situation. However, Sylvester has more in mind than just self-evident explanations. He proceeds to offer a second hypothesis, one that is not immediately evident from the first (24-28):

You have illness, go to the Doctor, the doctors says it is good to go to the traditional doctor maybe it’s coming out from family, or they need you, they need your parents to go to where your mother came from and give something that...that...that...all those things. I can even say that what? I can even say that without the traditional men, we the young generation, we cannot survive.

Cultural doctors, in Sylvester’s view, perform the very important function of diagnosing the spiritual cause of an illness and determining the solution to the problem, which entails making a sacrifice (‘give something’) to the local god who is the source of the problem or its solution. The origin of these sacrifices is from the gods (41, 60, 76-

77). Sylvester seems to be saying that an important reason (perhaps the reason) why the gods exist is to enable men to survive. This explanation does not contradict the first; it simply means that many different gods are helping many persons in different tribes. Whereas the first account hints at the ontology of the gods, this second account suggests the teleology of their existence. In this latter case, it is unclear whether Sylvester is asserting that the purpose for which the gods exist is to receive man's sacrifices and heal his illnesses.

Thus far there are two possible accounts (explanations) on the table for why the gods exist. An argumentation pattern in the form of a Backward Argument (Scheme) pattern is taking shape:

Premise 1: D is a set of data or supposed facts in a case (the existence of many gods).
Premise 2: Each one of a set of accounts $A_1, A_2 \dots A_N$ is successful in explaining D.
Premise 3: A_i is the account that explains D most successfully.
Conclusion: Therefore, A_i is the most plausible hypothesis (Walton, Reed & Macagno, 2008, 329).

In argumentation theory, each account, $A_1, A_2 \dots A_N$, explains the data D in some way. The question is 'Which explanation best accounts for D?' Sylvester's account of the existence of the gods includes the factors of tribalism and human need. Since he continues to develop the importance of human need in the next part of the dialogue, we will include that development as an extension of the argument in lines 15-59. However, in lines 60-63 Paul responds with his counter thesis, 'Without God men would not exist.' The men consider that thesis as the dialogue continues.

Sylvester continues to emphasize the idea that sacrifices are divine in their origin. In line 61, he notes 'That sacrifice...it comes from God...comes from God because I cannot...' Moreover, in lines 76-77 he concludes, 'So all these things that we should go and kill fowl there, make some sacrifice, they come from God.' Sylvester, it seems, has like Emmanuel in the first dialogue, fused theoretical to practical rationality.

However, he finally, plainly states his thesis in line 88: ‘So that’s why you see without people, god²⁵⁷ cannot exist.’ This proposition is the conclusion of the argument that follows in lines 91-92. If there were no people, there would be no problems. If there were no problems, there would be no traditional doctors. Moreover, if there were no traditional doctors, there would be no gods.

It is tempting to interpret this argument from an epistemological point of view, thus interpreting Sylvester’s viewpoint as ‘we would not know that the gods exist except through the existence of man’s problems.’ However, such an interpretation would likely miss the African understanding that man does indeed create gods. An incident in Kumba illustrates an African experience of man creating gods through the fashioning of idols.

An African teacher reports:

One afternoon, I came home from school and I found two little wooden statues in my kitchen. They were near the fireside. Trying to find out from my wife, she told me that they were kept by my neighbour to dry. I called for him to inquire the purpose of those things. (Standing there) in front of my kitchen with the statues in my hand (I asked) “What are these things for, Mr Ngum?”
My neighbour: “They are my gods! Give me! Why did you touch them?”(Ngong 2003).

As difficult as the idea might seem, it is possible that Sylvester means in some literal way, ‘without people, God cannot exist’. This would be the conclusion of an argument about the very nature of the gods (and men). Paul’s intended purpose, which is information-seeking, has prompted an argument from Sylvester about the very nature of the gods.

From its beginning, this dialogue had the potential of becoming a persuasion dialogue. Paul questions Sylvester, ‘What do you as a young man think about those various gods?’ In response, Sylvester provides an extended answer of what he believes about the gods, and why he thinks the way that he does (36ff). Since a statement alone

²⁵⁷ The use of ‘gods’ and ‘god’ becomes erratic from this point on in the dialogue. Assuredly, Paul is talking of God in the theistic sense (67ff), but Sylvester seems to want to talk about God in the singular (59-61), gods in the plural, and then sometimes equate the two.

is information as long as it is offered for the 'record'.²⁵⁸ This poses no change in the dialogue's purpose until Paul responds with his counter thesis (95). The conversation will then become a complex persuasion dialogue.

The first fifty lines of the dialogue contain a number of questions and statements sometimes interpreted as challenges. In line 28, Paul asks Sylvester, 'Are you sure [about the fact that young people cannot survive without traditional men?]' Answering 'I'm sure', twice Sylvester reveals that he is committed to the proposition that he has asserted in lines 26-27, 'I can even say that without traditional men, we the young generation, we cannot survive'.

In response to Sylvester's assertion 'I am twins' (34), Paul asks, 'What do you mean by that?' Sylvester answers, 'Wait...Ok! I'll give you my reason; I'll give you a name.' This he does not do in the ensuing lines except to say, 'When a year-end comes, you heard people say, Paul it's good to go to the village, and make some sacrifice. Sacrifice came from where? It came from the gods.' Another example occurs in line 42. Paul says 'Ok! I am interested because...from the gods (?)' However innocuous this might seem in print, in the context Sylvester interprets it as a challenge and responds 'Come on! You thought that I am saying something wrong?' His commitment is an action commitment. He actively sacrifices to the gods at year's end. Moreover, he will defend the correctness of his statement.

6.2.2 Who is the Creator of All Things? (61-101)

In this passage, I suggest that Paul uses Sylvester's assertion as a starting point in proving his thesis that men exist because God exists.

²⁵⁸ As I will again note in the conclusion, though information might be presented in a way that insinuates that the one seeking the information should accept argument, we are limiting ourselves in this inquiry to the presence of argument indicators and the clear indication that one who hears the information understands it as argumentative.

Sylvester may know more than he is telling in this part of the dialogue, but at face value, his statements reflect a man in search of a sovereign deity. He asks the question, ‘Do you know who created this world?’ Paul enthusiastically answers that the almighty did it. However, ‘almighty’ (69) does not carry the same significance for Sylvester as it does for Paul:

60 **Sylvester:** When the yearend comes, we always rush in the village to do some sacrifice... That sacrifice...it comes from where? It comes from God...comes from God because I cannot...do you know who created this world? Do you?
Paul: Eem...
Sylvester: The world...
65 **Paul:** That’s a beautiful question.
Sylvester: Yes!
Paul: I will like to tell you [that] there is a creator of the world...of heaven and earth.
Sylvester: Ok! Who is that? Let me know.
Paul: Oh yes! The creator of heaven and earth should be the almighty God.
70 **Sylvester:** Give me a handshake.
Paul: Uhum!
Sylvester: Yes! That’s what I am saying. I am saying that the creator should be almighty, which is that... which is that means...to mean God.
Paul: Yea.
75 **Sylvester:** You understand?
Paul: Eeh.
Sylvester: So all these things...that we should go and kill fowl there, make some sacrifices, they come from God.

The dialectical structure of this segment is an interesting example of unexpected circular reasoning. Sylvester begins by musing on the origin of sacrifice. He makes the assertion that sacrifice comes from God, but then asks the questions, ‘Do you know who created this world? Do you?’ (61-62) and ‘Who is that? Let me know’ (68). These questions prompt Paul’s enthusiastic assertion, ‘The creator of heaven and earth should be almighty God.’ Sylvester not only enthusiastically endorses Paul’s answer with a handshake but goes on to affirm that a necessary attribute of the creator is that of omnipotence. Paul’s dialectical move seems to be a classic example of using an opponent’s assertion (60-61) to challenge their position that ‘because men exist...god exists’. However, there is a semantic—or theological—twist in the argument. For

Sylvester omnipotence includes the power to institute sacrifice to the 'small' gods (76-77, 91-92).

6.2.3 A Self-Existent God (79-119)

Using the (assumed evidence) of the healing of Adeline's child, Sylvester concludes the train of thought he began in lines 18-19: 'Without people, God cannot exist because if this...if the world was not multiply, this...all this thing coming...traditional doctors and gods, they shouldn't have been... (91-92).' Paul challenges Sylvester to consider another way, a counter thesis, 'without God, people cannot exist.' This raises the issue of who will provide the solution to man's problems. Paul responds that God is available to aid man in the case of problems. However, this does not resolve Sylvester's continuing doubt, based on the premise, 'without people God cannot exist', about the existence and nature of Paul's God. Paul's answer is that God exists without 'generation', and that he exists by his [God's] word:

Paul: Uhum!
80 **Sylvester:** Yes! When God delivers a young baby like this one...like this Adeline's child...
Paul: Ye!
Sylvester: So that's why you see without people, God cannot exist.
Paul: Without people, God cannot exist...?
Sylvester: Without people, God cannot exist.
85 **Paul:** What do you mean that without people, God cannot exist?
Sylvester: Ok! Without people, God cannot exist because if this...if the world was not multiply, this...all this thing coming...traditional doctors and gods, they shouldn't have been.
Paul: Yes! Very interesting...but let us look it the other way...
Sylvester: Which?
Paul: That without God, people cannot exist
90 **Sylvester:** Ok!
Paul: Let us look it this way
Sylvester: That without God, people cannot exist
Paul: That without God, people cannot exist, and there cannot be multiplication
95 **Sylvester:** Good! Without God, people cannot exist with an aim that, now, if we have not exist...existed.
Paul: Uhum!
Sylvester: eeh...you call a problem, to who would you... would you lay your hands?
Paul: Oh Yea!
Sylvester: To who?
100 **Paul:** I have somebody that I can lay my hands and the Almighty God...

Sylvester uses Adeline's child as an example of the efficacy of sacrifice and as an indirect proof of his thesis. (79-87), 'So that's why you see without people, God cannot

exist.’ Sylvester’s reference to ‘multiplication’ (91) might refer to the growing number of people who have problems and who consult their ethnic doctors or, more likely, the procreation of the species.

Paul has reversed that position. Without God, there could be no multiplication. Sylvester responds to this with ‘Good’, but then the implication of Paul’s position dawns on him, ‘eeh... you call a problem, to who would you... would you lay your hands?’ Paul is ready with an answer to the question, ‘I have somebody that I can lay my hands and the Almighty God...’ Sylvester seems struck by the answer; he responds, ‘Not so?’ Nevertheless, he immediately returns to the problem of man’s non-existence, which Paul has raised. Without ‘generation’ (or reproduction), man does not exist; if man does not exist, then God does not exist. Moreover, how could a non-existent God solve man’s problems? Again, Paul has a response, ‘Let me tell you, God can still be existing by word...’ (119). However, Paul does not exploit this Christological solution to Sylvester’s dilemma.

6.2.4 A Solution to Sylvester’s Problem (121-144)

Paul has brought Sylvester to the cusp of theism. Nevertheless, he needs to cement in Sylvester’s mind the idea that the almighty God is available to solve man’s problems. He does this using an analogy. This section examines this important argument.

He asserts the greatness of God’s knowledge and his ownership of everything on earth. Sylvester does not see the connection between knowledge, the ownership of God and a solution to man’s problems apart from the work of the (small) gods. Paul responds with an analogical argument. God is like a mechanic working on a car; he is committed to solving its problems. At the end, Paul abbreviates his conclusion; he is interested in moving on to learning what Sylvester knows and believes about the Babanki god, *Keng*.

120 **Paul:** He is the one who created the world. He knows the world very well, more than you and I.
Sylvester: That’s good.

Paul: And also, everything on earth is made by Him.
Sylvester: Made by Him. Good!
Paul: So if we are not there, he will still be there.
125 **Sylvester:** My brother, do you think another solution will still be?
Paul: I think, I strongly think like that, that there will be another solution because he is the creator of heaven and earth...
Sylvester: And he knows everything...
Paul: Like for example, if you are a mechanic, eeh if a tire...if a car has a problem...good, you will
130 look for a solution, isn't it?
Sylvester: Good! Good, it is...
Paul: Ok! If the tire is bad, another thing is that what? If the tire is just punctured, you will...you can...the solution can be patching the tire too bad,
Sylvester: Or change it?
135 **Paul:** Now when you see that the tire is...
Sylvester: Yea!
Paul: Another solution is to buy a new tire and you reject that one.
Sylvester: You reject that one.
140 **Paul:** God...that is the way God works. He works in circumstances that we, His own creation...we don't understand Him. Unless we humble ourselves under somebody, we are still going...Now what I want us to know now here is; we have talked about the different gods and the few...the powers. I will like us now to...you know talk about a specific god in the Babanki land, which is what we call *Keng*...

It seems that Paul and Sylvester both understand that God is not a mechanic. However, Paul makes it clear in his conclusion that God's ways of solving problems are inscrutable. Though brief, the analogy argues that God, like the mechanic who owns a car, wants to solve the problems of the car. He is interested in what he has created. While the faithful concern of West Cameroonian mechanics is debatable, Sylvester does not object to the comparison.

6.3 An Investigation into *Keng* (~143-203)

The dialogue has moved from the general (gods) to a specific god (*Keng*). However, as the dialogue immediately reveals, *Keng* is viewed as a presence (161), a tradition (170ff.), and a deity (174). It is notable that viewpoints like this have occasioned much discussion among anthropologists about their 'logical' status. The same kind of discussion would apply to Sylvester's assertion (and one could use that word in its strongest sense) that 'I am twins'.

As Gellner notes, these uses of the word violate the categorical norms of recent philosophers (Wilson 1970, 45-46). Except for one crucial point Sylvester's use of

‘*Keng*’, one could compare *Keng* to Gellner’s analysis of *Baraka* from the Moroccan culture. That point is tradition. Sylvester identifies source of *Keng* (or *nKeng*) as tradition and says that other traditions (162-171) ‘add to that *Keng*.’

Keng, properly implanted (*tome*) into a child, protects that child from future dangers (175-177). Life is risky without *Keng*. However, *Keng* is very dangerous if taken improperly by eating food intended to implant the *Keng* in another (190-193). It seems that Paul is uncertain about how to engage the brothers’ discussion of *Keng*.

These vagaries are relevant to our purpose here, but only in a tangential way. In the face of this potentially compelling exposition of *Keng*, Paul paraphrases Scripture, perhaps thinking of Genesis 1, in an attempt to establish a premise from which he can judge his culture. The quote provokes a vigorous rebuke from Sylvester: ‘Let me tell you—let me tell you. You do believe in God?’ (198). For Sylvester, to disregard tradition in any way is tantamount to atheism:

Sylvester: *Keng*?

145 **Paul:** Yea you know about *Keng*...Now what are the implications does this have to the Babanki people. What do they believe about it?

...

160 **Sylvester:** What I am trying you to understand is that what I know details, when we go up, and we come across is that I do believe that this *Keng* that you are talking about. I think on the base comes from the creator because one, you have *Keng*, you have your own *Keng*, I have *Keng*. Ok! *IKeng* comes from where? This *Keng* comes from a tradition.

175 **Sylvester:** Because after *tome*²⁵⁹ they have to dance and do some certain things that add into that *IKeng* son, which I mean God is the One that review[s]...If you deliver a child, the child is about to say Daddy or mama...unable to go and carry you water to bring it here... you have to do a traditional, a traditional, a traditional, let me just say a traditional work on that child because if we don’t...if [we] don’t do, we might not know what can come out.

Paul: Yea!

180 **Sylvester:** That child can die, or that child can grow up, trespass again, when they are doing *nKeng* into somebody’s house, it can go and eat something that their parents did not put his own *Keng*, he go and eat somebody’s...you understand what I mean?

Paul: Yes somebody’s own, yeah.

185 **Sylvester:** Trespassing to eat something that your own house has not prepared for your people. That is to be sure that ok, you are ok. If they are do it somewhere, you can still drink corn beer from those people and other places, it cannot harm you. I think that all those traditional doctors’ gods, they come from God himself.

Paul: And there is something, the Bible says something.

195 **Sylvester:** Yes!

²⁵⁹ *Tome* means to implant.

Paul: That eeh... all that God created is good. So if this thing is good, then why should I not just eat and I don't have a problem?

Sylvester: Let me tell you—let me tell you. You do believe in God?

It seems that Paul understands and accepts Sylvester's analysis of the culture of *Keng*. However, he does not think that culture is compatible with biblical teaching. He appeals to an authority (the Bible) and contradicts what they have said about the eating of food in various situations. His view, at this point, is that people should discard the tradition of *Keng*. Dialectically, two authorities have come into opposition, the authority of tradition and that of the Bible. The cultural rules that govern eating and drinking in certain situations come from tradition, which *Keng* dictates. If the rules are followed, a substantial power of protection is imparted in the ceremony of eating and drinking. On the other hand, Paul claims that all food is good (196-197).

Lines 183-193 recount Sylvester's argument that one's 'house', meaning tradition, should be honoured and obeyed. In response to Paul's use of Genesis 1, Sylvester loosely bases his argument on a conflation of biblical paraphrases, concluding that there is but one 'house' on earth, God's house, that God's house incorporates all traditions ('houses') and that to obey [any?] tradition is to worship God. Though the argument mixes with a discussion of denominations and church buildings, Sylvester's accusation that Paul has abandoned his tradition is not lost on Paul, who reconsiders his assertion that all things are good to eat and reformulates his position. He asserts '—a born again child should not be involved in that, but he should follow some...he should follow the aspect that traditions, which are good...' (232-234):

225 **Sylvester:** What I was saying—I was saying that if you worship that God, don't forbid your own tradition.

Paul: With me I don't...not talking that forgoing my tradition...I don't forgo my tradition, but what I am looking here is as...this...as we are saying because God created everything for good and we discover also that God also...if God created everything for good, even the *Keng*, I would have eat...I would be eating.

230 **Sylvester:** eeh?

Paul: Because I know that it is just for eating...but now when I eat something then I still have some curses in me, it means that what? That there are some mysterious powers that are in that thing that I ought not to eat, that is therefore, a true child of God—a born again child should not be involved in that, but he should follow some...he should follow the aspect that traditions, which are good...

235

Sylvester: I know where you are taking your sense to...I already know where you are taking your sense to...

Paul: No! No! No! No! No!

Paul has reconsidered his position and asserts that there are some things he should not eat, 'then I still have some curses in me, it means that what? That there are some mysterious powers that are in that thing that I ought not to eat' (232-234). The next interchange is somewhat obscure. Sylvester believes he knows where Paul's argument is headed, but Paul strenuously objects to what Sylvester believes is the implication ('the sense') of his comments. Neither man clarifies what he has said. Rather, in lines 248-266 Sylvester proceeds to question Paul about where he is from and what he knows about the rules and regulations in Kejem (Babanki). Paul answers, 'Probably I don't know most of them, but those that I can know, I know them because what? I have grown there and I have gotten some...you know...some elementary things' (246-247).

Sylvester then questions Paul about how much he knows about Ajong Kekung as a tradition. Paul essentially confesses that he knows little about that tradition and Sylvester returns to his initial focus. Sylvester turns to the command of God to humans to multiply (263-264). This, he asserts, is the beginning of tradition, and that tradition creates tribes which results in many particular traditions. Paul enthusiastically concurs because, it seems, Sylvester has accepted Paul's premise (278).

6.4 The Place and Power of Tradition (302-377)

By now, it is clear that tradition, not polytheism, is the primary issue in this dialogue. Of course, they have addressed only one specific tradition, *Keng*. Nevertheless, as an authority, *Keng* interprets everything in its sphere. Heretofore, Paul has conversed with Sylvester. Now Celestin joins the discussion and, even though he is generally in agreement with his brother, his contributions complicate the conversation.

Both Sylvester and Celestin strongly emphasize their ‘twinship’ from here to the end of the dialogue. They say that they possess a more powerful tradition than those who are not ‘twin’. Each, it appears, shares the other’s *Keng* and thus has a double portion of *Keng*, so to speak. One might construe this to mean that they have more understanding than others have about tradition, but text never explicitly states this. However, *Keng*—identified with tradition (321)—is more powerful than their words can communicate.

Paul agrees that tradition is powerful, but that there is someone more powerful than tradition (322). Moreover, he continues, ‘We are not refusing, Grand Frère we are not refusing the tradition...I don’t...you know, the Bible...the Bible is eh...let us come back to the Bible, is written out [outside of?] of the tradition (328-329).’ The point Paul seems to make here is that the Bible is in a place to judge their religion. The brothers respond by restating much of what they have said earlier (317-365), but then Sylvester summarizes their argument (359-360): ‘Why? It’s because if we don’t do it, one of us can fall down here and die all because of all that?’

Paul recognizes now the significance of the argument they have been offering. He responds, ‘Do you not think that it is some...it is some eeh...some way to frighten you that that can take you away since everybody is afraid of death, that you must do it, if you don’t do it you will die?’ (360-361).

295 **Sylvester:** That’s why you see ... we now understand this tradition...the tradition because we are twins...we have the most powerful tradition more than a single like Adeline, more than a single man like you.

Paul: yea!

Sylvester: Why? Because God create us, we come out twins. Eh?

Paul: Uhum!

.....

Celestin: A tradition is more powerful...harmful than what we are speaking it.

315 **Paul:** Alright! It’s true, but there is somebody who is more powerful than the tradition

Sylvester: Uuuuhh...

Paul: There is, and who is that person?

Sylvester: God!

Paul: It’s God!

Sylvester: Honour him and do not lose your tradition...honour, No! Not killing

- 320 **Paul:** We are not refusing, Grand Frere we are not refusing the tradition...I don't...you know, the Bible...the Bible is eh...let us come back to the Bible, is written out of the tradition
- Sylvester:** No wait...hold on
- Paul:** Uhum!
-
- 385 **Sylvester:** It's a sacrifice do it...it's a sacrifice that God himself, He himself review...He is among us here, we are not seeing him...he put it...why He put it? Because he is the one...He is the one that created us and put all these...He is the one! Ok Wait! Why is it that we have our own end of year to go and do twins tradition. Why? You could have ask us this question
- 390 **Paul:** Uhum!
- Sylvester:** You could have ask me this question.
- Paul:** Uhum!
- Sylvester:** Why? It's because if we don't do it, one of us can fall down here and die all because of all that.

The argument here, as in other dialogues in this collection, is an argument from fear appeal (Walton, Reed, & Macagno 2008, 333-334). However, the appeal does not take quite the same form that these authors propose, which is given here in full:

- Premise 1: If you do not bring about A, then D will occur
- Premise 2: D is very bad for you.
- Premise 3: Therefore, you ought to prevent D if possible.
- Premise 4: But the only way to prevent D is bring about A.
- Conclusion: Therefore, you ought to bring about A.

There is a significant difference, however, between the cause-effect relationships of A and D in premise one of this model, and premise one in the argument that Sylvester and Celestin propose. The form proposed in *Argumentation Schemes* assumes a clear, dependable (if defeasible) link between A and D. In doing A, one prevents D from happening. In other words, doing A stops whatever is causing D. Therefore, the general dependability of the link makes the argument falsifiable. In Sylvester and Celestin's argument, the occurrence of D is unpredictable: 'one of us can fall down here and die because of all that' (326, 356).

I examine the difference, which is not salutary, in the conclusion of this chapter. Whether Paul's challenge provokes the following rhetorical argument by example is uncertain. However, it is clear that the brothers aim the argument at him because they apparently consider him a pastor.

6.5 A Rhetorical Example of Tradition's Power (414-507)

The conversation becomes very personal now. Celestin goes so far as to rebuke Paul for his disbelief in tradition's power (461-464) and to insinuate that he too will go to an ngambe house. Celestin enters the conversation, and after distancing himself and his brother from Babanki culture, he returns to the story of a pastor who went insane.

Sylvester: Eh-eh, do you think a Pastor is not going to an ngambe house? You sit there and you tell no! You sit there and tell me no.

Paul: OK!

Sylvester: Do you not think a pastor is not going to an ngambe house?

Celestin: My brother, can you allow me to say this? Can you people allow me to explain? Can you people allow me to...? (362-367)

At this point Celestin explains that he and his brother's culture is not that of Babanki, but the Kejem kekwo culture of Oku.²⁶⁰ Nevertheless, they tell Paul a story that he has heard before.

The story, summarized, tells the saga of a pastor who after several years of ministry went to the United States for an education ('to review his job') and zealously returned to Cameroon to preach from town to town (Ln 427). It seems that he became annoyed with tradition and began to 'kick against everything and [he said that] absolutely nothing [good was] to be found inside his father's culture' (432-433). According to Celestin, who continues the story, the trouble began at that point. The pastor refused to take his role in the family's problems. It seems that the pastor became 'mad' [insane?] (449) and ended up in an ngambe house. The storyteller explicitly says that he still had his Bible and implies that he died there.

Regardless of how the story ended, its point is that tradition is stronger than Christianity or the Bible. Paul concurs that the account is a good 'testimony' or story (475), but in line 506 he later protests that the story is only a story, which I take to mean that the story is not a confirmation that Sylvester is telling the (whole?) truth.

²⁶⁰ Through conversations with many Northwest Cameroonians, I learned that the Oku culture is viewed as the stronghold of traditional religion.

However vague some of its details are, the story carries emotional force. Considered as rhetorical induction by example, it leads to the general conclusion that *Keng* is stronger than the Christian God of the Bible. However, Paul does not buy that conclusion (519-520):

- 395 **Celestin:** Coming back home, this father is a reverend Pastor...
Paul: Oh, Fine!
Celestin: He has been for a chair for a couple of years.
Paul: Uhum!
Celestin: And served that as a man of God for a past of...years and years.
Paul: Uhum!
- 415 **Celestin:** He went to America to review his job right there as a pastor
Paul: Uhum!
Celestin: Then he came back and started to preach...
Paul: Uhum
Celestin: from town to town...
Paul: Yea!
- 420 **Celestin:** One day, he started to come annoy with these our cultured ways of things that we just come across by putting it right now to understand.
Paul: Uhum!
Celestin: He was kick[in] against...he kick against of everything and absolutely nothing to be found inside his father's... culture.
- Paul:** Yah! I am getting it.
Celestin: Sure! Sure good, ok right there these certain things of our culture come to hook him...
Paul: Laughs...
- 445 **Celestin:** He became mad.
Sylvester: Crazy!
Celestin: Crazy! One day he said, my father on his way, my father's father says 'Please, look, we are friends... it is good to understand some certain stances not to die because of shame...do you really know that this is what comes to reveal to you. You can't do otherwise...rather than to keep quiet and die, you must do it to succeed.'
- 450 **Paul:** Uhum!
- Celestin:** Where is he right now? He is a next of king [kin] and he was insisting not to do it and he do it by seeing what comes over him...why is it that he was a man of God and he did not...he's enough to do it.
Paul: Eem!
- 470 **Celestin:** And to die! And to die on shame...why?
Paul: All right, all right, that is why I said, this is...it is a very good testimony.
- Paul:** NO! No! NO! No! It's a testimony you are giving...it's a testimony...
Celestin: If I am lying here...
Paul: Uhum!

Though Paul punctuates the narrative with comments, the story bears all the earmarks of a rhetorical device. The essence of the story is an example that functions as a generalization. It is deeply rooted in pathos intended to move Paul emotionally. Paul functions as an audience of one and the story affirms the cultural values of its tellers. As

a rhetorical device, it complicates the structure of the dialogue, which at this point becomes a three-way conversation.

6.6 Good and Evil: Two Gods? (489-536)

In these last two sections, the conversationalists speak of the existence and implications of good and evil. The discussion in lines 489-520 lays the foundation for the crucial interchange in lines 521-536. Celestin raises the issue of evil in line 489-490 and continues to explain how evil people will pay money to have others killed. The meaning of 'to kill'²⁶¹ is not important to this discussion; it is important that the use of herbs to kill is different from the use of herbs by Pa Nyamte (515-520) in the practice of healing people. It seems that the men have reached a kind of consensus.

However, Paul uses this consensus as a starting point for presenting his viewpoint on culture. He begins by stating the obvious: He and the brothers have different 'stands' or viewpoints (505-506). Further, he suggests that they have different viewpoints because they 'see' different things (510-512). Thus far, the brothers concur with his assessment of their conversation. Paul then brings the sovereignty of God to bear on what men see. If God does not give men sight, they will not see anything (513-514).

This prompts Celestin's protest: 'Weeh! Why it that we happen to... Why is it that we talk? Please! Answer my questions' (515). Paul gives an indirect answer to Celestin's plea by reviewing the particulars of what they have said about good and evil and relating it to the context of tradition (520). Celestin, who is taking the lead in the brothers' part of the conversation, infers that Paul is talking about two gods. Paul quickly assures them that he is talking about one God. Celestin, in response, falls back on the sovereignty of the one God as the reason he knows that there is one God (525-527).

²⁶¹ Kill may refer to a physical or a spiritual act something like 'eating the soul'. An African would probably say that the latter action is a more common occurrence.

However, the brothers are not satisfied with attributing evil to God. Celestin affirms that Satan is the one who tempts (529). Paul appreciates his insight, but sees things from a broader perspective, ‘Good! Now we are coming...we are coming...but do you know that evil exists behind our tradition?’ (532-533).

- 490 **Celestin:** This father is a very good father...may I say it... if I may say it, it’s just simply because for this our future today, people are bribing people to do many evil things that you have not prayed on it...
- Paul:** Yeah! Eeh, I want to give you a bit of... I want to give you a bit of testimony concerning eeh!
- 495 **Celestin:** They would give you ...they would give you money to go and kill eh! Eh! Eh! Sister Delphine...
- Paul:** Uhum...
- Celestin:** Sister Ernestine...
- Paul:** Uhum!
- Celestin:** Sister Suzanne...Why? Why? Why?
- 500 **Paul:** Ok! It’s true...I have heard some testimony about Pa, right? Its Pa Nyamte all of you are talking about, isn’t it?
- Sylvester:** Pa Nyamte we are talking...
- Paul:** I want to tell you...the...we are not refusing tradition, right? God has said all the herbs he has created are good for healing...and everybody has his gift...and there are people who are being chosen to do...to cut grasses and give to others and they eat and they got...they get well.
- 505 **Celestin:** Exactly!
- Paul:** We don’t refuse that! We don’t refuse that! We don’t refuse that but I have my stand my stand and you have your stand right?
- Paul:** No! Listen...listen...
- Celestin:** I wonder why you know about two gods or you know about one God?
- 525 **Paul:** I know about one God...
- Celestin:** Then why are you...I do know about one God
- Paul:** All right!
- Celestin:** Because he is the one that put all those things.
- Paul:** Good! Eeh sit on the ground...
- 530 **Celestin:** If Satan tempts you... If Satan tempts you...
- Paul:** Uhum!
- Celestin:** Then you do evil things.
- Paul:** Good! Now we are coming...we are coming...but do you know that evil exists behind our tradition?
- 535 **Celestin:** Why...if you lose...if you lose the respect not to understand, then evil will enter you...
- Paul:** No, I am asking that...do evil...
- Celestin:** No, I know.

6.7 New Questions for Old Traditions (542--593)

It is not clear why Celestin asks about Paul’s church membership, but Paul takes this question as an opportunity to share his understanding of the Gospel (545-545) and to engage a bit of cultural hermeneutic (545-545). He does not explicitly connect Jesus Christ with the Jewish culture; he affirms that Jewish culture was Christ’s context and must be ‘transcribed’ (translated?) so that we will know what is not suitable to do in life.

Now Paul commits what might appear to be a non sequitur.²⁶² He asks whether Celestin or Sylvester would be happy if, at the death of their Fon (a king), the leaders of the palace chose to bury them with him. Would that practice be fair (551-557)?

Celestin responds, ‘That’s culture’ (554). Paul presses the question, ‘Will you be happy?’ Continuing to refer to culture (tradition) Celestin notes, ‘and you cannot change it’ (590). Celestin, thinking quickly, looks backward and makes a shrewd comment, “No wait...its fair for those who created it... its fair...its fair’ (567). By affirming that it was fair in the past, he can avoid the issue of whether it is fair today. However Paul reaffirms his view that the tradition isn’t fair—only to be again opposed by Celestin’s declaration of its fairness. At this point, the interchange seems to be going nowhere.

In response, Paul paraphrases a prohibition from Scripture: ‘The Bible says “Do not kill a soul created by me.”’ This unexpected invoking of biblical authority sends Sylvester and Celestin into a private discussion about why their fathers did such things.²⁶³ Celestin continues to defend tradition saying the tradition is fair, that he would die and not consider the tradition requiring his death to be unfair. Paul attempts to bring the interchange to a focus in line 584 ‘Let us address evil to be evil’. But that doesn’t bring closure to the issue, which will take on larger dimensions in lines 610-619. After raising the issue of evil again, presenting his view of salvation in response to their query about his church, he asks his last series of questions:

Paul: Let us come²⁶⁴, let us come, let us come...if they come to bury you today...if the Fon dies, and they say they need giant people to bury with the Fon, and they come to catch you to go bury with the Fon alive, Will you be happy?
Celestin: That’s culture.
555 **Paul:** Will you...no! The question is “will you be happy?”
Celestin: No, I will not be happy.
Paul: Is the culture now fair?
Celestin: Ok, Is the culture now fair? Ok!
Paul: No! I am just asking...lets reason like young men
560 **Celestin:** It’s coming out from our fore fathers that they do...they did.

²⁶² However, in line 595 he returns to what the Bible says. However, he does not connect his assertion to his Jewish hermeneutic.

²⁶³ Sylvester muses, ‘As their own development...it’s their future’ (599).

²⁶⁴ ‘Let me speak.’

Paul: Uhum!

Celestin: From the Banso clan, and we heard that they buried two women and men, on his burial...on his burial...that was a tradition...

Paul: Yea!

565 **Celestin:** And you cannot change it.

Paul: I am asking 'is that tradition fair?'

Celestin: No wait...it's fair for those who created it... its fair...its fair.

Paul: He! He! He! Brothers, I don't think it's fair...

Celestin: It's fair.

570 **Paul:** The Bible says 'do not kill a soul created by me'.

There are two remarkable things about this interchange. First, Paul challenges Sylvester and Celestin's view of their culture through an argument from fairness, and then an Argument from Authority. It is likely that the first type of argument is a subspecies of 'Argument from Negative Consequence':

Premise 1: If I (an agent) bring about (do not bring about) A, then D will occur.

Premise 2: D is a bad outcome (from the point of view of my goals).

Therefore, I should not (practically speaking) bring about A. (Walton, Reed, Macagno 2008, 101).

Nevertheless, there is a problem with this analysis. First, it is pragmatic, based on the goal to live that Celestine has, but there is a larger cultural-pragmatic consideration at stake here. The Banso people thought that custom of burying living persons did bring about future advantages for the tribe. However, Paul does not ask the twins to make a judgment on that standard. Paul's standard is two-fold: The act of human sacrifice is not 'fair'; more importantly, it is against God's command (570). While the passage might be better interpreted as an argument from value, in either case Paul is asking them to consider their view of tradition in light of the personal value of fairness, and the authority of the God, which he claims transcends the knowledge of culture.

Asking questions makes this consideration possible. Paul is leading them to ask questions that they have never before considered asking. For sure, Celestin thoughtfully challenges his question, and Sylvester disputes it in the final section. Nevertheless, Paul asks them to reason 'like young men' [of today]. It is difficult to miss the shifting standards for rationality in his challenge.

6.8 Concluding the Dialogue

The brothers did not take Paul's challenges lightly. Celestin tells him that he bears the consequences of any improper thing they have done (587). However, Sylvester is perhaps the more hesitant to reach a conclusion from the discussion. His position is that the final word has not been said. He will consult his father about the matter (590). In spite of his words to Paul about consequences, Celestin seems to be more open to Paul's arguments (603ff, 614-618, 624-626) and willing to adjust his actions (616-618). Celestin's subsequent reflections are difficult to follow. However, Paul affirms that Celestin has significantly revised his beliefs (626-629, 637), a revision that seems supported by his religious experience.

Celestin refers to his experience in the Presbyterian Church as one of having been born again in many aspects (610-613). He seems to connect this process of change to the dialogue in which they are engaged. He appears ready to act on what they have said, 'Ok, here we are just talking on our own...person like me...how we are going to do? Are we going to cleanse the place it has been there?' Paul wishes to reason that out (627), but Celestin immediately puts the topic in a larger context. The conversation has brought Celestin to a profoundly introspective, reverent moment. He confesses,

God create this future of today of his own good as I can say stories...we don't know God—we don't know God, and we don't know where he is right now...he can be found amongst us for this moment...and talk sense and let us reason...let us reason and see that it has been fair and give that honour...that respect...that abomination to him...he will solve it... (622-625).

However, Sylvester has other ideas. He is not very confident in their ability as young men to deliberate about what they have been taught and change.

Come back! Come back! We will not make a change...we will settle all these before make[ing] a change...leave me say...today, why is it that today, our generation could not sit in this country and make that money, come out with good ambitions of using that money...solving our problems, or creating universities, and be firm in this country'(656-659)?

Paul recognizes that this return to talk of money (or lack of money) is a return to talk about their gods. Celestin agrees, but the conversation ends in confusion.

Thus, the dialogue ends with a discussion about the 'fairness' and efficacy of the dialogue in which they have been engaged. Celestin and Sylvester each has his concerns. Celestin warns Paul that if their deliberation causes his death, Paul will bear the consequences. Then he affirms the 'fairness' of their reasoning together and connects it to his own experience in the Presbyterian Church, where he says that he has been 'born again' in many aspects.

However, Celestin's thought in lines 642-649 moves from optimism to pessimism and ignites a very different direction in the conversation. He muses, 'and I congratulate us that for sitting and talking whatsoever is not unbelievable for us to say what...because if we go into activities to this our future of today, this generation have been spoiled...isn't it?' Celestin sees the value of 'sitting and talking' (reasoning) about whatever is believable or unbelievable. When he maps their activity 'onto this our future'—he is unsure of success because 'this generation have been spoiled...isn't it?' The future of Cameroon, as we see in the closing lines of the dialogue, hangs on the answer to this yes-no question. Paul answers 'no', but the questions on the table provoke Sylvester's digression into multiple issues that are not immediately pertinent to the overall development of the dialogue.

6.9 Concluding Reflections on Belief Revision: An African Socratic Dialogue

This complex dialogue incorporates numerous dialectical strategies. Information-seeking activity is present throughout the conversation, but persuasion is clearly at its heart. There is a suggestion in line 15 that the dialogue begins on an eristic note, and

there are hints that the dialogue maintains an emotive, adversarial quality²⁶⁵ (211-212, 286, 485). Here I will reflect on the ways that Paul attempts to convince Celestin and Sylvester that their knowledge ‘is inaccurate’. He is like Socrates who disturbed his community (so it is claimed in his *Apology*) and challenged the conventional knowledge of the day.

Paul initiates belief revision, if one considers this dialogue as the beginning of that process, not so much by new knowledge as by offering new hypotheses and questions. In line 96, Paul suggests another way to look at God, ‘That without God, people cannot exist.’ In its context, the statement functions like a question, ‘Couldn’t it be true that without God, people cannot exist?’

He supports his hypothesis, ‘men exist because of God’ by appealing to the *a priori* nature of God’s existence in the statement, ‘God can still be existing by his word...’ (118). Moreover, affirming God’s power to solve man’s problems he affirms, ‘everything on earth is made by him’. To which Sylvester responds, ‘And he knows everything...’ (128).

However, for Paul to connect these divine dots to man’s need, he presents an analogical argument for God’s concern (120-142). He compares God to a mechanic who solves problems. Thus, the eternal God has the creative power and concern to deal with the problems that motivate man to create small gods.

Paul then proposes an investigation of *Keng* (143), a prominent god in the area. Though this may be an extension of the question about the existence and attributes of the gods or God,²⁶⁶ Paul raises the issue of whether the Bible or tradition is stronger.

²⁶⁵ However, one must make a final determination of this type of dialogue from the recording. It seems that parts of the conversation between the three men are more invested with emotional fervour, and borders on being an eristic dialogue.

²⁶⁶ A blurring occurs here between ‘gods’, referring to traditional gods and ‘God’ referring to a theistic deity. In lines 271-272 Sylvester concedes Paul’s thesis. He claims that God created tribes and tribes create traditions, which seem from his perspective to be gods.

The discussion begins with the reflection on danger of eating food dedicated to a ceremony in which *Keng* is implanted (*tome*) in a child. Paul responds to that danger by saying, ‘All right! It’s true, but there is somebody who is more powerful than the tradition... There is, and who is that person?’ (322, 326). Sylvester guesses that Paul has God in mind, but in his mind tradition still maintains the prominent practical reality. To seal the argument about tradition’s power, Sylvester and Celestin offer the rhetorical example of the pastor who is defeated by tradition. It seems that the rhetorical flourish motivates Paul to rethink the piety he has put before them.

Not to be deterred, he uses Sylvester and Celestin’s references to the Bansa custom of burying people alive with the king to begin a dialogue on the existence of good and evil (562-584), turning the course of the dialogue to more successfully questioning the all-encompassing goodness and authority of tradition. In the end, both brothers, to varying degrees, reconsider the value and authority of their tradition.

This dialogue vividly illustrates the complex dynamics of knowledge/belief revision. In the first case, Paul creates a plausible alternative to the brothers’ cultural theology. In the last case, he uses the value of fairness, one which their forefathers likely would not have considered, to question their perception of tradition.

Of the five, this dialogue best illustrates the potential of argument and questions in belief revision. Paul is able to use the brothers’ beliefs and knowledge as starting points for his own arguments. Even when he conceded *Keng*’s power, he used the (presumed) death of the pastor to point to a custom that the brothers conceded as unfair. How much influence their Presbyterian background exerted here is unclear. However, that matters little. Paul’s dialectic was effective no matter how much their ethnic theology and Christian beliefs had merged.

Chapter Seven: Commitment, Identity and Belief Revision

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, Ambola David, a well-respected Kom²⁶⁷ pastor, engages an elder who reckons himself to be one of the more knowledgeable men in understanding Kom culture. The conversation is about the defence of Kom beliefs and practices (7-9). As one might expect, the two men conduct the dialogue with great attention to decorum. The elder, who will remain anonymous, could be a candidate for being a sage²⁶⁸ in Oruka's scheme of things. Though pa has great knowledge of Kom practices, he reinterprets those conventions in a way that would be hard to understand by those who depend on his guidance.

The clarity of this conversation, however, makes it a much more straightforward dialogue to analyse, but not necessarily one that is easier to understand. The interpretative challenge lies in the 'gap' between the elder's revised understanding of customary beliefs and his practice of the customs relating to those beliefs. Compounding this primary issue, which is clear from the evidence, is the secondary issue of his somewhat ambiguous understanding of customary beliefs.

Belief revision is an issue here at two levels.²⁶⁹ Pa has reinterpreted 'throwing the wine', a Kom customary practice, in the light of psychology and given it an entirely

²⁶⁷ The Kom people, who live in a rugged mountainous area about 50 kilometres from Bamenda, are well known for both their cultural sophistication and their pride in their traditions. This is reflected in the website, <http://kompeople.org/>, which documents the Kom (Kingdom of the Mountains) culture in detail, henceforth given as a proper name, Kom.

²⁶⁸ Oruka compares a folk-sage and a philosophic-sage in this way:

'The folk-sage is versed in the common-place culture, customs and beliefs of his people. He can recite or describe them with much competence. However, he is unable to raise any critical questions about them, nor is he able to observe the inherent contradictions.

'The philosophic-sage, like the folk-sage, may equally be versed in the beliefs and values of his society. His main task is to make critical assessment of them and recommend, as far as the communal pressure allows, only those beliefs and values that pass his rational scrutiny' (Oruka 1991, 51).

²⁶⁹ Definitions of belief revision often use critical standards as indicators when assessing whether belief revision has occurred. The standard criterion is that of consistency. 'A belief revision occurs when a new piece of information that is *inconsistent* with the present belief system (or database) is added to that

different significance from that of its historic cultural meaning. However, on one account of rationality, the elder's revised interpretation is not consistent with the popular view of the practices that the elder continues to do. Even though David points out the problem of the elder's contrasting views and practices, the elder is unwilling to go further in revising his belief or commitments. The older man first concedes that tradition is defeasible and literally false. Nevertheless, he then declares his commitment to the practices based on the beliefs that he has falsified. The dialogue prompts two questions. Is it irrational to hold these divergent positions? If not, what presumption or commitment rationalizes what the elder thinks?

My plan for this chapter is to examine briefly how chapters 3-6 foreshadow the themes present here. I subsequently review selected belief revision concepts, and how the six tools that I use in this dissertation relate to the process of belief revision. I then examine the dialogue and conclude the chapter with further observations on belief revision as the goal of apologetics.

Chapter three is a case study of arguments posited to entrench beliefs;²⁷⁰ that is, make them revision-resistant. In chapter four, Teresa's question-driven revision of her ideas about witch doctors and the value of their work leads her to a new kind of commitment that informs her dialogue with Richard Tanke. In chapter five, Walters and Sunny are highly ambivalent about accepting the accounts of resurrections from the dead as authentic. Walters asks critical questions about the evidence for the belief, but Sunny

system in such a way that the result is a new consistent belief system' (Gärdenfors 1992) He continues, '... this is not the only kind of change that can occur in a belief system. Depending on how beliefs are represented and what kinds of inputs are accepted, different typologies of belief changes are possible'. While the work of Carlos Alchourrón, Peter Gärdenfors, and David Makinson (1985) was arguably seminal in the field, I will primarily focus on their work as it is interpreted and challenge by John Pollock.

²⁷⁰ Gärdenfors, *Belief Revision: 'An Introduction'*, Section 4. Also see Gärdenfors and Makinson, *Revisions of Knowledge Systems Using Epistemic Entrenchment*, in which they suggest that a more constructive approach could be 'adopted based on the "epistemic entrenchment" of the facts in a knowledge system which determines their priority in revisions and contractions'. However, AGM's explanation is only one of several ways of understanding entrenchment. Chapter eight presents the roles of cognition in entrenchment.

continues to seek evidence for it. In chapter 6, Paul first challenges the twins with an alternative hypothesis about the existence of God and then through questions prompts the consideration of a new perspective on the voice of tradition.

These four dialogues point to the complex nature of belief revision in the West-Cameroonian context. Rationalization and rhetoric play complementary roles in chapter three. Emmanuel concludes that the most compelling argument for his work is the economic argument (540-547). Teresa exemplifies the iterative nature of belief revision, how an agent sequentially revises beliefs in response to a string of observations [or questions]. The implications of her answers are cumulative. Moreover, in the final analysis, after she commits her life to Jesus Christ, she does not change her view that spiritual evil exists. Instead, she renounces the power of the practitioners of cultural medicine to protect her from that evil. The dialogue between Walters and Sunny hinges on the reliability of available testimony—a question with which neither can come to grips. A second, equally important, complication in the dialogue is the embodiment of cultural values in that testimony. In light of these complexities I have chosen to further develop the relationship between argumentation and belief revision in section 7.2.

7.2 Belief Revision and Argumentation Schemes

The compounding of the revision of a set of beliefs, any of which may be sensitive to evidence, or critical questions and inference, or both, is at its root quite complex:

We can think of a reasoner as a belief-updater, i.e., an effectively computable set function *update*²⁷¹ that operates repeatedly on sets of beliefs to generate new sets of beliefs. The reasoner starts with the set *input*, and each cycle of the reasoner constitutes the application of *update* to the previous set of beliefs (Pollock 1992, 5).

Pollock's point is that the input of new knowledge initiates a process. The operation of an 'update' [new knowledge] is often an ongoing repetitive process. In other

²⁷¹ Gärdenfors points to Katsuno and Mendelzon's work (1991) that makes a difference between two kinds of information. Revision has to do with the 'static' world, and updating addresses the changes brought about in the world by some agent (Gärdenfors, 'Belief Revision: An Introduction Section' 4:4:6).

words, agents do not generally realize all the implications that a knowledge update will have on their belief set, or noetic structure.²⁷² Thus, this process that generally requires a longer period because all the implications of an update are typically not immediately in view.

The process of updating, if practiced with reference to the standard of consistency, results in contraction or the revision of a knowledge base. Though one might consider a rational ‘standard’ to be a commitment, the commitment to consistency does not necessarily apply to the belief revision of addition (Pollock 2006).

Reason Maintenance System (RMS), a somewhat different approach, does not demand consistency within a noetic network. Rather, it views the network consisting of ‘nodes’, which are connected by reasons. The nodes can contain any conceivable element: ‘beliefs, desires, rules, procedures’ (Doyle 1992, 34), to which one might add experiences, commitments, etc. These nodes are related by different inferential relationships.

While it may seem that the two approaches are quite different, consistency in RMS is simply one type of rule, or reason. For example, I accept two very different sets of beliefs as compatible because I think that they are consistent in some way. The application of these two approaches to Pa’s beliefs about ‘throwing the wine’ produces different perspectives, each of which has value.

However, the term ‘Belief Revision Theory’ used here refers to both belief and knowledge revision (See section 1.7.1.3). The elder in this dialogue holds both belief and knowledge in his noetic structure. Moreover, to say that a proposition is a belief does not indicate how firmly an agent holds the belief at the beginning of the first cycle

²⁷² Noetic Structure was first used by Plantinga and Wolterstorff in *Faith and Rationality* (1983, 48; Nash 1988, 21). The relationship between a noetic structure and a belief set is arguable.

of a revision process.²⁷³ Since the participants in this dialogue have the possibility of a stable, long-term relationship, this dialogue might be the first cycle of a revision process. Yet, according to his own testimony, the elder is satisfied with the intellectual synthesis he has reached. Nevertheless, what he believes and what he knows is not clear in his own self-evaluation.

The elder is a sophisticated rational agent; yet, he is very much a person of his culture and his people. The passing of tradition is dependent on those who know it. The ‘Position to Know *Ad Populum* Argument’ documents this process in argumentative form

Premise 1: Everybody in this group G accepts A.

Premise 2: This group is in a special position to know that A is true.

Conclusion: Therefore, A is (plausibly) true (Walton, Reed and Macagno 2008, 311).

This argument, reminiscent of Polanyi’s concept of conviviality, was encountered in the setting of Teresa’s dialogue.²⁷⁴ In Polanyi’s view, conviviality involves a commitment to both the society and thus the culture in which the individual exists (1962, 203). However, the elder’s belief/knowledge/commitment structure may transcend his social dimensions.

Based on the dialogue’s clarity and focus, I will approach it in a manner slightly different from the approach to the other dialogues. I will provide summaries of a series of excerpts from the whole conversation. In sections 7.4ff, I will examine the dialogue through the six tools we have used, ending with the issue of belief revision.

7.3 Dialogue about the ‘Throwing of the Wine’

²⁷³ Epistemic entrenchment states that ‘Even if all sentences in a belief set are accepted or considered as facts (so that they are assigned maximal probability), not sentences are of equal value for planning or problem-solving purposes.

²⁷⁴ Polanyi’s masterful chapter 7 recounts, ‘Love of truth and of intellectual values in general will now reappear as the love of a kind of society which fosters these values, and submission to intellectual standards will be seen to imply participation in a society which accepts the cultural obligation to serve these standards’ (1962, 203).

In this dialogue a West Cameroonian village head presents an apology for his cultural practices. Functioning as a sage, a critical thinker (Oruka 1991), he presents his reinterpretation of the knowledge and beliefs of his people as the defence that Pastor Ambola requests.

7.3.1 Introduction to the Dialogue and Methodology

Like earlier conversations in this collection, the dialogue begins as an information-seeking dialogue. However, Pastor David is precise about his aim. He desires to understand how to defend some of his Kom beliefs. His source, as already noted, is an ‘elderly man’ of the Kom people, whom I refer to as ‘pa’ or ‘the elder’. The elder is a village head who supervises ancestral and other customary observances, and is also a member of a Christian church. His age and views make him an expert in their current field of discussion. Consequently, David’s conclusions reached here are based on a general argument from expert authority.

7.3.2 The Dialogue

David poses a question in the form of an assertion preceded by the phrase ‘I seem to see’, implying that the elder can clarify his perception of a regularly practiced custom that enables a homeowner to bury a relative on his compound. The elder confirms his observation, but explains that there is more at stake in the performance of the ceremony than obtaining the right to bury the dead. ‘Throwing the wine’ in the compound he owns qualifies him for full citizenship (‘full qualified’) in Kom and full respect (honour). The elder first provides the pastor with the pragmatic significance of the ceremony, and then proceeds to explain the custom in detail:

DAVID: Yeah Good morning Pa.

PA: Good Morning!

DAVID: I understand that you are really advanced in age and you have experienced a lot of Kom culture and the beliefs and for that reason, I think you can help me with a better understanding of some beliefs and how we can defend them.

PA: Eh, yes! Actually I am out of age. I am actually entering into my seventies and I believe that I can answer a few...a few questions from what you have...if not, there is one elderly

man in our village named Tomuh Tang who can speak about Kom beliefs better than myself.

10 **DAVID:** Ok!

PA: ...and I can...now I am sure that I can give you a few that I know.

DAVID: Ok! In that case we go ahead and we see what we can be able to have...there is one thing that I seem to see, that when a Kom man builds a house, there is always a ceremony that he does around the house before it qualifies that a corpse can be buried there.

15 **PA:** Yes! By Kom culture, you have many stages to be qualified as a full-integrated citizen. When you first build, you have certain things to perform, and when all these things are performed, you the owner of the compound become a full honoured citizen where you live. These things are...first of all you have to throw wine in that your compound.

7.3.2.1 Narration (21-52)

Pa describes both the historic and the modern details of the ceremony. The sacrifice of a fowl and offering of wine were often common elements of customary religious observances. In modern times, the cost of the ceremony has dramatically increased. One must provide *at least* 40 bags of salt to those who attend. After his speech, the village head will call to the ancestors (presumably) to participate in the ceremony. The elder Pa elaborate that, when the wine is thrown, ‘the ancestors are there to bless both the compound and its inhabitants’.

These last details interest David. Between ‘Oks’, he asks the elder to explain whether the village head (40) is speaking to the ancestors or to living people. Pa responds, ‘That’s to say, you invoke the spirit of the ancestors to prove to them that somebody is being integrated into the society which they have lived in’ (44-45). The elder’s explanation makes (in this author’s view) the village head’s actions more ambiguous. Does he intend to speak to the ancestors? Alternatively, does the speech simply authorize, or demonstrate to the villagers, that the compound head can bury the dead in the compound? Or are the ancestors actually present? David recognizes the elder’s ambiguity (81-82), but returns to the overall significance of the ceremony. The elder is more than happy to provide further details:

PA: Yes! Throw of wine...this throw of wine consist of...you just give a fowl.

DAVID: Yeah!

PA: Wine...for people to drink.

DAVID: Yes!

- 25 **PA:** And in these modern times, you must give at least 40 salts...forty bags of salt to the people and when they participate in these things, then you are through with the throwing of wine, and then after that, a village he will give you a cup...that is to show that this cup...you can transfer it to a child...can give it to your child.
DAVID: Ok!
- 30 **PA:** And then there when he is given the cup, he has already stood at the door and spoken, and said many things...he calls...he will call the ancestors of the place and this fowl which was given, the ancestors are participating...that's to show that this fowl...you have sacrificed this fowl for the ancestors.
DAVID: Ok!
- 35 **PA:** And we have a belief that when this one is thrown, the ancestors are there to bless you and the place and when the place is blessed, then you have a fine sleep in that place...
DAVID: All right!
PA: There you are integrated into the society of being able to bury somebody in your compound.
DAVID: Ok!
- 40 **PA:** Now when the village head stands at the door to speak like you have said...he is speaking to the ancestors or to the living people? He is speaking to the ancestors, for the hearing of those still living.
DAVID: Ok!
- 45 **PA:** That's to say, you invoke the spirit of the ancestors to prove to them that somebody is being integrated into the society, which they have lived in.
DAVID: Yea!

7.3.2.2 Narrative (69-115)

The elder reaffirms that all the Kom people practice the ceremony to obtain all the benefits of the ceremony, including becoming a member of a society, *Fimang*, and a compound head [a full-honoured citizen (16)]. Thus, it is something like an initiation ceremony into manhood, responsibility, and dignity. Pa then makes what appears to be an orthodox confession of faith.

However, the pastor is not satisfied with the earlier account of the village head's address to the ancestors. In lines 82-83 he requests, 'What are some of the things that are really said?' The elder responds from his own experience. He begins by talking to the first Kom man who first built on the land where the ceremony is taking place, then to that man's descendants. Finally, one addresses some deceased, important village personalities. The pa's emphasis here is on the participation of those named in the ceremony. The nature of this participation is a fundamental issue in the dialogue.

David suggests that the ceremony has two possible implications. The Kom believe that the dead are still living ((96-7) and that they are involved in people's daily lives

(106-107). The elder affirms these observations, but states that an ancestor is alive because the living remember the person. Moreover, people remember the ancestors because of their accomplishments, which include the existence of the Kom.

Thus, as to whether the dead are still living, the sage appears to make a crucial concession to the pastor. He notes, ‘We cannot throw them behind, though they are not really living, we believe they are living because of what they did, we are still seeing...’ (102-103).

However, this memory has two very tangible consequences. First, the naming of the ancestors results in the belief that they are present and that those in the compound are strong and safe. Secondly, the Kom give allegiance to their ancestors. This latter statement troubles the young pastor:

70 **DAVID:** Ok. Yea, but you talk about becoming a member of the society, it really means becoming a Kom man because....
 PA: Yes, a Kom man.
 DAVID: ...because it is not a sect of the Kom people but it is really a practice by all the Kom people...
75 **PA:** By all the Kom people...when you are negotiated into that particular ceremony.
 DAVID: Yes!
 PA: Then you become a member of the society wherever you are and you are honoured. It is known that you are a member of eeh Fimang, you are a member of eh...you are a member of a compound...you are a compound head.
80 **DAVID:** Ok! Thank you...
 PA: That’s your dignity.
 DAVID: And now, eem...you talked about the village heads talking to the ancestors. What are some of the things that are really said?
 PA: Well...eh...it depends...it depends in your understanding...how you know.
85 **DAVID:** Ok!
 PA: When you start, for example. Myself when I start I think of those first people who first build in this place...that is the original people. Like here, I am in the compound has been succeeded by many! Many people. I first of all call the first man who first build this compound, then talk to him...and then those who followed him, they followed him in that line. And then the man who eeh who started this village, is the first man that you name and then from there you move to some important people who lived in this village, and then you name them...that’s to say all of them, they are participating in the fowl which is being killed, and participating on the mimboo or wine which is to be thrown.
90 **DAVID:** Ok!
 PA: Yes
 DAVID: Thank you...so can we imply from here that the Kom man believes that the dead are still living?
 PA: They believe that the dead are living—really they believe that the dead are living because they will always think of them and always think of their importance...what they did...because what they did is more important—is what we...because we live on what the people started and it is there that we have more knowledge to develop our own. But we develop from them and that is why we cannot forget them...we cannot throw them behind, though they are not really living, we believe that they are living because what they did.
100

7.3.2.3 Narrative (122-151)

David now turns to a different line of questioning about the elder's culture. Making a distinction between Christian theology and Kom theology, he inquires whether Kom theology contains a doctrine of a creator God. In response, Pa sketches out a belief in a living God who is the god of both the dead and the living. However, at the mention of the dead he reflects, 'They are there and we cannot always forget them' (134).

David follows, rather abruptly, with the question, '—the person already dead, does the person have any power to bless or curse anybody who is alive?' (129-130). The elder replies that failure 'to do those things' (137) can result in some misfortune, implying to David that the Kom do sacrifices essentially to appease the ancestors and that these rituals are done out of fear—not necessarily from love and reverence.

Pa concedes the element of fear in the sacrifice, but affirms that sacrifices are performed because they have been passed down through generations and they are a duty of the Kom man ('it is what we have been inculcated from our ancestors' (150-151). Having established the Kom belief in the existence of God and the knowledge that sacrifices must be done to please the ancestors, David asks, 'What is the relationship between God the creator and the ancestors?' (152-154). Pastor David does not ask this question from a purely theoretical viewpoint. He is deeply concerned about the practical consequences of the divided allegiance that the elder is suggesting. David asks, 'Now, when you have these beliefs, do you in your culture have knowledge of God who is supposed to be the creator of all things?'

130 **PA:** Yes! We do these things...some of us who are Christians, we first pray, and then we get into our culture...we know that the living God is different from our ancestors and because the living God is the god for our ancestors, and a god for us who are still living. So we still have that belief that God is there and we still have that belief that our ancestors which were created by God, and they left according to God's will, they are there and we cannot always forget them.

135 **DAVID:** So eeh...when somebody dies, somebody is already an ancestor—the person already died does the person have any power to bless or to curse anybody who is alive?

PA: We have a belief like that—some misfortune can happen. And that is why sometimes, when you have a compound like that and you initiate yourself, then you are free to celebrate the death of your late mothers or you late fathers in that particular compound...that because we have a belief

- 140 that if you initiate yourself, into that group and fails to do those things, it means that you have failed to honour your late father or your late uncle or your late mother. And once when you have done the celebration, then you live happily with the belief that you have done everything to please your ancestors.
- 145 **DAVID:** So you are saying that these sacrifices and the death celebrations that are done are done essentially to please or to appease the ancestors...
PA: Exactly...that's it.
DAVID: Eeh...which ...eeh on the other hand could seem to say that these things are done because of fear that if we don't do them, something is going to happen, not necessarily because...just because of love and reverence for the...
- 150 **PA:** It is not only because of fear—it is what we have inculcated from our ancestors, that this is what should be usually done.
DAVID: Now, knowing that God exists and knowing that we have to do these sacrifices to please the ancestors. What actually is the relationship—according to the Kom man's mind, what is the relationship between God the creator and the ancestors.
- 155 **PA:** Well the relationship there eeh...is that ...we believe that God is there---the almighty. We ourselves are creators of God...²⁷⁵
DAVID: Maybe creations?
PA: Yes...created by God.

130 7.3.2.4 Narrative (163-206)

Pa asserts that the rituals (ceremonies) are neither more nor less than cultural practices (124-125, 172). The pastor does not pursue the implications of this position; rather, he seeks to clarify the elder's view on whether one can 'practice all these things' and still be a Christian. Pa enthusiastically affirms that one can follow Christ and move the way his ancestors moved.

Though one might think that pastor Ambola would contest this position, he chooses to redirect the dialogue through a question about the separation of the dead and the living. The story of Lazarus and the rich man, the pastor claims, teaches that the dead do not have anything to do with the living, presumably, because of the separation that exists between them.

The Kom elder concedes the teaching of the passage, but returns to the necessity and inevitability of remembering the dead. Taking the remembrance of the dead as a cue, he raises a significant inconsistency in Pa's position that has come to his attention:

²⁷⁵ This is reminiscent of Sylvester's claim in chapter 6 that man creates god. Since the Kom and the Oku are closely related tribes, there may be a broader tradition behind the elder's words than Pastor Ambola realizes.

We have already established that the sacrifices are done to appease the ancestors so that we can sleep well—so that we can live happy lives and at the same time we also believe within the same setting that these ceremonies are only done as a way of remembering our ancestors (192-195).

The elder establishes a remarkable pragmatic defence of his position. First, he notes that his situation is not like those of people who ‘have gone so much into the Bible’ (201). Thus, he argues that his situation is exceptional. Then he illustrates why being exceptional is compelling by recounting incidences when ‘in order for safety’ (203-204) he must instruct someone ‘to do this’ in order that he will get well.

Moreover, he concedes that he counsels ‘grandsons who have gone all over’ to go and cry die²⁷⁶ as a solution to their problems, and as a result of their actions, these young men ‘feel better’. David gets the point. The elder upholds the ‘sacrificial system because it gives psychological help’ (214-215):

- 170 **DAVID:** So you are saying that the ceremonies that are done and the belief that we have to appease our ancestors is just our culture...
 PA: Is just our culture.
 DAVID: Ok!
 PA: Is just our culture.
- 175 **DAVID:** Meaning that somebody can practice all these things and still be a Christian.
 PA: Yes! According to us, it is just a way of living, and by living, we are still Christians, we are still following Christ and we are still moving the way our ancestors moved.
 DAVID: Ok! Now the Bible talks about a separation that exists between the dead and the living—showing that when somebody dies, he does nor more have anything to do with the living. Maybe you who are both a Kom man and a Christian know about this passage in the Bible where this rich man dies in the Bible and he is wishing that he could come back and tell his people what happens in the next world. Have you come across this passage?
- 180 **PA:** Yes! We...we know that there is a separation between the living and the dead and you cannot forget somebody completely where you have lived with him.
- 185 **DAVID:** Yea!
 PA: You cannot forget somebody completely where he was your grandmother...where he was your grandfather...where he was your father and died. It is only remembrance—not really that man can...a dead man can come back and do anything. It just remember that comes into our minds that we must remember somebody who lived sometimes and died, knowing that God is there living...but somebody have lived with you and he is away, you always remember him.
- 190

- 170 ‘Only remembrance’ is the issue at the centre of the debate over the dual interpretation of the ancestral reality. The elder’s psychological approach dictate this proposition.

²⁷⁶ A ‘cry die’ is a ceremony that commemorates a particular ancestor. The ceremony is generally characterised by traditional (non-Christian) rites.

DAVID: Me a bit... Can you be consistent?

200 **PA:** Here, we understand that two cultures have come together...two cultures...that is Christianity and our local culture, and Christianity is far better than those cultures, because in some places, some people who have gone so much into the Bible, they have forgotten this. But those of us who are in places like this where many can run to us and say “my child is sick because this and this...because he has not done this” I must have to remember those things, in order for safety---in order to make people believe that because he has ran to me and I have
205 instructed him to go do this, he will be well meanwhile really as the Bible is saying, it is not quit true. That is what I know.

DAVID: So you mean...when you say in places like this, you mean in a place...

210 **PA:** Yes in a compound like this where many grandsons leave all over and they can come for consultation and many other things. So I believe that when they come and I say ok! Go and cry die and cry die, it means that psychologically, when he does that he will feel that he is completely well because he has done that.

DAVID: Ok!

PA: Yes that is a belief—another belief

215 **DAVID:** All right, so you mean that you also see these inconsistencies, however, you uphold this sacrificial system because it gives a psychological help.

PA: Yes!

7.3.2.5 Narration (212-287)

Pastor Ambola now changes the focus of the dialogue to *Ikeng*, a subject we encountered in the dialogue between Paul, Sylvester and Celestin, who spoke of the phenomenon as *Keng*. *Ikeng* are pots (233) with ‘eyes painted around [them]’, (214) that are consulted for healing. Pa asserts that some Kom report that healing even comes from just sitting near a pot. From this he concludes, ‘They have a belief...complete belief on such things’ (238-239).

The elder rejects the idea that the pots have supernatural power, and concludes that ‘the power is only the spirit of doing it’ (249-251). It would seem that ‘spirit’ in this context is the human spirit, and that he is suggesting that this ‘complete belief’ results in a psychological transformation or a psychosomatic change in the one who believes. He describes the goal of this return to historic culture as ‘pleasure’, but given the context, the word may have the sense of comfort/security:

7.3.2.6 Narration (221-251)

DAVID: Then I eeh...I may want to ask you for a favour to give me another few minutes. Can I ask you about what the Kom man calls *Ikeng*? There is a

certain ceremony that is done around the house with eyes painted around it.
 Eh, would you want us to talk a little about that?
 225 **PA:** Yes! I have them in this compound, dotted in all the houses and to me as a Christian, whenever my sister comes to do that, I am there—not there because I think that it can do anything to me...just to pretend that since I am a Christian, I cannot throw their way of life.
DAVID: Ok!
PA: It is there. But first of all, those of them who do not know God, they believe that it was
 230 their god but to those of us who are seeing it as mere—mere eeh...mere tactics.
DAVID: yea!
PA: We hold that those things are just to...to...psychologically to make people feel that when you do it, they are ok.
DAVID: Yea! You seem to be talking with...you are both a Kom mam...a traditional Kom
 235 man, and an enlightened person. So you are able to interpret these things and give psychological significance to it.
PA: Yes!
DAVID: Do you think that people in Kom who have not been educated like yourself...who have not been exposed to the external world has this understanding that this thing only has a
 240 psychological significance?
PA: Most of them nowadays are...know that. But our ancestors didn't know... They did not know?
DAVID: Yea.
PA: Thought that whenever they are sick and they consult that pot, they will become
 245 well...They and some of them, when they did that, some of them became well because they were to be well and they just believe that they are well because they have done that...they have sat near the pot. That is what I reason. They have a belief...complete belief on such things.
DAVID: Now do you mean that there is nothing supernatural in these practices? Do you mean
 250 that there is no power behind it?
PA: No! There is no power. The power is only the spirit of doing it...

Testing the elder, the pastor recounts people's testimonies about what happened to them after they abandoned their traditions and asks what he thinks. At first, Pa declares that there is no cause and effect between disposing of a fetish [a juju] and the death of a child in the family. However, he revises that declaration, and notes that there is something to the idea that there is a cause and effect relationship between rejecting tradition and misfortune ('it's not quite true' 259).

David immediately perceives that they have returned to the idea that the practice of tradition is necessary for salvation. The sage concurs—with the proviso, 'Yes. To be saved from his people...' (274). The pastor then clarifies the elder's two ways of viewing the belief: Kom people believe the practice of cultural rites is necessary for a Kom person to be saved from his people, i.e., the ancestors. Alternatively, the enlightened Kom views the same rituals as the practice of psychotherapy.

The pastor adopts the second interpretation and suggests that the church could hold the ceremonies, avoiding sacrifice, in the church services and accomplish the same thing (279-285). This would avoid the act of giving worship to the ancestors. However, this idea prompts a question about what can be done in the church without harming the church. Pa admits that people sing Kom music in the church, but he qualifies the music by saying that it is not from the Bible. It seems that it is a different matter with the cultural sacrifices. One senses that he cannot conceptualize modified tradition. Nor can he visualize those substitutes, modified traditions, in the church service:

PA: And after this long time, people are going back to pick up [unclear] believing that they have thrown their culture.

265 **DAVID:** I seem to have heard a good number of people talked about who are...some people are insane and different people have gone into different difficulties and people think that they ran into these difficulties in life because they threw away these things.

PA: Yes!

DAVID: What do you think?

PA: It is just a belief... It is just a belief that because I threw my father's juju, that is why my child has died...

270 **DAVID:** Yea!

PA: But it is not true...

DAVID: Ok!

PA: It is not quite true.

275 **DAVID:** We are therefore coming back to that conclusion again that, actually, there is the belief that... there is the belief in people that one has to do these things to be saved.

PA: Yes. To be saved from his people...

DAVID: To be saved from his ancestors and at the same time there is a belief in the enlightened Kom man that these things only give a psychological solution to the people's solutions—it does not really have a spiritual significance?

280 **PA:** Exactly!

DAVID: Ok! Now that it is only a psychological thing we could be Christians without necessarily throwing away *our culture but by transforming our culture, helping our people to worship God the way the Bible requires them* to worship, without necessarily giving the sacrifices. Maybe there is a ceremony that used to be done and people were given food to eat, then that aspect of it that has to do with giving sacrifices to the dead is omitted, but the food that was given to people is given and the people do the rest of the ceremony that does not really give worship to the ancestors. How do you think?

285 **PA:** Well it is true that eeh...there are certain things that we do in the church which are not Biblical...like singing in Kom, singing in Mungaka, singing in Aghem...all these are not from...the songs are not from the Bible. We form in order to sing in our own language, to believe that we have a language, which can actually be sung in a church...

290

7.3.2.7 Narration (310-327)

In the dialogue's conclusion, Pastor David continues to parse what they have said. He summarized the elder's viewpoint in this way: What we do is culture; what we believe is our religion. The pa concurs, but in response, David speculates that their discussion has been about 'two religions'.

Not attempting to address this dichotomy, the pastor returns to the uniqueness of Christ who said that He is the way, the truth, and the light. Curiously, the metaphor of coming to the Father emerges here as a pilgrimage. Even more curiously, the elder admits that customary sacrifices will keep the worshipper in Kom, maintaining his culture:

- DAVID:** The things we do constitute our culture but the beliefs that we have actually constitute our religions.
- 325 **PA:** Yes!
- DAVID:** And if we have a religion, and we put it together with Christianity, it's like we are trying to have two religions at the same time...however, the Bible has said that...Jesus has said in the Bible that He is the way, the truth and the...
- 330 **PA:** the light...
- DAVID:** ...the life, and that no one comes to the father except through him, which means that we cannot go to God through any other religion if God is the true God who created the universe.
- PA:** Yes! We are doing this...we are not doing this because we want to go somewhere...
- 335 **DAVID:** Yea!
- PA:** We are doing this to maintain our culture, but the way to go to God is through Jesus.
- DAVID:** Yea,
- PA:** Yes! So we are not doing this, maintaining our...keeping our culture because we want to go somewhere. We are just maintaining our culture to prove that we have lived with a culture...and that Christ came...before Christ came, we had a culture, and that we maintain
- 340 our culture, and then follow Christ.
- DAVID:** Ok

7.4 The Dialogue Analysed

This dialogue incorporates many of the themes from the previous four conversations. Much like Doctor Emmanuel, Pa's commitments put him in a highly ambivalent position. However, as in Teresa's example, he has significantly revised his original beliefs, though in a very different way from the way she revised hers. Though the argument from fear features in this and earlier dialogues, the elder's need for belonging

and identity play significant roles in his beliefs and commitments. Finally, the power of commitment to culture is evident here, as it was in the case of Walters and Sunny's dialogue. However, as one would expect, these parameters take on a very different character in this dialogue. My plan here is to examine, one by one, the roles that our six variables play in the conversation.

7.4.1 The Dialogue's Purpose

The conversation, as we have noted, begins on a clear note. It is an information-seeking dialogue with two goals: Ambola wants a better understanding of specific African [Kom] beliefs and 'how we can defend them'. While one might question the pastor's commitment to defend the belief that he is investigating,²⁷⁷ he has chosen a man who has served as a teacher in a Baptist primary school and a deacon in the church in Kom for many years, who is known to participate in both the church and cultural activities, and who is greatly respected.²⁷⁸ The elder, an 'enlightened' man (233-234), proves to be both an expert (Walton, Reed and Macagno 2008, 13-21, Walton 1998, 143-145) and a philosophic sage (Oruka 1991, 28).

The dialogue begins as an investigation into 'throwing the wine', but transitions into an inquiry into the elders divided understanding of the ritual. In further interview,

David notes:

Actually when I discussed with this person, I really arrived at this point where I saw a clear...a clear contradiction in the mind of this person. It is like the person is upholding two opposing views in his mind at the same time. He says one thing and later on he says another thing and he doesn't seem to be conscious that he is contradicting himself (Ambola 2008, 240-244).

²⁷⁷ David seems to indicate that he has more in mind for the dialogue than a simple apology in lines 269-273, perhaps an affirmation of respect for the Kom ancestral heritage in church.

²⁷⁸ Interview with Ambola David, 26 Mar 2008.

Then the pastor says something that seems out of place, ‘Can you be consistent?’ (198), which seems to be more a ‘request’²⁷⁹ than a question, but the elder interprets it as a question. He explains his reasons for holding his folk beliefs. The dialogue has exposed not only the elder’s viewpoints, but also the reasoning behind one of those viewpoints.

Pastor Ambola’s observation that the Bible teaches that the dead do not have any business with the living (179-180) signals a potential transition to a persuasion dialogue. However, the pa’s acknowledgement that the Bible does teach the separation appears to satisfy the pastor. He does not pursue the matter. The pastor’s comment about some people going insane or into different difficulties (261-263) might have also taken the conversation in a different direction, but the pastor does not follow up this assertion with the argument that the ancestors might actually cause harm to people.

7.4.2 Dialogue Structure

Though the dialogue contains approximately 25 explicit questions and indirect requests for clarification, it exhibits a genuinely cooperative relationship between the elder and the pastor. The pa responds with the information asked of him and does not elaborate too far from the point of the question. Extra material in the form of assertions are relatively brief and of an expository or explanatory nature.

Even though the elder claims expert knowledge at the beginning of the dialogue, it seems that his answers are not speeches. Moreover, even though he is both knowledgeable and articulate, he does not appear to try to impress the pastor with the extent of his knowledge. Nor does he seem to use stories in a manipulative fashion.

²⁷⁹ ‘But requests are...certainly not typical questions; and if it is doubted whether they ought to be classified as imperatives...the answer must be that they have more in common with imperatives than anything else’ (Hamblin 1987, 7).

While perhaps no conversation is devoid of rhetorical qualities, there are only a few points of emotional intensity in the dialogue (195-198; 199-203).

Thus, the conversation is largely dialectical. It contains a brief introduction (1-9), and the pastor's request to shift the subject matter at line 221.

7.4.3 Questions and Knowledge

The progressive nature of the dialogue is one of its more interesting qualities. Admitting the subjectivity of his perceptions, the pastor begins with the assertion 'there is one thing that I seem to see' (11-12). The elder interprets Pastor Ambola's statement, and many of his following comments, as opportunities for telling the pastor about the ceremony. In this dialogue, the outworking of defeasibility is clarification, precision, completeness, and thus increased understanding.

This is of no little importance for this dialogue and apologetics. David has gotten the significance of 'throwing the wine' partly right. However, in response, the elder expands that significance of the ceremony. Taken 'together with other things to perform' (15-16), the ceremony includes becoming a full honoured citizen. The 'throwing of the wine', furthermore, confers an authority on the house builder that is transferable from one property to a later one (54-59). Through the ritual, the owner is 'negotiated' into a society (54), a status that will enable him to bury a corpse on any property he might own.

However, the dynamics of learning through dialogue differs from that of Aristotle's approach, which has at its centre a curriculum or text (Walton 1998, 235-237). Nevertheless, it still maintains a core dialectical emphasis on questioning. Consistent with Aristotle's suggestion that 'dialectical arguments are those which, starting from generally accepted opinions, reason to establish a contradiction' (Walton 1998, 238), the pastor's questions move the conversation to the point (205-206) at which the Pa admits that his viewpoint has inconsistencies (205-209). However, the

inconsistency here is between what he believes and what he practices. It is grounded in studied ambiguity, which raises the questions of what does the elder know and what does he believe?

On one hand, pa seems certain that the Kom man believes that ‘the dead are living’ (94), but when asked about the power of the *Ikeng*, he answers that most enlightened Kom know that *Ikeng* is [psychologically significant] (231-235). However, his general acceptance of the efficacy of tradition leaves open the question of how much he shares in his people’s beliefs. It is clear that he thinks that he knows his people’s needs and is confident in the ability of rituals to meet those psychosomatic needs.

Nevertheless, one should not disregard his claims that ‘we believe that God is there—the almighty’ (155) and that ‘the way to go to God is through Jesus’ (334). The belief in a high God is common in West Cameroonian culture, while most Christian churches in West Cameroon teach that Jesus is the way to God. Whether these beliefs constitute knowledge of God in the Christian sense of the word (130-134) is beyond the scope of this work.

7.4.4 Argument Schemes

At first inspection, the elder grounds his beliefs/practices in something like a rhetorical *ad populum* argument of belonging:

- Premise 1: Everybody in this group G accepts A
- Premise 2: Being a member of this group G is highly valued for you (the respondent).
- Premise 3: If you do not accept A, you will be out of this group G.
- Conclusion: Therefore, you should accept A (Walton, Reed and Macagno 2008, 313).

However, according to the elder the enlightened in Kom do not accept the ethnic view of the ancestors, A. Nor do they accept the mystical powers of *Ikeng*. Thus, it seems the core of his reasoning has a different source. In 191-211, much like Dr. Emmanuel in chapters 3, the elder points out the pragmatic moral justification of his instructions to

distraught parents or worried young men. He claims that his context allows him no other recourse. It is an *ad populum* argument from moral justification:

Premise 1: Everybody who is good, or who represents a group G with good qualities, accepts policy P.

Premise 2: Your goal is (or should be) to be a good person, or a member of a group with good qualities.

Therefore, you should accept P (Walton, Reed & Macagno 2008, 312).

He offers this argument as a justification of what he is doing. He is a village head; he affirms the good qualities of his people; his goal is to be a responsible member of his people. Therefore, he should accept policy P, or the practices of Kom culture.

Pastor Ambola offers two arguments with implied conclusions. First, the Bible is in a position to know. The Bible, David claims, speaks authoritatively about the relationship between the living and the dead, telling us that the dead have nothing to do with the living. The elder concedes the pastor's point, but in light of his revised beliefs the argument is irrelevant. Certainly, non-living ancestors have nothing to do with the living. The second argument is one from pragmatic inconsistency:

Premise 1: a advocates argument α , which has proposition A as its conclusion.

Premise 2: a has carried out an action, or set of actions, that imply that a is personally committed to \neg (not) A.

Therefore, a's argument α should not be accepted (Walton, Reed & Macagno 2008, 353).

Argument α is the assumed argument that the ancestors are not living; the conclusion is that one should not worship them for one's well-being. However, the elder reduces the plausibility of argument α . In this case, the implied conclusion is that the elder's enlightened beliefs are likely not real commitments.²⁸⁰ Again, pa brushes off the implication of his actions. Is there an explanation for his divided view? I would suggest

²⁸⁰ This is an updated variant of the traditional *quoque* argument, which says that actions contrary to asserted beliefs falsify those beliefs. However, actions that seem to negate a statement do not necessarily make the statement false. To say that they falsify the statement is in essence the nature of the traditional fallacy. Nevertheless, if I argue that stealing is wrong and then steal, I have done almost irreparable damage to my argument.

that his commitments play a full-fledged role in the shaping of what he asserts and what he practices.

7.5 Concluding Reflections on Belief Revision: Commitment, and Identity

By the end of the dialogue, evidence of the commitments of the participants is apparent. The pastor is committed to a form of evangelical Christianity that focuses on the Bible (178-183) and teaches that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven (330-331). However, our appreciation of the extent of that commitment is limited by the partial strategies present in the dialogue. Given his thorough questioning of the elder, he shows commitment to understanding Kom beliefs, but how committed he is to defending those beliefs cannot be discerned from the evidence.

The commitments of the pa are more explicit, but difficult to reconcile. Clearly, he is committed to fully cooperating with the pastor in the project. One might say that he is wholeheartedly and extensionally committed. The men accomplished what they set out to do.

Beyond that, the elder has several conflicting commitments. Putting aside whatever Christian commitment he might have, he seems significantly committed to modern psychology. His continued emphasis on the psychological interpretation of customary ancestral rites, including Ikeng (227ff), indicates that in light of his studies of psychology, he has reinterpreted his culture. This would have been a significant past belief revision for him.

However, according to his own testimony, there is no question that he is practically committed to performing the customary rites and sacrifices... The reinterpretation becomes an explanation and justification for the efficacy of his work as a village head in facilitating the 'throwing of the wine' to 'sleep well' (35-36), counselling people to have a 'cry die' to 'feel well' (208-211), and encouraging of sacrifice 'in order for safety'

(274). It seems that the elder offers this interpretation to the pastor as a defence of his cultural practices—an apology, so to speak. The pa has attempted to give David that for which he asked.

However, the text makes abundantly clear the tension between his interpretation of those rites and the reality the rites imply. Does he believe that living ancestors must be placated for a person to ‘be saved from his people’ (274)? Or does he believe that the ancestral cult has only psychosomatic effects? Perhaps those are the wrong questions to ask. The current data provides ambiguous answers to these questions. A possibly more fruitful line of approach is apparent when one examines the relationship of one more of the elder’s commitments.

The elder’s commitment to belong forms a framework for his other commitments. In line 192, he asserts that Christianity is far better than his ‘local culture’.²⁸¹ Yet, at the close of the dialogue, he is committed to Kom culture, where his historic and emotional identity lie. The differences between two other commitments, one to psychology and the other to culture, while not lost on him, are not compelling. He focuses on the pragmatic need to belong. While the two affiliations that he has, Christianity and his ethnic culture, are two expressions of the same practical rationality, he may well have a deeper commitment to a vision of a dignified (70-71, 77), strong (106-110), and completed (120-121) life full of accomplishment (123-125).

No finer picture could be drawn of one epistemological tap root of entrenchment.

²⁸¹ The elder’s statement in 196-197 might be thought of as a concession if the pastor was arguing it. However, proving that point is not the goal of the conversation. The elder makes the statement freely, under no duress.

Chapter Eight: The Significance of this Research for Person-to-Person Apologetics

8.1 Introduction: The Plan of the Chapter

This chapter has four overall objectives: summarize the data on whether tools used in this research were suitable for the project; defend the thesis question's answer by summarizing and extending the concluding reflections of chapters three through seven; present the three contributions that this research makes to personal apologetics in pluralistic settings; and finally, envision the future of dialogue in the discipline of Apologetics.

Sections 8.2.1 through 8.2.4 are essentially descriptive. Did the questions addressed to the dialogues produce results? More importantly, given the purpose of this research, were they the right questions? Did the conversational data present any limitations on the use of the theories? Section 8.2.5 asks a more difficult question: 'What are the theories' possibilities in future research projects similar to this one?' Sections 8.3 through 8.7 exposit the thesis statement through evidence from the conversations and summaries of the end-of-chapter reflections. Section 8.7 presents three contributions this research makes to apologetics, and 8.8 reflects on the future of dialogue in apologetics.

8.2 Evaluation of the Tools

Four of the tools, with the exception of commitment and belief revision, are examined topically. Those will be reserved for sections 8.4 and 8.5.

8.2.1 Dialogue and Dialogue Type

Each apologist committed to begin the conversation by initiating an information-seeking dialogue. The apologists generally maintained that purpose throughout

their conversations, and the conversations exhibited mutuality and turn-taking. Moreover, though the apologists initiated the conversations, their partners furnished most of their content. This is evidence for the cooperative spirit of those who participated and the effectiveness of the dialogical approach. Taking into consideration that those who participated in the conversations, apologists and partners alike, had marginal or no formal training in dialogue prior to their conversations, the use of information-seeking dialogues seemed naturally fitted to the West Cameroonian context.

However, whether an information-seeking dialogue is alone sufficient for the purpose of apologetics is an open question. An apologetic person-to-person conversation may require a mixture of dialogue types. Though the conversations contained segments of interaction that were persuasive, similar to inquiry, and eristic, those types of dialogue were not initiated or sustained by the apologists. While these elements suggest the potential usefulness of these types of dialogue, the absence of the sustained use of those types limits what can be said here about general dialogue theory. A study of conversations initiated and sustained as a persuasion, inquiry, deliberation dialogue, or as an eristic dialogue, would provide more light on whether Walton and Krabbe's overall view of dialogue and dialogue types is suitable for West Cameroonian.

8.2.2 Argument Patterns

Section 3.31.1 notes that argument patterns occur throughout the conversation between Dr. Emmanuel and Ernest. While their dialogue contains the largest number of explicit argument patterns, the four conversations that follow reveal explicit and reflective patterns: Those verbalized or strongly implied are explicit; reflective patterns (when revealed) summarize apologist's observations or personal

judgements on their experiences. Four examples of this latter category stand out: Emmanuel's reflection on his motivation for his work (540-542); Teresa's reflection on the mistake of the witch doctor (Mokake 2007, 103); and Paul's concession to mystical powers (232-235). As sections 8.3 and 8.4 point out, a fine, if almost invisible, line separates the reflective and the public, or explicit, use of argument patterns.

8.2.3 Rhetoric

Rhetoric is scattered through the conversations in different ways. It first appears as a defensive strategy. When confronted with Ernest's view of the Bible, Dr. Emmanuel teaches him about the presence of witch doctors in the Bible and lectures him on the role of the Bible in the development of wisdom and knowledge. Walters and Sunny concede to stories that they have heard as they sought to judge the truth of the Manyu belief about resurrection. These stories were not readily susceptible to questioning because of their embedded cultural values and the fact that they were first heard in their childhood. The brothers, in their dialogue with Paul, resort to the story of the pastor's saga to impress on Paul the dangers of tradition.

This rhetoric in the conversations possesses four qualities: it does not encourage questions and therefore, is not part of the dialogical flow; though the rhetoric interrupts the development of the interaction, it does not completely stop it; it provides valuable information on the cultural or personal worldview of the agents; though narrative in nature, the rhetorical inclusions contain argument patterns that affect the course of the dialogues as they develop.

8.2.4 Questions

Throughout the discussion of the dialogues, purely information-seeking dialogues have been differentiated from critical questions that address inconsistencies, anomalies, or the considerations of other viewpoints. Sometimes the agents in the dialogues use assertions to imply questions. Ernest poses the idea of a biblical database that implies the question, ‘Are your practices incompatible with the Bible?’ Walters questions the plausibility of resurrected people with his description of the physical decay of one who has been put in a coffin. Based on her understanding of Christ’s work, Teresa asks Richard, ‘Why do you keep on sacrificing?’ David probes the consistency of the elder’s two interpretations of traditional rites, but does not accuse him of inconsistency. Rather, he asks the elder whether he sees the issue: **David:** ‘Alright, so you mean that you also see these inconsistencies, however, you uphold this sacrificial system because it gives a psychological help (214-215).

These questions, however, do stand by themselves. Embedded in a stream of questions that are addressed to mundane, but important, details and issues, they have authenticity. Clearly they do not follow the pedagogical approach suggested by the theory of argumentation schemes. However, they reflect its concerns by addressing a dialogue partner’s data, values, arguments, and commitments. However, having asked the question, or made their point, the apologists do not follow it with extended polemic or dialectic.

8.2.5 Conclusions

The data suggests three broad points. The questions in the dialogues are productive. In that sense, they are relevant. However, that data suggests that, given the cultural context of the research, it is easy to ask wrong, or misguided questions.

Three examples of this problem come to mind. First, it is easy to look for dialogue type where it is not applicable. The conversation between Walters and Sunny resembles an inquiry, but fails to meet the standards of an inquiry. Secondly, the traditional purposes of rhetoric are particularized in the data. Aristotle's broad categories of ceremonial, forensic, and political rhetoric are narrowed to the didactic defensive and offensive functions.

The examination of the data is also affected by the problems associated with assertion and concession. On what basis do agents in the dialogues assert propositions? What do concessions mean in the cultural context?

8.2.6 The Future Use of these Tools in Apologetics

This topic, as a question, can be asked in two ways: Based on the last thirty years of work in the study of dialogue, informal argument and belief revision, is there a future for the development and use of this dissertation's critical methodology? The second question speculates on whether there is a future in the development of the method based on anticipated developments in these fields. From this researcher's perspective, the answer to the first is an unqualified yes. The answer to the second is more in doubt.

The method of analysis employed in this research is ground breaking. For the first time (to this researcher's knowledge) contemporary studies of dialogue, informal argument, and belief revision are brought together to examine the rationality of case studies of conversations. Hints of this approach existed before the research began. Though John Pollock's commitment to the close relationship between belief revision and rationality pointed towards the convergence of the fields (1974, 1983, 1995), only in 2013 did *Trends in Belief Revision and*

Argumentation Dynamics explicitly connect belief revision and argumentation on the theoretical level.

Since the critical approach used here is at the most basic level, many improvements in the methodology could be made through further utilization of the work of John Pollock, Peter Gardenförs, Sven Hansson, and many others. However, as developments in the field of belief revision continue to accelerate, the task of integrating research in this field will become more difficult. The state of affairs in dialogue and argumentation research seems to be much more stable. Since the work of Walton, Krabbe, Toulmin, and Hamblin, to name a few, have just been touched upon in this work, there is much room for adaptation of these scholars' work to the demands of apologetics.

8.3 The thesis of the Dissertation

The thesis question, stated in section 1.4, 'How do the principles derived from this research into West Cameroonian rationality affect the practice of person-to-person apologetics in West Cameroon and other pluralistic contexts?' is open to a variety of answers. Taking the insights in 8.2.1 through 8.2.4 into consideration, the dialogues have an engaging ethos that embodies many positive communication values. (See Appendix One.) Moreover, the apologists have a lot to teach the reader about asking questions. However, the richness of these qualities is nourished by the culture in which the dialogues occur (2.13-2.16). An answer to the thesis question applicable to a broad spectrum of pluralistic contexts should be a creative theoretical synthesis consistently supported by dialogue evidence, and one easily transferable to other settings. The following formulation is an answer compatible with the data of this research and those parameters:

A belief's entrenchment, the result of argument patterns converging into a cumulative case for the belief, is primarily sensitive to understanding and revision in the context of dialogue. (1.5).

Sections 8.2.1-8.2.4 expounded selected terms of this thesis statement and their relationships.

The dialogue data shows the general presence of argumentative patterns. Typically, these argument patterns are connected by or embedded in a story with pragmatic implications. Patient, meticulous dialogue is the only possible means to learn the significant nodes of another person in a conversation, the stories that support those nodes, and the arguments contained in those stories.

In section 8.4, I summarize and develop the phenomenon of entrenchment. I suggest that entrenchment originates, in part, from one cognitive peculiarity of many argument patterns found in these dialogues. Section 8.5 looks at convergence in the cumulative case approach to argumentation.

8.4 Explaining Entrenchment through Cognition

Though the following treatment builds on the discussions of sections 3.32-3.32.3, it remodels the cognitive function of argument patterns by comparing them to Pollock's 'quick and inflexible modules'.

Section 8.3 addressed the viewpoint that an argument patterns, an assortment of premises expressed in conventional form, supports a conclusion. This section further explains their cognitive function, and why in a cumulative case they often offer *strong* support for a conclusion. After defining entrenchment and cognition, I use Pollock's difference between explicit reasoning and 'quick and inflexible modules' (2006) to clarify the essential role that an argument pattern plays in entrenching a piece of information. This is their cognitive function.

Entrenchment is the measure of the resistance of a belief to change. This is its fundamental meaning in Belief Revision Theory. Entrenchment, in this sense, is dynamic. A belief's high resistance to change can be reduced, presumably, by

new knowledge introduced into a conversation through assertions, the use of questions, and of course, arguments. However, entrenchment can also refer to the amount of confidence an agent has in a belief. (Hansson 2002, 3-4). Though BRT theorists view 'confidence' as a static concept, experience demonstrates that confidence in a belief is increased by new evidence for its factive state. Since practical apologetics has both negative and positive dimensions, entrenchment is used here to refer to both confidence and resistance to change (3.32.3). Arguments, offered to support Christian beliefs, increase the confidence that believers and nonbelievers have in them. However, the definition of 'resistance to change' entails two different scenarios. An apologist presents a Christian belief in such a way that it becomes more plausible to the nonbeliever than the one he currently holds! On the other hand, one can use the same tools, assertions, questions, and arguments, to undercut, or reduce the plausibility of a conversational partner's belief.

Though section 1.3 and 1.32.2 define cognition, respectively, as the 'mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses', or simply 'the processing of new information', the position here is that argument patterns play a significant role in *both* cognition and entrenchment.

Argument patterns are strongly, but not completely, presumptive. While presumptions or presumptive arguments are subject to exceptions (1.9.2.2), in practice they are often accepted at face value and assumed to be fact. This is consistent with Hansson's view that since our cognitive resources are limited, 'we treat things as certain although they are not'. (2002, 4). This makes presumptive argument patterns both useful and dangerous. They are dangerous because an

argument pattern can be the stimulus for ‘jumping to an erroneous conclusion’. However, they are useful because they offer quick mechanisms for processing new information. Many patterns exhibit both qualities. For example:

Premise 1: Person P has done acts A.

Premise 2: To acts A is attributed the value V.

Conclusion: Person P is V. (Walton, Reed & Macagno 2008, 321).

A common template for processing new knowledge about people, this pattern can be used to reach a warranted or unwarranted conclusion. P has acted to save lives on several occasions. Each occasion is presumed to be a heroic act. Therefore, perhaps without all the facts being known, a rational agent considers P to be a hero. This conclusion could be derived with time and effort, but most likely it is a quick response to dramatic stories told about the actions attributed to P. However, when all the facts are in, this conclusion may need to be revised.

This is reminiscent of Pollock’s observation that much of ‘our belief formation and decision making is based on various shortcut procedures’ (1995, 51-52, 2006), which he calls ‘quick and inflexible modules’ (section 3.32.2). Even though most quick and inflexible modules work largely on an unconscious level, the parallel between quick and easy modules and argument patterns is evident. Quick and easy modules facilitate processing large amounts of information. Argument patterns are default reasoning templates that allow an agent to bypass, in the above example, making the inductive effort to determine the motivation and circumstances of each of P’s actions and to make a probabilistic estimation of whether P is a hero.

However, argument patterns often carry with them a sizeable amount of information—and ignorance. The dramatic stories about P’s actions in the news are impressive and memorable. In the absence of anything bad about him, they result in the vivid impression, difficult to change, that P is a hero.

The agents in the dialogues reflect this phenomenon. Emmanuel's memories of his grandfather seem to be good ones. He respected him, listened, and did what he was told to do. The impression here is one of positive admiration. The perception of the mysterious shrine plays an important role in substantiating Richard's theology, and his apparent impression that his village gods help children and childless couples (68) carries with it a powerful emotional empathy he feels for those people. The stories that Walters and Sunny discuss are from a number of sources. Though Walters only mentions his uncle (292) and the 'town crier' (127-129) as sources of his information, the belief deeply embedded in Mamfe [Manyu] culture carries strong emotions. Walters notes that a family that does not have rumours that one of its members is resurrected is not a 'strong' family (102). Finally, Sylvester and Celestine's arguments for tradition are grounded in fear, and the elder's arguments for his tradition carry with them pride in the Kom heritage.

However, ignorance often plays a strong role in presumptive arguments. Evidence that would qualify the presumption and alter the argument is missing. This ignorance can be about Christianity *or* their own beliefs. Walters and Sunny find themselves in this latter situation. The sources of their stories are either dead or inaccessible. The two men have no first-hand experience of the phenomena. The other dialogues are different situations. Since Dr. Emmanuel has limited, fuzzy knowledge about Christianity, he reasons largely from memories of his grandfather. Though Richard seems familiar with the Christian teaching about Christ, the particulars of his village religion are the possession of the priests. The elder is grounded in the basic teachings of the Christian Faith. On the other hand, time enshrouds the ancestors whom he admires and desires to emulate and please.

Though their lack of knowledge does not create their presumptive arguments, it fuels them.

Correcting that ignorance is the purpose of critical questions—to bring new information about the ‘actions of P’ (in the first example) to be processed at the discussion table. This new information may secure or undercut the status of P. In either case, the new information should come from somewhere in a timely manner. The longer the conclusion of the argument pattern stands without comment or challenge, the more difficult it is to challenge or undercut—if just for pragmatic reasons. In other words, entrenchment is a function of both knowledge, ignorance, and time. Knowledge is the contents of the argument pattern. Ignorance is the state of mind that says I have no reason not to accept this conclusion. The passing of time makes objective evidence for that non-acceptance more difficult to obtain or accept. This is particularly true of societies that are characterized by the oral transmission of information. Thus, dialogue is all the more important in those societies. The fourth dialogue documents this.

Though one cannot say that Sylvester and Celestine are totally ignorant of Christianity (They attend the Presbyterian Church), they seem to be unfamiliar with biblical teaching and the Christian world view. Confronted with their situation, Paul makes an assertion about ‘God exists therefore...’ and asks a question about the fairness of position that pushes the brothers to reflect on their cultural arguments. Thus, he introduces the plausibility of Christian thought and injects the possibility that their tradition is less plausible than they thought.

8.5 Defeasible Arguments and the Cumulative Case

In this section, as an introduction, I revisit the legal interpretation of the cumulative case. I then return to the significance of Paul’s assertion, in dialogue four, that

‘without God people cannot exist’ (95). This introduces a broader discussion of the research data and the cumulative case.

The legal interpretation of the cumulative case, often attributed to Basil Mitchell, originated with John Wisdom:

The debate, to be useful, must take the form of a dialogue in which, as John Wisdom observes (in relation to a legal judgement), “The process of presenting and representing a case which severally co-operate in favour of the conclusion” (Mitchell 1973, 45).

Typically, the conclusion here is the guilt or innocence of the defendant. In other words, elements in the presentation of a case must ‘severally co-operate’ to favour one point, guilty or not guilty. Relevance is determined by whether the argument contributes to one conclusion or the other. To put it another way, the arguments should confirm either the story of the defence or the prosecution and, in some legal systems, place the epistemic status of one of those stories beyond a reasonable doubt.

Most stories contain crucial elements on which that confirmation depends. In criminal cases, the elements of motive, means, and opportunity play key, but not absolute, roles in the final decision of the court when no incontrovertible evidence for a verdict is available. Each of the elements is a factual point in the story of guilt or innocence. An advocate for the defence presents various arguments that *undercut* or *disprove* the key elements of the prosecution’s story. Moreover, the crown advocate seeks to reduce the plausibility or discredit the defence’s story. Now, there is no doubt that legal defeasible arguments offered from either side must converge on the points of motive, means, and opportunity in contention. However, at this point the discussion must transition back to the dialogue data and the nature of the cumulative case in person-to-person apologetics.

In the fourth dialogue, Paul quickly recognizes that the creation story is a key element of the narrative that frames Sylvester's understanding of the birth of Adeline's child. Loosely paraphrased, the narrative, as we have it, presumes the existence of man. Though there is an almighty God, man is on his own to deal with his problems. Man's response to his predicament is to create 'small gods' who, in response to man's sacrifices, solve his problems. The story blurs the relationship of the 'small gods' and the almighty God to the point that the two are indistinguishable. Thus, Sylvester says, 'Without people, God cannot exist' (90). Paul's assertion, 'Without God, people cannot exist' (95) significantly revises Sylvester's story and presents serious pragmatic problems for Sylvester's understanding of how people get help in times of need. This introduces section 8.6, a fuller discussion of the relationship between propositional apologetics and narrative in apologetics.

8.6 Narrative: Points of Commitment in a Cumulative Case

The importance of narratives for person-to-person apologetics has been one of the unexpected discoveries of this research. Though narrative does not eclipse the crucial importance of propositional apologetics, the importance of narrative in conversational apologetics should not be underestimated. In the following discussion I use points of contact, a well-known concept in missiology and apologetics (van den Toren 2011), as a template to understand commitments of an agent in the context of narrative. In doing so, I redefine 'points of contact' as key propositions within narratives with which an apologist can engage. Engagement here can involve either agreement, congruence, or a variety of critical approaches. Though points of contact in missiology are typically viewed as some form of

agreements between a Christian and a non-Christian, in this view they also can be significant points of difference.

Narrative, as I use the term here, is simply a story of the happenings of the last hour, day, year, and so on. The length of a narrative is dependent on the number and significance of its events. However, short narratives can be very significant. The longer the time a story spans, the more it transitions to being tradition in West Cameroon: Stories abound about origin of the tribe, where the tribe is going, and what part a person should play in that continuing story. Thus, on the personal level, there are two kinds of stories: stories composed of the events of a period of one's life, family, and society; and stories, found in tradition, about what I should be and do. Think of the traditional stories as metanarratives.

Each dialogue in this collection contains stories that propose standards, actions, and ideals for those who are under tradition's authority. Of course, these stories, handed down from generation to generation, are subject to revision and interpretation. To illustrate these points, I use the elder's account of tradition and his role in passing down that tradition as the first example of these processes.

Kom tradition dictates that there are 'many stages to be qualified as a full-integrated citizen' (15). The 'stages', in the account here, are actually actions related to building a house that is situated on property that an agent owns and where the agent can bury a corpse. Arguably, the account of how to consecrate a house is but a small part of the Kom heritage, but it is sufficient to show the importance of argument patterns: the 'Argument from Feeling Well' (210-211) and the 'Argument from Safety' (274-277), variants of Argument from Consequence (Walton, Reed & Macagno, 2008, 332).

These practical arguments for the elder's actions provided in the dialogue with David are support for the central assertion of the thesis of this work: 'An entrenched belief...is primarily sensitive to understanding, revision, or reinforcement in the context of dialogue.' Though Pastor Ambola begins to understand the elder's complex motivation, he respects the integrity of the man. Through his questioning, he brings the elder to see for himself that there might be a need to revise a key point in his beliefs that will significantly affect his actions. However, at the end of the dialogue, the ontological status of the ancestors remains in question. Are they simply memories that have psychosomatic powers? Or, as living beings, do they have powers to bring good or ill in the physical world?

Dr. Emmanuel's story is replete with arguments for his two cases that he argues. He begins by presenting arguments for the spiritual nature of the wind. That case transitions into a case for his general work among the Kom people. As chapter 3 notes, some of the arguments for each case are cross-linked. They serve both arguments, and in the final analysis, the cumulative argument for 'African Storm' becomes a support for his traditional practices.

However, is 'African Storm', or even his work, the centre of the dialogue? Probably not. Buried in the dialogue, and fully connected to the above issues, is the story of Emmanuel's life. After an introduction and review of Doyle's Reason Maintenance System, I explain how one insight from Doyle's work helps an observer understand and respond to the narrative of this dialogue.

8.7 RMS: A Tool in Dialogue and the Cumulative Case

Section 2.11 argues that the basic forms of belief change, addition, subtraction, and the process of belief revision provides the apologist flexibility, freedom, and goals in conversations limited by time and circumstances. In this section, I will

interpret those basic forms in the framework of Reason Maintenance Theory, Jon Doyle's version of AGM (Belief Revision Theory). In section 8.8.1, I will focus on the practical contributions of the field of Belief Revision Theory to person-to-person apologetics.

The concept of a 'noetic structure', first proposed by Alvin Plantinga, is defined as 'the set of propositions he believes, together with certain epistemic relation that hold among him and these propositions' (Plantinga & Wolterstorff 1983, 48-51). This abstract idea has been visualized as a net, or network, in which beliefs are the points in the net where the strands or ropes of the net touch each other. The points of contact are the nodes and an epistemic relation is the strand of the net that connects nodes together. Though this visual representation errs on the side of regularity and order, the human cognitive structure, which the noetic structure represents, is the arrangement of all the data and their interconnections that the mind contains.

Though Doyle's Reason Maintenance System is visually similar to Plantinga's, its content and arrangement are quite different. The nodes of this net can contain an unlimited variety of elements like beliefs, desires, rules, procedures, and database elements (experience/memory). Moreover a node that contains belief can be connected to many nodes, each containing a belief, a piece of knowledge, a rule, desire, and so on. Though the connections between these nodes are called reasons, a more accurate description would be inference, where the thought in one node calls to mind (prompts) the contents of another node (Krabbe & van Laar 2007, 238). The reasons are not situated in the nodes, but are the inferential connections between the nodes. Though most of these 'connections' are 'defeasible', *the agent's noetic system contains deductive or inductive*

inferences. This latter point is the one on which I wish to focus in the following paragraph.

Though Emmanuel's narrative is replete with argument patterns supporting his views and his work, there are key points and patterns that 'enforce the necessity' of his worldview and work. He uses a childhood experience with his grandmother to deductively reason that since he was created in a certain way, he must follow that way. He interprets his removal from the seminary as an obligation he must follow to provide resources (and perhaps status) for the family. And finally, he concludes with an either-or syllogism. There are only two paths in life available to me. One is impossible to follow; so I will follow the other.

Pointing out these key arguments in his life does not diminish the importance that he connects to them. Rather, it integrates his arguments from position to know, perception, evil, and so on into the fundamental points of his cumulative case. To engage him as a whole person, a cumulative case must be tailored to fit the key arguments of his life.

8.8 Contributions of this Research Makes to Personal Apologetics in Pluralistic Societies

In this section, I fulfil the commitment I made in chapter two to outline three contributions that this research makes to person-to-person apologetics in pluralistic settings.

8.8.1 Dialogue: Discovering, Delivering and Engaging Cumulative Cases

In chapter two, I proposed that this research would bring meaning and clarity to dialogues practiced in a pluralistic setting. The data here suggests the fundamental truth that in those kinds of settings, each person believes and does what is right in his, or his community's, eyes.

From this perspective, McGrath was right when he speaks of an audience of one and an audience as a group. Groups have narratives and beliefs. Groups value certain ways of behaving. A group has an ethos and an ethic. The dialogue partners involved in this research were thoroughly infused with intellectual elements of their ethnic group.

Yet, two of the dialogue partners had chosen to interpret elements of their tradition without abandoning their traditions. Dr. Emmanuel casts the ethnic role of the 'good' witch doctor in light of selected doctrines of Christianity. The elder re-evaluates tradition in the light of psychology. On the other hand, Richard, Sylvester, and Celestine have chosen to adhere to their own ethnic theology and practice. Sunny is perhaps the most enigmatic of the lot. He claims to believe in an ethnic resurrection, but refuses to commit himself to its scenario.

These people, as well as those who initiated the dialogues, present a compelling case for dialogue. However, such dialogues, if the data has anything to teach the apologist, should be 'mixed' dialogues. Though it makes a clear case for the primary role of information-seeking dialogue in the West Cameroonian context, the case for information-seeking dialogues in western relativistic cultures that are fixated on certain kinds of privacy, is not as clear. Section 8.9 will address that issue.

Though the information-seeking dialogue envisioned here is not a pure dialogue type, it maintains a focus on its purpose. While it mixes with persuasion, inquiry and critical questions where key points in the conversation partner's narrative and their noetic structure (8.3, 8.7) are revealed, it aims at the issue of plausibility of those points. I further address this issue in 8.9.

8.8.2 Argument and the Plausibility of Propositions

In chapter two, I suggested that a wooden view of informal logic would be enriched with an ‘expanded understanding of the theory and practice of [informal arguments]’. The theory together with the data of the research suggest that most of the arguments offered in the works discussed in chapter two are informal, and therefore defeasible. There are three consequences to this observation.

First, the apologist would profit from an epistemological framework that is suitable to the claim that all propositional knowledge is subject to revision or annulment. Consistent with Stackhouse’s desire for humble apologetics, the strengths and weaknesses of defeasible reasoning have much to teach the apologists about the vulnerabilities of their own and other’s arguments.

In particular, the awareness of the defeasibility of an argument leads one to consider the critical questions that might be addressed an argument by a particular audience. Conversely, and secondly, it stimulates an apologist to ponder the ways his arguments might be addressed as inadequate or wrong.

Thirdly, this research points out the importance and role of plausibility in person-to-person apologetics. In the dialogues, the reality of plausibility is a two-edged sword. The apologists gently challenge selected beliefs of their dialogue partners in various, often subtle ways. Even with those challenges, the dialogues continue. However, the reality of plausibility is one-sided in the dialogues. The apologists, except Paul, do not engage the criticism of the plausibility of their viewpoints. Ernest’s reticence to engage Dr. Emmanuel’s criticisms of his database view of the Bible stands out in the conversations. Though the data does not support an extended point of view, it points to the need to present and sustain

Christian belief at the highest epistemological state possible. The next section addresses that issue.

8.8.3 Aim at the Whole Truth, but Settle for the Process of Belief Revision

Lastly, I suggested that person-to-person apologetics would benefit from a more flexible approach to what can be accomplished through conversation. Section 2:11 began the discussion that is continued here. It recounts the iterative process of adding beliefs which, in their cumulative effect, initiate significant belief revision in a listener's worldview.

There is no doubt that the apologists offer questions and ideas [propositions] that they hope will affect their dialogue partner's worldview, or belief set. This, in part, is based on the effect that knowledge has on presumptive thinking (8.4) and is consistent with Williamson's view that one can call into question what one knows, re-examine it as a belief and revise or delete it. The challenge is to find the points in a dialogue partner's belief set that are vulnerable to the challenge. This is the function of dialogue (8.3).

The function of the apologist is to encourage the continuing process of belief revision in a dialogue partner's worldview. Contrary to John Stackhouse's view, this is not the process of conversion. It is the process through which a person passes to recognize enough of the truth to make a decision to follow Christ.

However, congruent with Stackhouse's viewpoint, dialogues like Teresa's or David's can help a dialogue partner start out on a pilgrimage to learn the 'whole truth'.

8.9 The Future of Dialogue in Person-Centred Apologetics

As long as the Holy Spirit is at work in the hearts of people, there is a future for apologetics. As Verkuyl notes:

Whatever the circumstances may be, our intention in every human dialogue should be to be involved in the dialogue of God with men, and to move our partner and ourself to listen to what God in Christ reveals to us, and to answer Him... (Orchid 1963, 147).

However, dialogue's future in apologetics may be complicated and difficult.

In this closing section, I present two final arguments for this approach to the importance and study of person-to-person dialogue in Western apologetics. The first argument is speculative, but credible. The second, from a position of faith, is predicated on the work of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth (John 16:13)

It is credible to think that the fragmentation and pluralism currently gripping the West will continue to increase. In the scenario of increasing fragmentism, the social capital of the area could devolve into tribalism. Engaging other person's worldviews will require increasingly sharp conversational/dialogical skills.

However, if this fragmentation evolves into increasingly isolated tribal mentalities, as it already shows signs of doing, dialogue will become even more difficult and risky.

The second argument is predicated on the One who convicts of sin, judgement and righteousness. He is the one who makes truth compelling. Dialogical apologetics, no doubt, can challenge the plausibility of non-Christian belief and establish the credibility, or at a minimum, the plausibility of the Christian faith, but it is God who makes truth compelling in the long term. Moreover, even the slightest crack in one's belief set can be an opening through which the ocean of God's truth can eventually pass.

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Appendix One: The Ethics of the Dialogues

The dissertation raises questions about the ethics of the pragmatic approach to dialogue and argumentation. The pragmatic approach has specific rules that guarantee or make likely that the goal of a particular type of dialogue is achieved. These rules, orientated towards success, do not specify the particulars of a dialogue. They only stipulate factors that would contribute to the reasonableness and cooperation within the dialogue (Walton & Krabbe 1995, 67).

However, this viewpoint does not present a fully rounded view of what a dialogue can be. Martin Buber notes that while we:

...may seek to influence them [other people], or may attempt to suggest the inadequacy of what those persons are believing or doing,...the communication influence must be exerted in a noncoercive, nonmanipulative manner that respects the free choice and individuality of the receiver' (Johanssen, Valde, and Whedbee 2008, 58).

This reflects the ethical stance of this research. The apologists were to obtain as full an understanding of their dialogue partner's worldview as possible and engage elements of that worldview with dignity, respecting the other person's freedom to respond.

Makay and Brown have suggested ten principles that optimize the quality of the relationship of those involved in dialogue. While they are not insensitive to the need for success in persuasion dialogues (5& 10), their concerns are for relevance (1 & 3), character values (2, 8, & 9), respect for human dignity (4 & 7), and effective communication (6, 8, & 9).

1. Human involvement from a felt need to communicate.
2. Atmosphere of openness, freedom, and responsibility.
3. Dealing with real issues and ideas relevant to the communicator.
4. Apprehension of individual differences and uniqueness.
5. Acceptance of disagreement and conflict with the desire to resolve them.
6. Effective feedback and use of feedback.
7. Mutual respect and hopefully trust.
8. Sincerity and honesty in attitudes toward communication.
9. A positive attitude for understanding and learning.

10. A willingness to admit error and allow persuasion (Johanssen, Valde, and Whedbee 2008, 58).

The apologists featured in this dialogue collection exhibited these qualities to varying degrees. They possessed a genuine desire to communicate with those whom they chose to converse. They responsibly discovered and addressed 'real issues' with openness and an appreciation of the other person's beliefs and actions. The apologists sought to understand exactly who they were speaking with through the feedback loop and questions and answers.

Consistent with Buber's view of 'influence', the apologists were not determined to resolve the differences between themselves and their dialogue partner. They were not constrained to present 'compelling' arguments for their points of view. While they didn't accept the assertions of their dialogue partners, they gracefully accepted their points of view without conceding them.

These conversations are saturated with a freedom and a circumspect responsibility that places them well within the boundaries of dialogue as Buber defines it.

Appendix Two: Transcript Release Form

AUDIO\TRANSCRIPT RELEASE CONSENT FORM

Location of Conversation: _____

Senior Researcher: Gary Stephens

Interviewer/conversationalist's name _____

As part of this project we have made an audio recording of you while you participated in the research. We would like you to indicate below what uses of these records you are willing to consent to. This is completely up to you. We will only use the records in ways that you agree to. In any use of these records, names will not be identified.

Please put your initials beside the use you approve.

1. The records can be studied by the research team for use in the research project.

Audio _____ Transcripts of Audio _____

2. The records can be used for scientific publications.

Audio _____ Transcripts of Audio _____

3. The written transcript can be kept in an archive for other researchers.

Audio _____ Transcripts of Audio _____

4. The audio/written records can be used in published thesis work.

Audio _____ Transcripts of Audio _____

5. The records can be used at meetings of scientists interested in the study of Dialectics/Epistemology.

Audio _____ Transcripts of Audio _____

6. The records can be used in classroom for educational purposes.

Audio _____ Transcripts of Audio _____

I have read the above description and give my consent for the use of the records as indicated above.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Signature of Guardian, if Applicable: _____

Native Language(s) _____

Place of Residence _____

Tribe of Origin _____

Education _____ Work _____

Name _____ Age _____

Appendix Three: Dialogues

A Conversation about 'African Storm'

Ngam Ernest with Dr. Nshom Emmanuel

Ernest: Dr. Emmanuel, Good afternoon.

Emmanuel: Good afternoon, Rev. Ernest.

Ernest: I would like you to tell me what you understand about African storm, or which we call the strong wind that usually blows and destroys things. As the one the one that happened two days ago.

Emmanuel: Thank you I will, even though I am not feeling quite good, I will try to explain it to you. When I was a kid at home I lived with my old man, my grandfather, when at each time there was this strong wind, he asked me to take a knife and put it outside, shook it outside on the veranda, so one day when I came back from school after a strong rain and I started asking him Why is it that this wind is always come when they are harvest they are planting maize, they are planting things, when the corn is started growing they will come and push the corn down. And so my grandfather told me, it is an occultic society down south, that the people come like this, they get our food they bring it back to themselves through the wind. So he advised me for all the plantains that were felled in the compound, never to cut one that they were on top of people. Sincerely, it was a thing that I tried to accept because each time by May, by April-May it happens every year and it not only destroys food it destroyed houses, it destroyed things; for example, two days ago more than three hundred houses lost their roofs. And including churches, like the apostolic church. And other schools like the school in Akoinbunji, it lost the whole of its roof. There were roofs taken from other houses and planting them on other houses that had no roofs and I think that African storm is some sort of occultic thing. We normally call it in simple English, witchcraft.

Ernest: So, you yourself, what do you truly believe as a traditional doctor? Do you accept to what they hold that...?

Emmanuel: Normal, normal. It is not a question of accepting. I have something here...I have a kind of drug here. If the wind starts like that, if I don't want it to be coming near here I just put it in the fire and stand it outside. You see that the wind leaves this my environment and goes...No trees shaking by my site. That same drug made na by my grandfather who showed me. Each time he did that he showed me everything. So I believe that that is not for nothing. It is witchcraft; and truly it is witchcraft because no wind...even the Sahara desert...that you have a lot of wind that blows...that is natural because there are no trees in the Sahara desert. But I believe where we're living in Kumba is a city, but it is a village because you have a lot of trees, mango trees, pear trees. You have flowers planted all over the town. The flowers would have been holding the strong wind from damaging but yet it damages.

Ernest: What I'm saying is that wind is a natural thing and in Africa when somebody is to construct a house and he fails to take into consideration the direction of wind because you have wind has its own direction that it takes and some of us lack the knowledge of how to put on a better roof. Don't you believe that can be some of the consequence?

Emmanuel: Number one that.

Ernest:massive destruction...

Emmanuel: Now I will believe as I will not believe because in my...where I come from each time they want to put a structure for people to live in you will see (uh) the old men who coming to pin down the tree for the construction they will move with peace plan when they come they stand. It is that peace plan that shows the direction of the wind. And the people will say if you put the doors or windows this way it will be very difficult for you to stay there because wind will always be troubling you in the house. So turn the building sideways, turn the foundation of the building sideways so the wind can only come and meet the building at the back. Truly I accept that people lack (uh) people lack the way of construction. Some people know; for those who know they do their best and here in the quarters where I live we are living in a slope sometimes when the wind is coming as how, the wind wouldn't have touched our houses because we are living on a slope. The wind would have been flying over us and that is why we have no major problem in our own area but in other areas near us their roofs, sheet of tin were taken from the roofs of houses and we had no touch around us. So it is really witchcraft.

Ernest: So according to you, you believe it is witchcraft.

Emmanuel: Yes, (interrupt) by my own point of view.

Ernest: (interrupts)

55 **Emmanuel:** From my own point of view (listen) by my own point of view it is witchcraft because
what I see as a traditional doctor the layman do not see. If you were me sometimes you see, when
it's passing like this, these people with axes, people with cutlasses, people with hammers, people
with so many things. It is not my place to tell the people what I see because I was given that by
60 god. I didn't go into any occultic society before the eyes were given to me. And so therefore people
who think that the wind is passing empty like in my home town some year ago...a reverend father
when the wind was passing like that...a reverend father just came out with a hammer, with a
camera...snapped all the wind...even some of those senior Christians came out from the photos
with hammers, cutlasses, swords and the rest. It is just that I cannot do that here. I would have
65 looked for a camera. I cannot do that. If I do that maybe somebody who is coming here for
treatment you do not know that he's that kind of man. He will come the other time and you will
see him in that kind of camera. Maybe he will die because you will not want to treat that kind of
man with mass destruction of other peoples' property.

Ernest: The question I want to ask you is you said one that the camera, the camera actually pictures
come out of images.

70 **Emmanuel:** Yes.

Ernest: The wind is something that is not visible. How do you therefore believe that a camera can
snap....?

Emmanuel: Let me...let me...thank you very much...

Ernest:A Spirit or a spiritual wind...

75 **Emmanuel:** Let me tell you. We don't use the camera like that. We have another spiritual means
of using the camera. So it is best known to me and the reverend father who was a Dutch. You
understand....don't fail to understand you live with kind... so many people in the society. Man was
made the most intelligent animal in the world... given wisdoms and powers to overcome all
80 everything...over the creations of God but man became very stubborn to god and god had to put
man part by part...man is part by part. There is a man who is empty like we're talking here
Christians...you are a pastor, I am a doctor. There are people who talk...who only talk bad, who
only think evil. To us we don't think evil. There are people who pretend to be reverend fathers,
bishops, pastors who if you go in deep they are the strongest wizards around the universe. They
even go far to this kind of occultic societies so that they have powers so be careful that you don't
85 think that to snap. There's a thing here only that man...when you are given a think don't test it in
people. There's something there that I rub in your face, when you go to bed...if there's anybody
that's a wizard around here...there's a drug...if there's anybody that's a wizard around here you
will see he or she when they're coming out.

90 **Ernest:** Na such a thing like that, where do you think the powers is actually coming from? Do you
think the powers is coming from God or from Satan?

Emmanuel: Normally, uh, the powers are coming from...God made man and gave man his own
will to play over it. It can only be Satanic when you go the other...you invoke a spirit from India,
maybe from other places but what I can give you is a drug prepared, cut round...barks of trees
ground...then they are combined. We do consecration too. We do consecration. When we do that
95 they takes us two weeks in providing the drug. After the drug there is a master who comes and
stands on the drug, maybe with a fowl and say I here now duly consecrate this drug for the using
of all the people that are here and for the using of all the whole entire village and anybody who
wants to be evil will be seen when this drug is used. When they do that the consecration, there is a
group that takes the drug and started going, go round all the stop ends of the village, that is all the
100 entrances of the village and they implant. They implant like that to lock to stop the witchcraft from
coming into the village to stop the people from crying. I am sick because of this, I am sick because
of that or my crops never grow because of this... so that is the cause of that drug. It is not witchcraft
it is not a thing from Satan. ...because it is hand made with one voice and one mouth and one
105 thought...one thinking that makes the drug to be strong. They say, people's wishes are powers to
overcome all the witchcraft to overcome all the evil. So it is not power from Satan. If you go to
where we prepare this drug if you are man that has ever attempted that somebody losses his life or
somebody losses his eye or anything or any part of the body by you the drug will detect that you
are not a good man the drug will detect that you are not a good man and so we will send you away.
110 This year we sent about four people, I will name it to you. One was from (...); one was from Wum;
one was from....Asaph and the other was from Njinikom. The one from Njinikom we knew him
like a very wicked man who killed so many people He had an attempt over me...it was just that I
was so strong to him. He would have even eliminate me in 2002 when I was in the village. He

questioned me and even made me get sick. So that drug does not permit anybody who is an evil doer to come even into the yard. So please, African tornado is made up of occultic society. Down south, here in the southwest. The society is here in the southwest. They go up gently and they come now with so many things. So now, we've lost all the fruit that bear. We've lost all the plantains that people will eat. We've lost a lot of things. You go under mango trees and you see mangoes, young mangoes, on the floor. Plum trees you see like that. This is not normal. This is not the [Scottish??] food that is written in the Bible. This is not the Scottish way that is written in the Bible. This is witchcraft. Even you the pastors believe this because around you in... (in the) the Seminary you have trees...you sawed that some parts of your roofs were taken Maybe the school, the primary school in which you are there, maybe some parts of the roof were taken. It is not original by God. God has not said that you construct a thing like this and tomorrow it goes off.

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Ernest: But actually. When actually as you believe...we know that wind is natural.

Emmanuel: Yes.

Ernest: And with our own eyes as you've said...you have eyes with which you look and see those mystical things. My greatest concern here is where is the source, the source of the eyes and the source of the medicine as you have mentioned... that you are somebody again who have also studied the Scripture Do you hold, what do you hold that the eyes...because we have two kinds a force is not coming from the Scriptures or not coming from the Word of God it is coming from Satan.

Emmanuel: Yeah... (It) is coming from Satan. Listen...

Ernest: How do you hold...what do you hold about it?

Emmanuel: Thank you very much. Let me clarify you there. I uphold Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour my Lord and Saviour. Because I had lived in the monastery, studying, went into theology a bit and before my grandmother withdrew me from there, I wanted to think that everything that is possible in the world is from God, that those impossible things are not from God but are from Satan. And God has accepted Satan to try the world because he want to see how much the world believe in him. When he accept Satan to do like this wind now those who are faithful to God will enjoy God's will. Now to those of us, I want to think that tornado has come and gone. The will I have in me is from God...the eyes...normally God has made man...if you look at...if you want to know that God is powerful...God's will is so strong that nobody can challenge. Look at your fingers. They are not all are the same. You have the stump of your finger. You have the first. You have the most longer one and you have the shortest one here. Meaning that one of your fingers are not here your hand is not full. So God has made man. He made man to be a dull...there are people who are dull from birth. There are people who are very, very clever. Like you now. You are sitting here. You are seated here a pastor. You are my junior brother. You used to be a business man. O.K. You were born when you were business inclined because you were born in a family whereby people only started looking for themselves and never wanted others to enjoy. But you decided you were going to feed the family and today you are no more that business man. You've been called to the vineyard. So belief that there is eyes...that God has made man... made man and man is so strong...those who have faith are so strong before God's will and have the will of God in them. There are some people who simply take the Bible and cover their face. But what they do...if you look at it in the dark you will be unable to talk about the people. So pastor I want to tell you that I have my eyes...my eyes are given to me by God. I have not taken it from any...let's say occultic society or from any special realm. I have not got that. I have never been to any spiritual realm. I was born like this. When I got up...when I got up...when I was born in 1954 I got up and at about twelve years I started doing wonderful things. I could go like this...come and cut grass...go and tell my grandmother take leave your stomach well...take, put it in your nose...the headache you have will finish. That is how I started. I started with my family. I never started with someone outside. So my eyes were given to me when I was born. [I delivered me??] I feel that God created me with eyes because one day my grandmother was going to a union where they had to meet together. I just got up in the morning and set there by the chair near the door. 'Mommy, na where are you going?' 'I'm going to that union of women's union that used to hold.' I say, 'Sit down.' My grandmother sit down back on the chair. I said, 'Don't go anywhere,' There in the union a woman was cut with a machete. That would have been my grandmother if I never saw like that because she was the most elderly woman in the union and when they were sharing things they must give him the big one because he had given his own share all and only eating now. So please take my eyes....give me a godly thing. I will always talk about the Bible and I will always take about Jesus Christ as personal...my Lord and personal... Saviour.

Ernest: Yes, it is good...all of us.it is good that all of us we understand the Bible and all of us we are Christians...uh...You know that the word of God or God himself is found in the Bible...

Emmanuel: ...yeah...
Ernest: ...through his word.
175 **Emmanuel:** Yes.
Ernest: And we Christians, we rely on the word of God...
Emmanuel: Yes.
Ernest: Because it is....that is our own....
180 **Emmanuel:** Uh—huh...
Ernest: ...uh...foretelling...
Emmanuel: that is....that is your own powers....
Ernest: powers...ok and we strongly believe that anything which is of God should be found in the Scriptures and that which is not of God...
Emmanuel: please...
185 **Ernest:** ...you scarcely find it in the Scriptures...
Emmanuel: ...please....let me...let me....
Ernest: What I want to ask is that, do you believe any...that in the whole scripture as you have yourself studied...have you noticed any passage or any portion that mentioned that a man was born and given that particular opportunity to...to able to see things in the Spiritual realm.
190 **Emmanuel:** I think that I might not brainwash your words as your questions that you are asking me... sincerely I will say... I will say...tell you the Scripture can only motivate man...when you believe-o and only motivate man to be...to go on to another step. Man has five steps in him. The first step is the baby...baby step. The second step is the teenage step. The third step is beginning of knowledge. Uh... You begin to know that this my father, this my brother, that is my uncle, that is
195 this. That is the third step. And the fourth step is going into a classroom as a primary child and coming out with a first leaving certificate and start to think that I have to go to college. Then you might even be forcing your parents to send you to college. The fifth step is the spirit of understanding. And the spirit of understanding and the spirit of positive thinking. That is, you think that...you think that pastor will come here today in a couple of minutes. Pastor come. If you think that...uh...you're going to have some fruit like banana, in about a couple of minutes if you have your money, if banana is passing and you will buy. If you think that if you stayed long without seeing uh...uh...your mother or your father then after some time...maybe a week or two...
200 kwa...kwa...kwa...you see them on the door. That is the five steps the man has. The number sixth step is...making yourself an age now. You become matured. You are not doing things that you used to do when you were teen-age; you're not doing things you use to do when you were a student in the college or in the high school. Immediately after high school ...the knowledge is there... you have the wisdom. Ah to think that...the Scripture has clearly stated that everything that make up man...and has put the wisdom in man those who read the scripture and really understand what the scripture is talking. It is not a question of taking a part of...one part of the Scripture and start talking on it. Because people will read and give you quotations in the Bible and say this, this, this....say you should not do this. Go back to the Bible pastor, where you are in it. Can you give me? (I'm not questioning you, but [I want to])...
205 **Ernest:** ...yes...yes...right...
Emmanuel: I'm just giving an example...Can you give me an example where God has given command how...where...man like a human being has the right to command the Lord our God to do evil?...to do good things? To do bad things? Like I command you to stop man-made God. I command you to do this, this and that...Is there any chapter in the Bible like that?
210 **Ernest:** No...man has...man has got no power to command God because God is the supreme. You cannot command the person [unclear]; you can never command the person who has created you because he is the one who influences you he is the...one who....
215 **Emmanuel:** ...he knows all about you...
Ernest: ...who knows you?
Emmanuel: ...he knows all about you....
Ernest:just like if you're command God it seems as if you can also create another God.
220 **Emmanuel:** Yeah, one thing in life...
Ernest: (unclear)
Emmanuel: Let me cut you off. One thing in life. The Scripture like this. To those of us who went through the Scripture and came out prematurely. Some cannot even talk as I use to talk...as I'm talking like this. Some will not know what to say. Because at a point time I had read...I read philosophy and after philosophy I had to go into theology for two weeks and then mommy came. But I want to think like this the Scripture the Bible is a good book for anybody who wants to study anything to read first. Read the Bible like a book like a novel.
225
230

Ernest: ...uh...the Bible.

235 **Emmanuel:** You read... Let me come. Read the Bible like a novel. Eh? Irrespective of this time, this time. When you read the Bible like a novel you will now that from Genesis to Exodus is the history of the creation of God. From...that is the beginning... that is the history of creation, that is the Old Testament. Then you will know that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John is the beginning of Christ in the world. That is first and second part of the Bible. You will know what Jesus Christ came to do here on earth for us. And you will know what is really the creation, that what God really know, really did, thought of man to make all the creations, to make man at the hem of his creation
240 You will know that Then Acts of Apostles selovution [sic] tells us about the Spirit of God Tells us how Jesus was going up to heaven and say ten days after I will send my Holy Spirit to revitalize your memories and you will go out to preach the good news to the world. In any town where you go and people don't do not want to listen to you pat the dust under your legs and leave the town for that people will continue to live in trouble. And ten days after the Holy Spirit came, made the apostles, the disciples and the blessed mother of Jesus Christ who is Mary seated on the same roof with fear. And so the Bible is subdivided into three parts. If you come to talk the Bible and you cannot tell me you have three parts... It means that you aren't talking Bible. The Bible, like some people will say, 'the Bible is 66 books, the Bible is 68 books, the Bible is this, this and that.' We don't go by books because there are additional chapters in the Bible now—the Apocalypse and the rest that the Apostles wrote to suit the universe in where they were ruling after Jesus Christ. Like today, somebody will say 'Sunday, Monday. Sabbath was Saturday really in the Bible, but because Saint Peter who was the first Apostle wanted the Roman kings to join the Church changed eh...eh Sabbath to Sunday because the Sunday was a free day for the Romans—for the Roman kings, and so they had to join the Church. Not to take you too far because if we want to talk about the Bible,
245 I am seated me quiet, and the Bible is really part of me, I am, let me conclude here. It is unfortunate—I will say that it is unfortunate that they withdrew me out of the Church—out of the Bible studies in which I was undergoing and I am, I find myself who I am today, Ernest I am a normal human being like you and what I do here is truth—the truth, and nothing but the truth. I will not tell a lie to anybody who comes here. First of all people say 'sorcery is this—sorcery is this.' I can remember if it is not in the Book of Job that Nebuchadnezzar was punished upon because he sent away all the sorcerers and fortune tellers in his country. God brought in these people because there was evil, he wanted the fortune tellers, and the sorcerers to tell the people exactly how to move on their steps, but Nebuchadnezzar being the king at that time said, have found that anybody who is a sorcerer or fortune teller in this country should leave. Therefore, he was punished to crow in his stomach like an animal. If I don't forget, it should be in the Book of Job, if it is not Job, it will be eh...eh... it will be either Kings. I cannot just quote through.

Ernest: E--hum!

255 **Emmanuel:** So sorcery is not a thing started here, the Bible has started it; Jewish people who are the first Christians started the sorcery. Fortune telling is not a thing that begins now in our generation, it begins the world. So each thing anybody is doing was time before now. Pastor Earnest, so please I hope that you are not taking this my talk, this my words like this and not making good use of it. I want so that tomorrow so that when you are making your report, your book, come up with a strong book that anybody will read and come to you and say 'Pastor we glad to see you write.' That is why each time you come here. I want to tell you exactly what it is, the other day we talked about tradition, traditional medicine and the world—and the society. That is what we talked about the tornado, we are talking about the eyes that we see, we are talking about...by so seeing like this, let you not think that I am a witch—wizard. I cannot sleep on my bed and start seeing careless things. I not meant for that—I am meant to see you as you came. If I refuse telling you what you are, I am just refusing because it is not permitted that all we see should be spoken. Because if we start to tell what we see, do you know that the circles of this world will turn upside down? That is why some of us are called witch doctors. Those witch doctors are those who inherit from the spirit of the queen of the coast—from India, they invoke. I don't invoke. What I do is natural. If I get up in the morning and I tell you 'Earnest, today is going to be like this,'
265 know that is going to be like that. Somebody will ask—side talks will come and ask 'you know you see all these things, why are you sick all this while?' I will—I will tell you one thing. I am not God. It is my own trial, trying moments that God has given me to see how faithful and how strong I am before Him. But I am proving to you that I am strong before my God. I am faithful to my people—to the people that came. I am faithful to my God. That is why I am alive, or I would have died long before now. And so the trial moment has not ended. God know—God knows when it is going to end. So thank you very much. I want you to go ahead.

Ernest: So eh... for this point last time, you, we discussed about traditional medicine.

Emmanuel: Yeah!

Ernest: And today, we are talking about the African...

295 **Emmanuel:** Tornado

Ernest: Tornado.

Emmanuel: Uhum!

Ernest: And what you believe so much about it, and... and the...the source of powers.

300 **Emmanuel:** I don't, eh...listen! I don't dispute the fact that eh...there are evil powers. I have given you just a little word here. There are people who are Rev. Fathers, eh? Just taking the Rev. Father thing, to covering the face, who can do wonderful things? There are people who are Rev. Pastors, they take the Bible and cover their face with the Rev. Pastor affair and do a lot of bad things. You will believe to me you are in the society and you are going out after you course you are going out to face the world. You will see in the congregations you will administer like a minister of God—you will see them, you will see these things I am talking. Ah... I don't know if man was able to command the Lord our God, I will tell Him—I will tell God destroy all the people who are, who don't want others to live well. I would have told God like this but there is no way of commanding our God. You can even, if you want to command God, it means you can command the ten thousand angels that prowl round the walls of heaven, and he will command the saints that are around the table of dinner in heaven which is impossible—it is very—very impossible. I find myself where I am like this, I don't regret—I don't regret being a traditional doctor. It could have been regretting if they took me out of the monastery and I came out, and I just—and I stayed like that without learning anything, without doing anything. Meaning that mama and his family saw that I, my grandmother and his family saw that I was going to hide what was given to me because I was a I child born by their daughter and I was growing up, they are seeing me. They know me, they know what I am able to do. Then I was now diverting because of Rev. Father Oneh who came from Italy and wanted me to go into the monastery so that I can come out and after two years in the monastery, I can come out and go into—to the junior seminary and my grandmother whom I, they delivered me in her hands quickly fore see that was not what I was going to do. That was not really they really wanted me to do so he had to come and pick me up. And with the Catholicism, when you are a student father, immediately your family comes and says one thing like this the cannon law that makes up that seven book that I am telling you that they are additional books in the Bible. That's the cannon law, the cannon law will simply take you out. The cannon law is the law that governs the Catholic Church. The cannon law does not permit any argument on somebody that was chosen and it takes you off. That is why I am out. Maybe today, I would have been a pilgrimage centre because those of us in the Catholic Church that does this they send you to where you will continue to meet people. People will continue come there for prayers and anointing then you now you are the shepherd of that prayer that area that when people pray like that for their problems as they are going out you are anointing them, using that spiritual, that spiritual powers. I can give an example. Father Etienne Kumba was in Bojongo. And Bojongo is the pilgrimage centre of the South West like Njinikom where you come from is the pilgrimage centre of the North West. No careless no...no all Rev. Fathers who are in Njinikom and in Bojongo are not simple people. They are people like me—they can see. So the Church do not...the Catholic Church do not refuse those kind of people because they are the eyes to the Bible, they are eyes to the Church, they are the eyes to the Christian community. They can foresee things that can come maybe to help the community...Christian community before time and any will have to justice because immediately there is anything wrong, they run to the Bishop, arch Bishop, and say 'oh! Oh, the Bishop I am please say bishop, this is what we see. We do the protection by prayers, we do the protection by novenas, by meditations so that this kind of evil cannot come. So that is that. And to me now, when I know that like, when I know that the quarter is not good, what I do is, at every 12 midnight, I am up in prayers and after prayers I do the traditional libation I am supposed to do. Maybe I can go out with the tradition to this bridge, to the other one there, to the other one there, to the other one, for all the three cardinal points that make up the quarters. I put it there so that you cannot come with that your evil and enter the quarters. I love my people; it is just that people don't love me. I love the people with which I live with them, but I will not force anybody to like me, and I will not force anybody to come here. There are words Pastor, let me tell you, there are words that people say and I hear that I trick people in getting money. I want to ask you this question like a pastor, if they send you to a congregation and you go and sit in the church—sit in the church for one day or two days without Christians, will you be happy to be there?

350 **Ernest:** I will keep on praying and trusting God, doing my own effort.

Emmanuel: Yeah!

Ernest: Because I am winning and working for God and it is God who knows why...

Emmanuel: Yes, because today you come like this, sometimes you use to come like that, I have no chance to talk to you. Is it a lie?

355 **Ernest:** No, it is the truth.

Emmanuel: Yeah, but today I am alone. I don't go to people's houses to call anybody to come here. He sits, maybe I had treated him and he got better, the token I wanted from him, has not come. He did not willing to give me. He sits behind and sends somebody say 'go see this man for this place, he go help you' the man will come because I will still do the same, and he goes like that

360 but today people are saying that I am fooling people taking matchets, takings cutlass, taking fowl, taking this. I hear that but I have simply said I have not forced anybody to come to me. Yes! So thank you very much. I feel that there are more questions, begin to ask me.

Ernest: Eh... the central idea is for us you know as eh a believer, the Bible is always our final answer and the Bible have given nearly all solutions or all answers that can possibly be found or asked on earth and our own problem, our difficulties mostly we use to have or we use to ask is the... get the difference between what we are doing either is it actually from God or we are working are we working in the line of God or we are working in the light of the world. When I talk about the light of the world, I mean like eh...actually, we believe that God can work in diverse manse like we mentioned about eh, Rev. Fathers having eyes, and others having eyes. I think eh, a

370 situation like this, it will be necessary for us to go to Biblical studies to study the scriptures and to hear what the Bible actually tells us and even like the last time discussion we had and we also suspend it because we have actually not have time to go deep into the scripture and also find out what...

Emmanuel: I shall, I shall one day.

375 **Ernest:** So...

Emmanuel: When I will be better listen, when I will be better, I shall one day ask you to come. We shall go in Biblically and treat this situation that we are talking about.

Ernest: Uhum!

Emmanuel: The Bible is written by man and man, being the writer of the Bible is not just a

380 common man.

Ernest: Uhum!

Emmanuel: God choose those people with wisdom to write the Bible and He gave them a rule while writing the Bible and they followed the rule and came up with the Bible and all what is written there is about God. Man has not written the Bible about himself neither man has written the Bible about his family and his brothers or his sisters. And so, the Bible is the final say to everything that man does on earth. And the Bible controls the anger...the minds of people not to be wicked, not to be bad gossipers. The Bible is a book that was written, plan before now and man is using the Bible now to play a game. Like I see in others. Kom man will take the Bible, the Holy Bible like this, and open and say 'Isaiah chapter this says this must not be done, this must not be this, that's a small phrase out of the chapter. But to me Rev, Earnest I go through the Bible and I see the scripture to be a trainer of trainers. That is what I see the scriptures. The scripture to be a

385 trainer of trainers. A man, if he is as wicked as what, as you start reading the Bible, you wickedness starily [starts] going off. The spirit of positive thinking is coming into you. You think that this must not be evil; this must be very good. Here, the Bible is wonderful to me. Especially the prayers of King David—Psalm 1-150. The Psalms coordinate the Bible in all parts. Psalms coordinate the Bible in all parts. Be it the Old Testament or the New Testament or the Holy Spirit that dwells in us that is Acts of the Apostles Revolution that talks about the Holy Spirit and talks about Christ the King. And so, I think that the Scriptures is to be carefully studied. Not to rush over the scriptures. I first of all told you that the Bible is to be reading to those who want to do something better for themselves. I will say at an idle time because somebody if you are not idle, you cannot go reading the Bible true! True because it will say it... he will read and reach in a place where the Bible is condemning this, condemning that. You will read where the Bible is telling you to do this and not to do that. Some people will not want to read that kind of stories, but with me...

390

Ernest: I am very happy to hear that eh... that is the most reason why I so love you and interested in you because actually you are open and you are somebody who knows the scriptures and last time, during the discussion we had, I think it was quite interesting and this one is also interesting and actually we have not gone to the scriptures but we are... all those points, I think during the holyday, very soon by May when we go out from school, we will really need to start from the first discussion that we had and unto this one then now we will search the scriptures [in] detail.

395

Emmanuel: I want to... I want to clear you hear...

400

Ernest: Get from the Scripture what the scripture actually tell us because when we are taking time now that we are going to the scripture we will not dilute or diagnose all the points vividly.

405

410

415 **Emmanuel:** You see me like this, I have the Bible for... I have the Bible for Jehovah—the Jehovah Bible. It is quite different from the Bible. I have the universal Bible—the second edition, then I have the Knox version of the Bible. I have King James Version. I want to be frank, the Bible is... if you read the Bible, look Rev. Earnest, we do these things here... I do these things here like this in with connection of the Bible because I tell, each time I want to do anything here, I will say God, I put you before, before I do it. There are those things that the Bible don't want this to be, don't want this to be. By the norms of our society the Bible doesn't want but we will do it because there is no means of living. There is a lot of evil that if I know that the Bible is prohibiting me from doing and I know I will do and defend the human, God's person. I will do it and I will simply tell God I am not... I wouldn't have done it but, it is because of this reason and situation that made me to help this man out of a situation. There is no position in the Bible that tells me to watch somebody out of evil. Is there any?

420 **Ernest:** to watch somebody...

425 **Emmanuel:** Yes! To clean somebody from evil. Is there any?

Ernest: No!

Emmanuel: Eh?

Ernest: No!

430 **Emmanuel:** That's the first point. Is there a place in the Bible where I have to use blood from an animal to do something death to somebody? Eh?

Ernest: No!

Emmanuel: I want to give these points because I know them. Is there a place in the Bible where I have to take somebody near the... no Jesus did that... Jesus did that in the river... washed that man's eye. Take mud like this, he rubbed and wash say go down for water... go wash your face. That is point. Is there a place in the Bible where I have to make sacrifice—sacrifice maybe at the junction? Is there any place like that in the Bible?

435 **Ernest:** No!

Emmanuel: So I want to tell you that the Bible—the scripture is outing is structures, its good structures in place and it is from the scripture structures that we use in the healing people in diverse

440 **Ernest:** But now I am very interested to hear that so... now according to you do that only to satisfy or to rescue people.

Emmanuel: Yes!

Ernest: from their problem?

445 **Emmanuel:** Yes! I don't do that because I diminish what is written in the Bible, I don't do that because I neglect what is written in the Bible.

Ernest: So I will like you to... do you think it will better for you to maintain the word of God that you have already known, to please God or do you think it will be better for you or do you think it will be better for you not to maintain the word of God and please men?

450 **Emmanuel:** I am not, look! There is a difference between pleasing somebody just like that and healing somebody out of... out of certain things that the Bible prohibits. You understand? I am not doing that on my own. The situations has made me to do it and before I do I say Lord I am doing this because I find this man's situation in this way and that is what I must do. Like you must do that to the Ngrafi man like the Bamilike man. You cannot fail doing that to the Bamilike man because they themselves when they burry somebody after ten years, they go and take the head—the skull. They come and start killing fowls, killing goats, putting oil, putting camp wood, making fire. Eh? It is their tradition. You can't change it and today, somebody, if you come to me, sometimes he says 'it is above me, help me. As you have the strong hands and power'

455 **Ernest:** But now you believe as mostly with the Bamilike people, you know how hard hearted they are towards Gospel. Majority of them are unbelievers and now do you think it will be better for us to work and please the Bamilike people? Do you think that man can help God? Do think that you can, can you help God? Or can we help God?

Emmanuel: Normally!

Ernest: By doing those things that...

465 **Emmanuel:** Normally! It is not for me where I stand now. I think that I read the Bible and I know the Bible and I do what, I do this because man is subject to see whatever thin comes to him that can you know make it a possibility to live or make him a possibility to be reliable to all the actions of the society. I think that I am doing this because I am supposed to do it because sometime... let me tell you, sometimes man, you feel that there is a situation whereby you can come out... that God does not blame man for that kind of thing. You see that the situation that where you can free yourself, eh... you can tell lies to free yourself and God will not blame you. You were in a fire and so you made that statement to free yourself, and you free yourself and go.

470

Ernest: OK remember the situation of Job in the Bible where he was seriously sick. God allowed it to be so. And now despite all the illness, do you remember what the wife asked him to do?

475 **Emmanuel:** Yes!

Ernest: Curse God. What did she say? What did the wife told Job to do to free himself from the situation...

Emmanuel: Yes to forget about God.

Ernest: To forget—to curse God.

480 **Emmanuel:** Curse God and forget about that and so that he can free from all these things. He is sick because he is always talking God! God! God.

Ernest: And what was Job's reply?

Emmanuel: Job said 'I can never forget about my God and I can never do what is against the will of my God.

485 **Ernest:** Can you now believe that it will be wrong for man to satisfy... to try to help himself, but to rely and trust God that God can solve our problems?

Emmanuel: Em, I will come back to where you are talking now. If God had to save man just by words eh? Where you have the seminary there wouldn't have been a hospital, there wouldn't have been a maternity, there wouldn't have been hospitals around. But God has made His word and has

490 made man to know His words and divert His words in different actions of life and different parts of...to play. And so I am simply doing here like a hospital. I am not going against the will of God but my own is not different because I don't have laboratories, I don't have this is, my laboratory is there. When you come like this, I use that instrument you use to see me hold. Earnest has come, is he fine? The instrument will tell me yes! Earnest has come, where he is living? Is he living well

495 there? Yes! Earnest has come where, his movement from here back to his house. Will it be fine? I know that you are better. But let me not...let us not go into the Bible deep because if we want to go into the Bible, it means that I can completely stop what I am doing. And then, the will of God will not permit because God has given me this. I am a plumber, I am an electrician by myself. I can do building, even this carpentry, I can do it but sincerely I built a wall and it get bend. I will

500 not tell you a lie this is where I stopped the fence round the Catholic Church. The barrier round the Catholic Church, I built it and it stopped...that is where it simply came to me when I was in the Church that 'don't do anything technical. That word came like that from the tabernacle where they keep communion—'don't do anything like technical work. I hear it whisper in my ears and a light came from there to my face. The second one came to my chest and a third one came and wiped my

505 face. We were in a prayer session they call the benediction and that was happening to me I never knew somebody else was seeing. Rev. Father Anthony M. saw and after the benediction, four Rev Fathers were in the benediction. He called the Rev. Fathers to come back and he called me. They had to do four hours meditation after the benediction and we left the church at about eleven o'clock in the night. He did that meditation and in the morning, he came to my house, blessed the place where I do these things. That Rev. Father saw who I was and even said if I was in the brotherhood or in the Monkshood or anywhere; he would have like me to be sent to the pilgrimage centre in Rome. And so I don't go too much about that because I know the Bible and I don't go too much

510 about the Bible because if you want to follow exactly what the Bible is talking you will leave so many things from doing it. You will not even want to do anything like that. I will gather all these things and go and put it and light fire. If you want to follow the Bible really whereby you have the god of the people that is a universal god. He has made man and had made man in a different! Different you know, different! Different criteria of man, of men, people with different systems of their own anything and so this is my own system. I am a traditional doctor, I am a first aid with the Red Cross society. I am head of my family, as you know and all that is a sign of wisdom. Because

520 to be a reds cross man, you don't tell lies. To be a traditional doctor, only few of us tell lies because we want to grasp money from people's pockets. Look at my house, if you look at me, I am a wretched man because I am serving my God. If I wanted, you would have come and meet cars parked. You would have come and seen me living on good televisions, good chairs, having a good place to live, but I have not taken that as an advantage that God has given me what to do and I will

525 change to be a money doubler, I will change to be a dealer to deal people and take money. If you give me 10 France here, it is the 10 France that you are supposed to give me for my work—you are just simply rewarding me for what I have done to you. You are not paying me for what I am doing to you because all the herbs and barks of trees come from God. They don't come from man, man has not planted anything in the world. God has planted everything, and that is why He has

530 permitted us to use it as our food—to use it as our drugs, and to use it to heal others. If everybody knew what I know, there will be trouble because you not like to do what I do. You will want to be above me and so power struggle will start. That's why God has made man, you are pastor, some

535 Rev. Fathers, some this and that, and has given us this chance like a native doctor—traditional medicine, in traditional medicines. And so please, the Bible is saying really something and man has changed it and today you have women pastors. In the early days, no woman could come up to the pulpit to stand and talk, do you believe that?

Ernest: But that's what the scriptures say...

540 **Emmanuel:** yes! But changed it, the Roman Catholic church changed it because he wanted woman to be seen in the society and that is why a woman was made a choir mistress, a woman was made a deacon, a woman was made an elder of the Church. So you simply change it and tell God 'my God, I have changed this because of this, to suit the society, so I am doing this I know some of those things are about idols, they are bound by the Bible but please I think I don't help my God—I will not help my God. I want to thank you sincerely and I want to tell you if you go to the scriptures I have told you, I have to take all these things go and burn them and sit, and when I sit, that's the means which I have food that we eat, if I sit like that it means that I will become handicraft. I will not go back to construction or plumbing, or electricity and so on. You see I have been a free land journalist in town. While I was a free land journalist in this town, I was doing this only in the night stationed a news proper agency whom I have my son I trained, where I trained my son, the I trained who is running the press centre down there today, I trained him. He was a cigarette seller. I called him and I trained him and he is today a master. Look at where I am...he has built his house, is running on a bike, is many things but God did not say that when you are a trainer you will have everything. So please thank you for talking about the scriptures. I have simply explained what the scripture is. If you want to follow the Bible strictly, there are so many things that we might not do—following Bible, even to eat, even to drink, even to work. If you want to follow the Bible the way the scripture is talking, it means that when you are walking in a road you don't look like...as a holy man you just go right to your destination. That's the Bible. So please let us talk about the Bible the way it was let us talk about, and see the Bible the way it is written, and read what we are supposed to read in the Bible and practice part of those things in the Bible, leave some. Like me, I cannot practice everything in the Bible, it means that I will go down on my knees. So I simply tell God 'I am here doing what I am supposed to do in your name, I am not doing it Satanic—I don't do anything Satanic. Before I do anything, I go down on my knees. If I have to do any work this evening, I would have... you would have met me praying and asking and asking God that I am going to do this, help me to do it. So please the Bible is a wonderful thing. Nobody should play with the Bible. If anybody is playing with the Bible, it means that he is playing with his life. It means that he has lost sight of his life.

565 **Ernest:** So it is actually quite...a very...quite difficult journey to go but by the grace of God we will go through, and the Bible says He can never forsake His own people nor leave them. We know we are in the world—we are in the world but not of the world as we use to say and we believe that through Christ we can do everything and we know that it is quite a painful journey but we know according to the scriptures, even if no matter what we have, you know what is so important in one's life is his soul as we strongly believe. I believe that that is why the temptation of Job came into the Scripture. Even Christ Himself suffered...

Emmanuel: Uhum! 40 days and 40 nights...

570 **Ernest:** 40 days and 40 nights. And even on the cross.

575 **Emmanuel:** suffered when he was taken to the judgment powers where he was being flogged strokes of cane with ropes and sticks and they wore him a red garment and put him a crown of thorns on his head.

580 **Ernest:** If you look even from world history, the history the history that people have written, those who even started...our church fathers who will recognize that through them...through their pains, we have now received the Gospel, but they keep on moving, pushing. So we know truly as a Christian that Christianity life is not an easy race, but we do achieve through the help of the Holy Spirit. That is why Job was tempted in that way that he happened to lose nearly everything...his cattle...everything...

585 **Emmanuel:** ...Eeeh! Everything, you will count and leave even what? All his magazines that he joint and built new, packed food in it, he lost everything and until he died.

Ernest: ...and the wife...what he said the wife himself...herself said the husband should curse the God but he didn't because he knew the God he was serving. So...you yourself you know how much I have lost but I count it all gain, because as a Christian, we have peace of mind...

590 **Emmanuel:** you know that I don't think that you lost?

Ernest: That's what I am saying.

Emmanuel: people are talking 'see that one! See that one!' he don leave eeh... he don leave eeh... all his business way he be de do, he go join church...he go enter pastor job...pastor hood, but they don't know...

595 **Ernest:** so that is the thing...

Emmanuel: The journey to eternity to those who are talking mockery words about you shall be very difficult...their journey to eternity shall be very difficult.

Ernest: So...

600 **Emmanuel:** and that's why even me here, if somebody comes and talks ill about me, who does not even know what I am doing here, he takes his troubles and starts going, not me giving him the trouble. God will say 'I closed this man, why are you talking ill about him?'

605 **Ernest:** what makes us different from...from unbeliever is that we focus but on Christ, and we look our treasures and store them in heaven, not on earth, on this very earth, because the earth is full of evil. That's why the Bible says we should store our treasures where thieves cannot thief; get the entrance to steal it or where rusts cannot destroy it, so actually it is actually a concern for prayers and I will say during the holidays, we will have time to go detailedly into the scripture. Now we are just discussing as last time I came and we discussed. Actually we have not really

610 opened the scripture to see what the Bible will teach us because we believe that the Bible is the final answer to everything. so actually I thank you for the time that you have actually sacrificed for us to discuss pertinent issues like these ones that we are discussing now, and just the allowance that we have to discuss is a blessing that God has given us because it is not everybody like this will like to exchange or to discuss issues like this. This proves you are a man with a difference in the society...eeh, as we remain humble to the God, remains submissive to the God, opening our ears and our eyes to hear what the Bible will speak to us, I think by the time we will study or search the scriptures like the Bereans like the Bible says that we need to study like the Bereans and precisely

615 know what is required of us to do and what not. I think by the time we will come to the end, the Holy Spirit will reveal many things to us for His glory, and we believe the Bible tells us He will never leave us nor forsake us even if the worst comes to the worst, we will grow from here to a higher height. The Bible says that what? That his kingdom is full of blessings. His ways are not our ways but we believe that the Bible, that's the word of God itself, is a blessing to us. So thank you for this time. We will just have some moment to pray together and if I have another time ok or any other pertinent question at any time you can ask or if I have any finding as you have given me the opportunity to inquire from you, I think I am blessed in one way or the other because all is for the glory of the Lord. Before...while waiting until we will close from school by this coming may, it's not far from now so that we can search detailedly into scriptures and begin to see how God will be blessing us, we will allocate days to read the scriptures and we will also be growing in our spiritual life. I thank you very much...

620 **Emmanuel:** Thank you too...

625 **Ernest:** Eeeh...praying that God...our gracious God and merciful Lord will give us more inspiration into His words and will give us more courage to work according to his will and our own and according to His liking, believing that at the end all of us will be blessed. In Jesus name. Amen. ...I will like us to pray...

630

Dialogue with Richard Tanke by Teresa Mokake

The dialogue has been translated from pidgin into English.

- Teresa:** Good day, sir.
Richard: Thank you.
Teresa: May I know your name?
Richard: My name is Richard Tanke.
5 **Teresa:** Is a name from where?
Richard: Is a name from Western Province.
Teresa: Western province?
Richard: Yes, it is use by Nschang and Bangante people.
10 **Teresa:** Do you share a similar culture?
Teresa: O.k. what do the Nschang people believe about God or perceive him?
Richard: It depend on what you want to know about God, traditionally we have three gods, one who controls all the other gods, he is in the shrine very big where sacrifices are been offered monthly, the sacrifice can be goat, cow etc., to give blessing s to the chief ruler and for everybody. And then, we have other small ones like the score where we putt it around the house and we visit
15 it from time to time especially in times of problems.
Teresa: Ok these small gods that your people and these other superior god, now what is the name of the name of the superior God?
Richard: Well, which of the big God do you mean? The one who created mankind, our own god also?
20 **Teresa:** Ah! So you people know someone who created mankind, then someone who....
Richard: Yes, we know that there is a god who has created mankind.
Teresa: So which one have you met.?
Richard: So you know that the one who makes us to be fine, when we have trouble in our farm, trouble in the family, he is the one we meet, kill a goat, make traditional rites, we are fine; so he is
25 the one in which each time we have problem, we run to.
Teresa: Ok! But note that he is not the one who created mankind.
Richard: We know that he is not the one who created mankind. He is the one who gives us instructions on what to do.
Teresa: But you like a young man who is growing, how do you imagine the one who created
30 mankind to be?
Richard: We know that he has created us and left us alone he has created us, done his own work, so we know that it's the god we have, he talks with us directly.
Teresa: Ah! You people pass through a god to the God almighty.
Richard: Yes
35 **Teresa:** But don't you believe that this almighty God sent his son to be mediator for you and me? Or you still believe in your shrine god?
Richard: We believe in that shrine god because the day you stop going to him, you are in trouble, no matter where you go, trouble will follow you until you have made sacrifice, so he the one that we are saying, without him we can do nothing.
40 **Teresa:** But don't you see that if you accept Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour. You believe that he is the only way to the God almighty. Even if you refuse the village god, it means nothing.
Richard: I do go madam, we are always taught about Jesus all the time, but in times of problem, I will pray ones, twice, and thrice, but if I run to shrine god, my problem gets finish, how then can we stop sacrificing?
45 **Teresa:** Now do you believe that that your traditional god exists?
Richard: He really helps us because if we stay without doing this and that, some will die, and when we don't do it, we will die.
Teresa: Now can you enlighten me how this god operates?
50 **Richard:** Our god is capable of seeing even the future of man, then, there is the chief priest who interpret the words of the god, since not everybody understands the language of the god. The chief priest, when giving sacrifices ask the god questions about the land, families and danger coming to the land, and the god will give them information and instruction about the land. The chief priest passes the information to us whom he is guiding while the guider of the god brings information
55 from the god about the sacrifice, which is done after the rallying of the people by the chief.

Teresa: Have you ever seen the god before? Or is it only the chief priest that sees him?

Richard: Only the chief priest goes in to speak to the god but in the shrine we can see a small house meant for those with tough problems. Only this people go in to the small the house after giving sacrificial items to the chief priest. The chief priest then goes inside the main shrine to meet

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with the god. Everyone can hear him performing some rituals and asking the god to help the people.
Teresa: Now that you are a Christian, the Bible tells us that Christ died on the cross and break... We can... through this, we were all made priest thereby gratifying us to enter the holy of holies. And the Bible tells us that we are clean through the blood of Christ on the cross, so why keep on sacrificing, how can you?

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Richard: People say Christ's blood has cleans us and there is still suffering. So which has cleans us? Because if we are cleans then news should be heard about the death of children without been sick, suffering of the young in the village, childless couples accused that the village curse etc. therefore if we were free from Christ's blood then we ought not to have these problems. On that point of view, we have decided that out god is powerful.

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Teresa: Br. Richard, therefore you do believe in the church and also in your village god, why?

Richard: Because we know that our god works together with the god, they call the almighty God.

Teresa: So you really believe that the other god works with the almighty God?

Richard: Yes.

Teresa: What makes you think that the almighty God works with the other god?

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Richard: Because what so ever we give, the amount is announced there.

Teresa: So how can you reconcile the fact that Christ said, He is the way, the truth and the life, no one goes to God except through Him, yet you holds firm to the village god; therefore, you don't truly believe; do you?

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Richard: We do truly believe because if we didn't, he would not have spoken to us since he is not also with us, He is on the same side with our village god. Thus, He also sees and gives us information and instruction. If he would have been amongst us then there would have been no need to believe in him.

Teresa: Oh! Thank you very much for giving me this information.

Richard: Thank you very much.

The Dialogue of Agbor Walters and Sunny

- Walters:** Suns.
Suns: Yes!
Walters: Morning!
Suns: Good Morning.
- 5 **Walters:** It has been a long time.
Suns: Really! Quite a long time.
Walters: so where have you been all this while?
Suns: well, I'm just around. Eh... you're not fortunate to meet me.
- 10 **Walters:** Ok! You also know that I was involved with school activities and we were also on a short holiday and even though I was around the campus, but I was always charged up with other small, small problems. Thank God, I have met you this morning. So how is it all together?
Suns: No, Fine!
Walters: How is Mum?
Suns: Everybody is fine.
- 15 **Walters:** All right, I...I came to—to find out some information from you. Em... do you know of one Bate Bisson?
Suns: Yes! Yes.
Walters: Bate Bisson.
Suns: Bate Bisson.
- 20 **Walters:** Tell me.
Suns: eeh... Bate Bisson, Mrs Bate Bisson or let me call him Mr Bate Bisson was a lecturer in Buea University, a Doctor who died and a writer. A poet and a writer.
Walters: So what about him. I learnt that he died some time ago.
Suns: Yes, he had a motor accident when he went to Yaoundé to lunch the new book he wrote.
- 25 **Walters:** Ok! Bate Bisson is a native of where?
Suns: From Ndekwan.
Walters: Ok! So he died in the course of that accident?
Suns: Yes!
Walters: He died.
- 30 **Suns:** He died and the...
Walters: And has he been buried?
Suns: Yes.
Walters: Ok! Where was he buried? Is it in Yaoundé or in his village?
Suns: In his village.
- 35 **Walters:** Ndekwa is where?
Suns: In Manyu Division
Walters: In Mamfe?
Suns: In Mamfe.
- 40 **Walters:** Ok! Did you attend the funeral programme or you were here in town?
Suns: No! I was here in town.
Walters: Wow! I hope as a Mamfe man, there must be some news about him? You know whenever Mamfe people die; at least there must be some news. So have you gotten any latest in town about the late Bate Bisson?
Suns: No! Not quite.
- 45 **Walters:** I hear some news that he has travelled to Germany. That's the rumour I hear in town. Have you come across this rumour?
Suns: I cannot say because I haven't come across such a rumour.
Walters: I was beginning to wonder how it is possible for somebody who had died and they say he is in Germany, but are these kinds of things familiar or common in the Manyu context in your area in Mamfe. When somebody dies, tomorrow or someday they say they have seen him again?
- 50 **Suns:** Yes, I myself I have lived in Manyu. I have been hearing about it, but I haven't seen it, but I do believe. There was one time I heard em...somebody resurrect, he resurrected and...
Walters: somebody resurrected.
Suns: And was...em...burnt. Although I wasn't there. But I was in Manyu when it happened. People were rushing there.
- 55 **Walters:** That is, somebody who died rose up again?

Suns: Rose up and ...

Walters: And they caught him...

Suns: And was caught and burnt.

60 **Walters:** That happened in Mamfe?

Suns: Em... What's the name of this village again?

Walters: Is it Kembong? Ah! Because I know that Kembong is the centre of those kinds of things in Mamfe. We have villages like Kembong; we have villages like Ntanekoh.

Suns: Yes!

65 **Walters:** Cases of people who die and come back to life are very common.

Suns: And what I don't understand is like those people appear in certain...for certain people to see them because I myself, I have lived and i move to many areas...where dark areas where you expect this types of...

Walters: Expect...

70 **Suns:** ... You can suspect this type of people there but...

Walters: you have hardly met with them...

Suns: I have hardly met with them.

Walters: But are you interested in meeting some? Maybe it will be an experience Oh! My brother it is interesting.

75 **Suns:** (Laughs)—Though it is very dangerous to meet one but eh... I am not expecting...let me just say I am not expecting to meet one.

Walters: Now let's just say you happen to meet somebody you who died sometimes ago, and you meet the person, how will you react?

Suns: I don't know how I can know that this is somebody who has died and I don't know how they do know that this person... except if you know the person...

80 **Walters:** That's what I am saying. I mean somebody whom you knew was alive, and you knew he died and can testify that you saw his grave and that you saw him being buried...I Mean the corps, then tomorrow somewhere again you see him maybe on the street, in a super market buying, or maybe in a shop selling, or driving a car. I don't know how do you react to this?

85 **Suns:** Laughs...

Walters: Brother tell me, it's an experience. You know we are all from Mamfe.

Suns: Yes...

Walters: So let's discuss like Evange people. I think there is nothing we should be afraid of or ashamed of.

90 **Suns:** Well from the story I have learned that if you see those types of people, just behave as if you have not seen them because if you try to...if you give the impression that you know them and you know that they are dead, they can harm you.

Walters: Hum?

Suns: Hum!

95 **Walters:** If you see them you should just behave...

Suns: Yes!

Walters: As though you do not know them?

Suns: Just behave as if...just go your way.

100 **Walters:** This issue of people dying and coming back to live has been part of our culture, you can understand. And sometimes it's like a priority in Mamfe. If your person dies and does not come back to life...there is no rumour about him or her that he/she has been seen somewhere, either in Cameroon or Nigeria or in another country, it is like that particular family is not a strong family. I don't know whether these kinds of concepts are in your own family?

Suns: Yes. It's something traditional for some people...for some families let me say. They do prefer it, and they arrange for it.

105 **Walters:** they arrange for it.

Suns: they arrange for it.

Walters: Tell me little bit about...

Suns: I heard they use to...they give you a certain medicine for you to come out and see certain things. For somebody who is a responsible somebody who died accidentally...

110 **Walters:** Or prematurely.

Suns: Or prematurely yes, without preparing his or her will or whatsoever. So they do prepare some medicine for him to...to come out and see certain things.

Walters: And it has been quite successful.

115 **Suns:** Yes it use to happen like that.

Walters: Hum?

Suns: Ehem! But for some, it comes as a result of...from what I learned that the cuts...

Walters: Some medicine in the blood?

Suns: Ehem!

120 **Walters:** Wound your body, rub medicine...

Suns: When you are sick at times you go to herbalists and they begin to do some cuttings and all the like. Those two cause those types of things. They make you to come out like that without you knowing.

125 **Walters:** Suns, suppose one of your family dies...God forbid I am not wishing them dead, and tomorrow or after tomorrow you see him/her selling in super market, you know and offers you some money...you know, Suns tell me your reaction.

Suns: Well for member of my family, the person is already member of my family; I don't think I will be afraid. I will even like to talk to the person and I will take the money...

Walters: And you do business...

130 **Suns:** Laughs...if it comes to that.

Walters: Yeah I want to think that if I were placed in that position, I could take the money. Now tell me, when you will be taking the money, how do you reconcile your conscience, given that you knew that he died sometimes ago? In that case are you just promoting your culture? Please let me just get some briefings.

135 **Suns:** Ehem...I don't...I will take the money quit alright and the only thing I will try to avoid will be to tell people about it because if you happen to expose him the person too will feel bad about the whole thing and the person can harm you.

Walters: Let's say you take this money with the purpose of investing on a business and along the way, some misfortune follows you, how will you explain that?

140 **Suns:** If some misfortune follows me...

Walters: Some bad luck...I don't know how to describe it but let's say some misfortune.

Suns: Some misfortune can still come in as a coincident; not necessarily meaning ehh... ehh...it must not mean that it comes through that eh...

Walters: It is like you have studied causation—cause and effect. Yeah, the fact that misfortune came does not necessarily mean that...

145 **Suns:** Yeah! The fact that misfortune came, does not mean that it is the reaction from the money that I took. It can still come in like that.

Walters: That is true there is an element of truth in what you are saying. Now, but don't you think that you know, a human being died, being buried, the body must have decayed, now coming back to life. Don't you think that that kind of a person is not a real human being? Otherwise why don't they fell free to live amidst other people? But they??? Like living in hidings? Please let's examine this.

150 **Suns:** But if they cannot come in the midst of other people, it's just that they are...they are not welcome by others. People point fingers at them.

Walters: Now the reasons why people will not welcome them is because they have passed through the normal process of burial...

155 **Suns:** They are abnormal people, they are not—you will be afraid, even...coming to sleep with you, even it is your brother, even it is your mother, you will be afraid...you will not like to welcome them...??? I was told about a certain person from our village who died and he was very intelligent, studied in Nigeria...I learn he went to Nigeria...he was studying in Nigeria, he was a Christian—a Presbyterian Christian. So when he went there as a new person, he will ask for the Presbyterian Church, but they went and introduced him to a church...the signboard is there Presbyterian Church but in it...

160 **Walters:** It was a cult.

Suns: Ehe! See he was initiated to that cult. See, just of a sudden, he was asked to give his own...

165 **Walters:** To offer sacrifice...

Suns: To offer sacrifice.

Walters: Human sacrifice...

Suns: Human sacrifice. So he offered...gave his eeh...junior sister. So the next offer they asked him was...was...his mother.

170 **Walters:** OK!

Suns: He refused.

Walters: He refused.

Suns: He refused—he refused to give his mother.

Walters: What happened?

175 **Suns:** Maybe before they asked him to give his mother, you must have given some other persons. So he refused his mother and so he sacrificed himself for his mother. One time he came to the village

and, he was knocked down by a vehicle—out of the road, not even...out of the road and he was not even seriously knocked. He just fell and died like that. So when they went and found out as they...

180 **Walters:** As they usually do? You know in our context in Mamfe, when somebody dies, there is a cause attributed to it, something must have happened before the person dies and we usually go and find out from native or traditional witch doctors to know the cause of the death and probably who must have killed...so tell me.

185 **Suns:** So as I was saying when this man died, he was buried, he rose and went to Nigeria. So the mother use to go to Nigeria maybe to buy or I don't know. So the mother went and met this man married—he had married one Nigerian and was living in his home. So the mother went there and saw her son there. This son was giving...he use to give the mother son money and the mother most of the time coming and going like that. So one time this mother went right to the man's house. He viewed the issue about the man to his wife. So when this man came there, the wife...is like the wife...I don't know, maybe the wife too ran away because of fear she was afraid and left like that. So one time when this woman came back to Nigeria to see the son, the son now, the man was angry. Say why...you have been coming here and I have been giving you money so why do you have to do this to me—why do you have to break my family this and that. So he just said to the mother you...you too go! You will see what will happen. The mother just came back to the country and died too just like that.

190 **Walters:** And died too.

195 **Suns:** Uhum! He killed the mother too.

Walters: So it means her interest was the huge sums of money she used to receive.

Suns: Uhum!

Walters: From the son?

Suns: The Son.

200 **Walters:** Wonderful. My brother did you say his son...

Suns: ...I will not like to call...I know about the family...

Walters: No! I will not want you to call some person's names here. You know it is contextual.

Suns: By then I was in Besong when it happened I was there when it happened, although the story only came later.

205 **Walters:** OK!

Suns: I know the man's junior sister was in Okoyong—was in Okoyong, the girl—Queen of the Rosary College. By then she was my classmate, and she died like that.

Walters: I will not advise you to call persons names here. Let us try to at least confidentialise the identity.

210 **Suns:** Yes!

Walters: Hum! My question here is 'did you say it was a member of your family or somebody from your village?

Suns: You mean... he is somebody from my village.

215 **Walters:** Have you ever recorded in your family this kind of cases, I mean rumours about somebody of your family, whoever, maybe from generations past, somebody who died.

Suns: I think my mother would have told...she would have informed me about that, but I don't think any has happened from my own family.

220 **Walters:** Now tell me, let's say tomorrow in the future when we will all pass away to eternity, there is an opportunity for you...you know like we commonly say, there is a job opportunity for you somewhere in Nigeria or in some other country...yes after your death, you go there and you become a devil and you work some work and you begin to send money to your family. Let's say there is an opportunity for you someday in the future, how do you react to this? How do you embrace it?

Suns: You mean opportunity after life?

225 **Walters:** I mean there is an opportunity that is... I mean you die and you come back to life, becoming a devil and working money and sending back to your family to help them. Let's whether—how you will welcome the situation.

Suns: Well...eeh...

Walters: Maybe you will be survivor.

230 **Suns:** I will leave that to my family because there are some families who try to block...because when they know that...because when somebody dies, they become...at times they come with...what they call the chief priest, the chief priest will only come and look at you, and will know that you will come out.

Walters: The priest has such powers...

Suns: He has such powers to know that you will come out.

235 **Walters:** Uhum...

Suns: So they are the family to avoid at times the...because it is disgraceful to hear that your person is this way, they have seen this person this way disturbing the village just like that is a disgrace

240 **Walters:** Now we have just sampled some few advantages, or let's say the positive side, I put that positive in quotes of those who die you know and come back to life, and the positivity here is that they work money, if at all and they sponsor their families, something like that. Now the other aspect of it which is on the negative side, which you have mentioned, which I want us to dwell on is the issue of the disgrace, because you say it's disgraceful for people to hear that a member of your family dies and comes back to life. So let us examine that disgrace, what do you mean by 'is disgraceful?' Let's examine the disgrace and the frustration in it.

245 **Suns:** Uhum...know there are some that comes out and begin to disturb the village...everybody, very prominent in the village, you go this way...you have seen this person, how will you...you yourself you will not welcome that...you will not like to hear that your family member...

Walters: That's part of the disgrace.

250 **Suns:** Uhum! It's so disgraceful, you will not like to welcome him...so no family will like to welcome that. But those that have been prepared, it's like they are like a normal human being—they reason. You know this thing of ghost, there are some that who...there are some that does not reason.

Walters: There are some who do not reason.

Suns: Uhum! There are some who do not reason because those are...as I said, those might...they can come as a result of the...

255 **Walters:** The concorsions [sic] being cut on their bodies.

Suns: Uhum...and there are some which have been prepared, they come out reasonably—they know what they are doing and they will never expose their selves...they go very far, out of the country. If they want certain...they only see...they are coming to say what they say and ones they say, you will never see them again. But there are some that, they are just like mad people. And they just keep on running from one place to the other...

260 **Walters:** In the village, creating confusion...

Suns: Creating confusion.

Walters: When he passes this way, you will hear 'hooooo'.

Suns: Those are the mad ones.

265 **Walters:** I have been experiencing that in the village even when I was in early...and mid-primary school. You know we usually fear going to the bush, to the farm alone without our parents—the fear of devils, and I think that is one disadvantage with devils too. They are really abnormal human beings. And even before I settle on the point, disgrace, you once mentioned something here that I also want us to look at it a little bit critically. You said when they die, they will rather prefer to settle in remote areas where people will not see them, because they believe they are abnormal human beings. Let's examine how abnormal they are, Suns you mentioned that and you said...'because they know that they are abnormal human beings. Let's examine the abnormality.

270 **Suns:** Well, when I mean abnormal, if somebody—can you imagine you burry somebody in a coffin that has been nailed and that person comes out.

275 **Walters:** They dig six feet.

Suns: Dig six feet, and you are buried...at times they...

Walters: Not only you are buried, they nail the box...

Suns: They nail the box...How do you look at that type of a person who has come out again from that six feet?

280 **Walters:** It's unbelievable...

Suns: It's unbelievable. So the person...

Walters: Is questionable...

Suns: Is questionable... and even the person himself is that type of person, only the touch of you, he can only touch you like that, and that will be all about you. They have their own power in them...they have great power in them. I don't know if the power dies for those who come out and get married...I don't know how it happens...I cannot say because some come out and get married...they go to other area and start life altogether and people don't know them there...

285 **Walters:** Son...

Suns: I don't know... maybe we are still living with some who must have come from other African countries...

290 **Walters:** And they are living here in Cameroon, even in Kumba market.

Suns: Yes!

Walters: Laughs...you see Suns, I am laughing, it's not like I am laughing at you. You have just caused me to remember something of the past. I listened from one of my uncles sometimes ago at least when I was a child that when the wife was pregnant and was labouring at the point of delivery.

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You know in our village, in such an ungodly hour, 11/12pm, vehicles do not move again. So he was to travel from our villager to the next village where we had a small dispensary...so that the maternity--where the wife can give birth. Now on their way as they travelled, in the night, he carried the wife on the bicycle. There were no motor cycles by that time, very common. Now when they arrived somewhere in between the two villages, there used to be a hip of Indian bamboos growing along by the side of the road and dark. Now, he took the wife by the side of that Indian bamboo so that the wife can stay under that Indian Bamboo for some time so that the rain will not soak her, that even [if] it means giving birth, she can deliver there. The story is very funny, you see that he went there and met, at about 12 something in the night, he went there, and surprisingly, he met a man and a woman having sex. I mean he came to discover that there were two people whom they knew who had died, and have come back to life, enjoying themselves in such a place. Suns, do we say this is wonderful or terrible? The question I ask here is 'if they had actually loved to live, why did they die in the first place?' and I don't know, are there some names that you people attribute to those who die and come back to life? I will like to know some of those names.

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Suns: Well I don't know, I haven't asked... I don't know...
Walters: Because some people call it ghost.
Suns: Ok, I thought you were talking...
Walters: No! I mean an English name that another man can understand.
Suns: Yah! They call it ghost.
Walters: Is there any other name?
Suns: They call it ghost...
Walters: Some people call it devil.
Suns: Uhum!
Walters: Let's say somebody says 'devil' what is the impression that comes into your mind? When somebody just says 'devil.' What comes into your mind in that first instance?
Suns: Yes first thing that comes from my mind is eeh...haven died and come back.
Walters: Having died, and come back to life?
Suns: Ehe...
Walters: My brother, it is interesting. Yeah I will like us to consider talking about who a devil is, or who the devil is because you see something, a devil and the devil. I want that we handle this in our next session—in our next session. That is to talk about who is the devil and to also examine the mystery behind this devil's issue. And if you may ask me, I will suggest even maybe tomorrow. Be it in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening, I will be available, except that I will go to church in the morning.
Suns: OK.
Walters: And I will like you to do some little research and find out who are devils and the mystery of this devil issue, and you distinguish between who are devils, and who is the devil? From your background knowledge of you know...from your childhood interaction, religion, or whatever. I don't know where you get your sources, but just pray towards that—that we will meet in the course of the day tomorrow and we will examine who are devils and the mystery behind it. I think I will really like it. Now, any last word about devils?
Suns: If I have to say any...
Walters: For now, in preparedness for that occasion.
Suns: I will just like to comment on the point that devils or ghost is a universal something, it's not something only attributed to the African context...
Walters: It is universal?
Suns: It is universal.
Walters: My brother, you are logical eeh...I thought you...
Suns: No, I have watched films where a ghost was eeh...a Western film, not the Nigerian type, whether they call it...the title should be Franco...
Walters: Uhum!
Suns: A ghost was disturbing the society...
Walters: Uhum!
Suns: And there were, they have been trapping all...doing all what to catch the person, he was so mysterious that eeh...you might be complaining about this person. It just so funny that when people are planning to catch him, he appears...eeh, appears immediately, immediately you are leaving to your house, I mean when you come into a plan...
Walters: Yeah!
Suns: And you are going back. And you are going back into your houses, only to come the next day to attribute that...to carry out the plan, he will attack people ...

Walters: In their respective homes...

Suns: Uhum!

Walters: In the course, in a forum where they plan on how to catch the ghost, it's like, because it's a mysterious something, he understands.

360 **Suns:** Yes, he understands

Walters: Now when you people scatter from that...

Suns: Is just that when you people are planning, he is there, you people cannot see him...

Walters: In your respecting homes he meets you there and instead of you executing, the devil starts executing.

365 **Suns:** Yes.

Walters: My brother thank you...

Suns: When it was so...until they discovered a method...

Walters: Hum!

Suns: Until it was one eeh...one other traditional healer who told them to... that when whenever the man stepped, they should go, use a nail that they go and nail eeh...

370 **Walters:** To pin the person.

Suns: Yes to pin the person.

Walters: Ha!

Suns: When they did it, the man was there shouting, the devil could not...

375 **Walters:** He could not move again.

Suns: Shouting, Ehe...crying! Find blood all coming out... Ehe...

Walters: My brother that is the mystery that I want us to unfold in our next session.

Suns: Yes! Yes!

Walters: Now is it possible to get this movie you said is titled Franco?

380 **Suns:** Yes! It's quite long eh. This is something I watched when I was still very young during my childhood.

Walters: My brother we will try to find out whether we can find it and watch it too.

Suns: It's a Western film, very interesting...

Walters: Very interesting! Thank you very much and I pray we will have the opportunity to meet even tomorrow...

385 **Suns:** Yea...

Walters: And if you have an opportunity to do even some findings from...whoever, my brother don't hesitate, we will talk later.

Suns: Uhum!

390 **Walters:** Thank you!

Suns: Ehe! You are welcome.

Walters: Yea!

The Dialogue of Vulgar Paul, Sylvester and Celestin

- Paul:** We are talking about traditional gods.
Sylvester: What did you wanted to know about traditional gods because I know that they definitely come from our fore fathers that you have.
Paul: Uhum!
5 **Sylvester:** A young generation like us...
Paul: Yes!
Sylvester: Cannot give you a details
Paul: Yes, cannot give you...
10 **Sylvester:** Couldn't see it is good to go and meet a father—when I talk of a father which is sixty something that can give something that can easily...
Paul: Yeah! It is very interesting but my problem here is having to talk with different age groups, right, that of a father, the old parents—you know women for about sixty years...yea! I have discussed with some of them. So I want to have levels of different age groups. Right? What do you as a young man think about those various gods, and what do you think about us...
15 **Sylvester:** Calm down...come down.

An interruption because Sylvester goes to get something from the room.

Part II

- Paul:** Yea!
Sylvester: The traditional gods.
Paul: Uhum! Well...
20 **Sylvester:** What I will like to tell you is the traditional gods...the traditional god came...because when you see, we have tribes.
Paul: Uhum!
Sylvester: You see, this person comes from this tribe...
Paul: Uhum.
25 **Sylvester:** I come from Bamenda which tribe? you say it ok Right now!...You have illness, go to the Doctor, the doctors says it is good to go to the traditional Doctor maybe it's coming out from family, or they need you, they need your parents to go to where your mother came from and give something that...that...that...all those things. I can even say that what? I can even say that without the traditional men, we the young generation, we cannot survive.
Paul: Are you sure?
30 **Sylvester:** I am sure.
Paul: Alright yea! It's quite interesting...yea! Yea!
Sylvester: Very sure!
Paul: That you...we...
35 **Sylvester:** I am twins...no! No! No! Wait, let me tell you.
Paul: what do you mean by that?
Sylvester: Wait! Wait! Wait! Ok, I will give you my reason, I give you the name.
Paul: OK!
Sylvester: What I am trying to come out for example I am twins.
Paul: Yes!
40 **Sylvester:** When a year-end comes, you heard people say, Paul it's good to go to the village, and make some sacrifice. Sacrifice came from where? It came from the gods.
Paul: Yea! From the gods...
Sylvester: From the gods.
Paul: Ok! I am interested because...from the gods...
45 **Sylvester:** Come on! You thought that I am saying something wrong?
Paul: Ya! Ya! From the gods!
Sylvester: Do you think I am saying something?
Paul: No, we are discussing something which is absolutely important...Ok, Yea!
50 **Sylvester:** Yeah! I am telling you what we are sitting here and talking about is what...it's interesting.
Paul: Yeah!

Sylvester: Coming out across me...telling me...saying that you wanted to do your research...

Paul: Yeah!

Sylvester: That's, that's good.

Paul: Oh yea!

55 **Sylvester:** That's good, congratulations.

Paul: Amen

Sylvester: Yes...so what I am trying to saying...I am trying to saying that, I am god...eh! I'm twins.

Paul: You are a twins. Yea!

60 **Sylvester:** When the yearend comes, we always rush in the village to do some sacrifice... That sacrifice...it comes from where? It comes from God...comes from God because I cannot...do you know who create this world? Do you?

Paul: Eem...

Sylvester: The world...

Paul: That's a beautiful question.

65 **Sylvester:** Yes!

Paul: I will like to tell you there is a creator of the world...of heaven and earth.

Sylvester: Ok! Who is that? Let me know.

Paul: Oh yes! The creator of heaven and earth should be the almighty God.

Sylvester: Give me a handshake.

70 **Paul:** Uhum!

Sylvester: Yes! That's what I am saying. I am saying that the creator should be almighty, which is that... which is that means...to means God.

Paul: Yea.

Sylvester: You understand?

75 **Paul:** Ehe?

Sylvester: So all these things that we should go and kill fowl there, make some sacrifice, they come from God.

Paul: Uhum!

Sylvester: Yes! When God deliver a young baby like this one...like this Adeline's child.

80 **Paul:** Yea!

Sylvester: You see, it tells and it shows...

Paul: Yea!

Sylvester: God review that this child should be eeh a four eye somebody, we need to go to the village and do some certain traditions because if we don't do some certain traditions, he maybe a young man but in future, he can tend to be a different thing...we don't know...

85 **Paul:** Yes!

Sylvester: So that's why you see without people, God cannot exist.

Paul: Without people, God cannot exist...

Sylvester: Without people, God cannot exist.

90 **Paul:** What do you mean that without people, God cannot exist?

Sylvester: Ok! Without people, God cannot exist because if this...if the world was not multiply, this...all this thing coming...traditional doctors and gods, they shouldn't have been.

Paul: Yes! Very interesting...but let us look it the other way...

Sylvester: Which?

95 **Paul:** That without God, people cannot exist.

Sylvester: Ok!

Paul: Let us look it this way.

Sylvester: That without God, people cannot exist.

Paul: That without God, people cannot exist, and there cannot be multiplication.

100 **Sylvester:** Good! Without God, people cannot exist with an aim that, now, if we have not exist...existed.

Paul: Uhum!

Sylvester: eeh...you call a problem, to who would you... would you lay your hands?

Paul: Oh Yea!

105 **Sylvester:** To who??

Paul: I have somebody that I can lay my hands and the Almighty God...

Sylvester: Is God!

Paul: Yea!

Sylvester: Not so?

110 **Paul:** Yea!

Sylvester: Ok, for instance, if we were not.
Paul: Eehh...
Sylvester: If we were not existing at all...
Paul: eeh yea! God would have still been existing because...
115 **Sylvester:** Not having...not having a generation. Right?
Paul: Yea!
Sylvester: Aha! That's what I am talking about
Paul: Let me tell you, God can still be existing by word...
Sylvester: Uhum!
120 **Paul:** He is the one who created the world. He knows the world very well more than you and I.
Sylvester: That's good.
Paul: And also, everything on earth is made by Him
Sylvester: made by Him. Good!
Paul: So if we are not there, His will still be there.
125 **Sylvester:** My brother, do you think another solution will still be?
Paul: I think, I strongly think like that, that there will be another solution because he is the creator of heaven and earth...
Sylvester: And he knows everything...
Paul: Like for example, if you are a mechanic, eeh if a tire...if a car has a problem..., Good, you will
130 look for a solution, isn't it?
Sylvester: Good! Good, it is...
Paul: Ok! If the tire is bad, another thing is that what? If the tire is just punctured, you will...you can...the solution can be patching the tire too bad,
Sylvester: Or change it?
135 **Paul:** Now when you see that the tire is.
Sylvester: Yea!
Paul: Another solution is to buy a new tire and you reject that one.
Sylvester: You reject that one.
Paul: God...that is the way God works. He works in circumstances that we, His own creation...we don't understand Him. Unless we humble ourselves under somebody, we are still going...Now what
140 I want us to know now here is, we have talked about the different gods and the few...the power I will like us now to...you know talk about a specific God in the Babanki land which is what we call *Keng*...
Sylvester: *Keng*?
145 **Paul:** Yea you know about keng...Now what are the implications does this have to the Babanki people. What do they believe about it?
Sylvester: What I am saying that it's good to inquire all this information from a father that he or she thinks...
Paul: Has been experienced...
150 **Sylvester:** Has been experienced of so many circumstances.
Paul: Uhum!
Sylvester: He will give you the headlines, then you will know more details before coming to hear...
Paul: Yea! I want you like a young man to really give me your own side...your point of view.
Sylvester: Ok! I will give you... I will give you...
155 **Paul:** What do you believe about it? And we will focus...
Sylvester: I will give you...
Paul: Yea!
Sylvester: I will.
Paul: Yea!
160 **Sylvester:** What I am trying you to understand is that what I know details, if we go up, and we come across is that I do believe that this keng that you are talking about I think on the base comes from the creator because one, you have keng, you have your own keng, I have keng. Ok! *Ikeng* comes from where? This keng comes from a tradition.
Paul: Yea! A tradition.
165 **Sylvester:** Which is Ve-Nyingong ...
Paul: Uhum Ve-Nyingong...
Sylvester: Gods.
Paul: Uhum!
Sylvester: And you know it.
170 **Paul:** Yea! I am aware about it.

Sylvester: Ok! It comes from the Ve-Nyingong which is this keng and some other! Other tradition that add into that keng.

Paul: Uhum!

175 **Sylvester:** Because after tome²⁸² they have to dance and do some certain things that add into that Ikeng son, which I mean God is the One that reviews...if you deliver a child, the child is about to say Daddy or mama...unable to go and carry you water to bring it here... you have to do a traditional, a traditional, a traditional, let me just say a traditional work on that child because if we don't... if we don't do, we might not know what can come out.

Paul: Yea!

180 **Sylvester:** That child can die, or that child can grow up, trespass again, when they are doing nkeng into somebody's house, it can go and eat something that their parents did not put his own keng, he go and eat somebody's...you understand what I mean?

Paul: Yes somebody's own, yeah.

185 **Sylvester:** Trespassing to eat something that your own house has not prepared for you people. That is to be sure that ok, you are ok. If they are do it somewhere, you can still drink corn bear from those people and other places, it cannot harm you. I think that all those traditional doctors, gods...they come from God himself.

Paul: Ok! Brother, you've said something that if you don't do it, then you may trespass and go to somebody's house...

190 **Sylvester:** Sure!

Paul: You eat something, and it will bring...

Sylvester: It will bring a problem...

Paul: It will bring a problem to the house.

Sylvester: To the house...

195 **Paul:** And there is something, the Bible says something...

Sylvester: Yes!

Paul: That eeh, all that God created is good. So if this thing is good, then why should I not just eat, and I don't have a problem?

Sylvester: Let me tell you—let me tell you. You do believe in God?

200 **Paul:** Uhum!

Sylvester: And God said if you believe, believe to me with all your heart, with all your knowledge that you have no commitment. Or any other thing. But if you believe to me, don't...don't...if you believe to me that this is my own house, that you do worship. Don't, don't, don't hesitate that I will go to another house. Honour this house that are being offered to you that this is my own house which is one house on this earth. Do you understand that?

205 **Paul:** Oh yea!

Sylvester: Ok! You cannot tell me that you will honour God and you forbid your own tradition...

Paul: Laughs...

Sylvester: Do you? Do you? It is what you are trying to come out?

210 **Paul:** Ha-ha-ha, ok let me come out.

Sylvester: Do you? Do you?

Paul: Let me come out...let me came out...

Sylvester: Do you? No don't quote me wrong...don't take me wrong. I am twins...do you...?

Paul: No! No!

215 **Sylvester:** I have my own house...I worship Presbyterian Church.

Paul: Oh beautiful.

Sylvester: You understand? Though all these houses...Full Gospel, and so on...that is not what God says in the Bible. Roman Catholic Church, Baptist church, and Press three churches that we do worship... all these before three months... There are people that they need...they do need money... You understand?

220 **Paul:** Yea.

Sylvester: They want money... So churches adding now because people make money from churches...

Paul: Yes! Ok let's...

225 **Sylvester:** Ok let's come back to our point...

Paul: Uhum.

Sylvester: What I was saying—I was saying that if you worship that God, don't forbid your own tradition.

²⁸² *Tome* means to implant

230 **Paul:** With me I don't...not talking that forging my tradition...I don't forgo my tradition, but what I am looking here is as...this...as we are saying because God created everything for good and we discover also that God also...if God created everything for good, even the keng, I would have eat...I would be eating.

Sylvester: Eeh?

235 **Paul:** Because I know that it is just for eating...but now when I eat something then I still have some curses in me, it means that what? That there are some mysterious powers that are in that thing that I ought not to eat, that is therefore, a true child of God—a born again child should not be involved in that, but he should follow some...he should follow the aspect that traditions, which are good...

Sylvester: I know where you are taking your sense to...I already know where you are taking your sense to...

240 **Paul:** No! No! No! No! No!

Sylvester: And let me tell you something...let me tell you, let me tell you.

Paul: Uhum!

Sylvester: Let me tell you... Are you born in Kijem?

Paul: I am a native of Babanki... I am born in Kijem, and I grew in Kejem.

245 **Sylvester:** Do you know the will in Kijem? The rules and regulations in Kejem?

Paul: Ha! Ha! Ha!

Sylvester: Do you?

Paul: eeh...probably I don't know most of them, but those that I can know, I know them because what? I have grown there and I have gotten some...you know...some elementary things.

250 **Sylvester:** Ok! Did they composed...ok, don't take me wrong. Ok! What do you know about Ajong Kekung as a tradition? Do you?

Paul: Hum! I will...I will write what I can write.

Sylvester: You will write...

Paul: What I can write...what I am up to. What my knowledge...

255 **Sylvester:** ...what your knowledge...

Paul: Yea. My knowledge reach...reach...yea. So I will...

Sylvester: That's good... Let me...no! I am trying to come out with something, and I will tell you more what that means.

Paul: Yea.

260 **Sylvester:** Ok, good! When they say 'a tradition' A tradition comes from where? It comes from...God said into Bible, multiply... Go out and multiply...go out and multiply by deliver us...

Paul: My brother yea! Yea! Yea!

Sylvester: Not so?

Paul: Yea!

265 **Sylvester:** Fine! Not go out and multiply Churches. No! That is not what God said. God said, 'Go out and multiply—multiply children. For instance, you will see them... meet my Celestin, he is coming...he is coming and you will see him...you will see him. What I am trying to come out is for this young generation to see any... God is not a foolish man to create tribes...this one comes from Bali, this one comes from Bali Koumbot, this one comes from Big Babanki, this one comes from Kom, this one comes from Wum, one comes from Njung....And so on and so on. God is not a foolish man. Ok! How God put that tribe is also how God also create... a tradition.

270 **Paul:** Yea! A tradition...

Sylvester: Which means this tradition...it definitely means if you don't do it...if you don't do it, there shall be a day...a month...that will harm you.

275 **Paul:** Ha! Ha! Ha! Good! I love it...I love what you are saying, but why will I be harmed?

Sylvester: Fine, because your parents didn't do it for you...that's your fore fathers...your fore fathers didn't do it for your father, and your father right now have that right...he will still ask you to fall under his children...

Celestin:²⁸³ In order not that family...family...family...eeeh..e-e-e-em...

280 **Paul:** Curses?

Celestin: Voila!

Sylvester: Is not that Celestin? I am coming out with a good solution...find a chair and sit down...you will understand more details...look and listen...I am really taking care of that. I just told you we are twins.

285 **Paul:** Uhum!

Sylvester: I was expecting a question from you to ask, but you didn't...

²⁸³ The brother who has just join them is called Celestine.

Paul: No, I eehh...
Sylvester: No! No! No! Don't panic.
Paul: No! No I am not panicking.
 290 **Sylvester:** We are discussing...
Paul: We are discussing something we want to come out with...
Sylvester: Solutions!
Paul: Yes!
 295 **Sylvester:** You will know because we are twins...I am going to tell you what I know, what I see or eat.
Paul: Uhum!
Sylvester: That's why you see ...we now understand this tradition...the tradition because we are twins...we have the most powerful tradition more than a single like Adeline, more than a single man like you.
 300 **Paul:** Yea!
Sylvester: Why? Because God create us, we come out twins. Eh?
Paul: Uhum!
Sylvester: From that twins, they said, Papa...you will go and throw nkeng for this child you cannot sit there and tell me you don't have...you people, or you people's houses...your brothers, your sister,
 305 you people don't have wenna [Pidgin: your] own nkeng...
Paul: No my parents do have...
Sylvester: You people have...
Paul: My parents have...
 310 **Sylvester:** Aha! Aha! Ask yourself that if this keng could have not been tomè, what can happen next? Ask your own self and come out with a solution...what can hap...
Paul: (Unclear)
Sylvester: No, wait first! I am asking a question, and I am answering it for you to understand...
Paul: Uhum.
Sylvester: You understand?
 315 **Paul:** Uhum!
Sylvester: Ok, ask yourself why this keng have not been tomè²⁸⁴ and what can came out...what can came out next if this keng could not been tome? People can be that...you will see a house will collapse.
Celestin: You can just craz [can just talk crazy].
 320 **Sylvester:** No wait, Papa will die, mami [mama] will die...
Celestin: Big set of confusion when you have not tome that nkeng.
Sylvester: They will die...they will die...they will die...your own children will be affected of that...is this set of things that is bringing discrimination inside the family.
Celestin: A tradition is more powerful...harmful than what we are speaking it.
 325 **Paul:** All right! It's true, but there is somebody who is powerful than the tradition.
Sylvester: Uuuuhh...
Paul: There is, and who is that person?
Sylvester: God!
Paul: It's God!
 330 **Sylvester:** Honour him and do not lose your tradition...honour, no! Not killing.
Paul: We are not refusing, Grand Frere. We are not refusing the tradition...I don't...you know, the Bible...the Bible is eh...let us come back to the Bible, is written out of the tradition.
Sylvester: No wait...hold on.
Paul: Uhum!
 335 **Sylvester:** There is still a question I was expecting you...I was expecting you to answer...I was expecting you to answer... ask... and you didn't ask.
Paul: Uhum! And...
Sylvester: No Wait Celestin, wait, I will explain it... if this nkeng has not been tome, what can happen next? And if this keng...it has tome...now you have a good energy to visit us...
 340 **Paul:** Uhum!
Sylvester: To share a word with us...
Paul: Uhum.
Sylvester: We thank God.
Paul: Uhum!

²⁸⁴ Tome here means to implant

345 **Sylvester:** And God said all men don't forget their tradition. Respect your tradition.
Paul: Uhum!
Sylvester: Where you come from, you must go back, and do that activities...
Celestin: And do that activities but don't kill.
Paul: Uhum!

350 **Sylvester:** No, not going to that house of darken to go and kill someone, it's for your goodness.
Paul: Uhum.
Sylvester: It's a sacrifice. Do it...It's a sacrifice that God himself, He himself review...He is among us here, we are not seeing him...he put it...why He put it? Because he the one...He is the one that create us and put all these...He is the one! Ok Wait! Why is it that we have our own end of year to go and do twins tradition. Why? You could have ask us this question.
Paul: Uhum!
Sylvester: You could have ask me this question.
Paul: Uhum!

355 **Sylvester:** Why? It's because if we don't do it, one of us can fall down here and die all because of all that.
Paul: Brother...
Sylvester: It's because of all that.
Paul: Do you not think that it is some...it is some eeh...some way to frighten you that that can take you away since everybody is afraid of death, that you must do it, if you don't do it you will die?

365 **Sylvester:** Eh-eh, do you think a Pastor is not going to a ngambe house? You sit there and you tell no! You sit there and tell me no.
Paul: OK!
Sylvester: Do you not think a Pastor is not going to a ngambe house?
Celestin: My brother, can you allow me to say this? Can you people allow me to explain? Can you people allow me to...?

370 **Paul:** No came, we are still discussing.
Celestin: Can you people allow me the room to go ahead?
Paul: Yea, you can talk.
Celestin: Can you people allow me to go ahead, please, if I be wrong here please you people forgive me here because I just came in a few minutes and I heard you people discussing a very sweet intelligent there are ways we learn as I can put it, this civilization going through...

375 **Sylvester:** It's a project.
Celestin: culture, and to in future our lives by knowing Kejem kekwo culture as I can said...
Paul: Uhum!

380 **Celestin:** Kejem kekwo, not Big Babanki.
Paul: Yea!
Celestin: Big Babanki is not our fore fathers who keep this name, who come out with this name... Kejem kekwo is the foundation of where we have settled in Oku—that's Jikejem.
Paul: Uhum!

385 **Celestin:** Then when we turn to...eem...when we turn to Kom, we put it Njine kejem...
Paul: Uhum!
Celestin: So that's the difference between...ok, come back to our generation, what we was to put together by progression...
Paul: Uhum!

390 **Celestin:** Is that I have my father, not the real born father, but the father that is relating in my father's...
Paul: Hum! Hum! Hum!
Celestin: Bla-bla...
Paul: Yea! Yea!

395 **Celestin:** well, let's take it that way.
Paul: Yea!
Celestin: Coming back home, this father is a reverend Pastor...
Paul: Oh, Fine!

400 **Celestin:** He has been for a chair for a couple of years.
Paul: Uhum!
Celestin: And served that as a man of God for a past of...years and years.
Paul: Uhum!
Celestin: Ok! He went to United States.
Sylvester: I will like to tape your voice... I will like to tape your voice...

405 **Celestin:** Go ahead... You can't do it, by the grace of God, you can do it... this is a phone...if you don't know how to manipulate, you can fumble.
Paul: Ehe!
(Interruption from Sylvester trying to use the hand set.)
Paul: (Unclear)
410 **Celestin:** (Unclear)
Paul: Yea! The fore fathers...eeh what did he...
Celestin: Yes! I said, I have one of my father that he is relating with my own born fathering the family...a father inside my father's...
Paul: Family...
415 **Celestin:** Family...
Paul: Yea!
Celestin: He is a pastor, he has been serving this of a man of God work for about a few of years, a couple of years.
Paul: Uhum!
420 **Celestin:** As can... I can put...
Paul: Uhum!
Celestin: He went to America to review his job right there as a pastor.
Paul: Uhum!
Celestin: Then he came back and started to preach...
425 **Paul:** Uhum.
Celestin: From town to town...
Paul: Yea!
Celestin: One day, he started to come annoy with these our culture ways of things that we just come across by putting it right now to understand.
430 **Paul:** Uhum!
Celestin: He was kick[ing] against...he kick[ing] against everything and absolutely nothing to be found inside his father's... culture.
Paul: Yea!
Celestin: As I can say...
435 **Paul:** Yea!
Celestin: His father's compound...
Paul: Yea!
Celestin: Right there he is the next of kings [kin]...next of king [kin] again...
Paul: Uhum!
440 **Celestin:** To his father's resident...he has to put his next of king [kin] to that... his father that he is the next of kings [kin] today and that...now write that father's...that his born father's died before coming to be this next of kings [kin] for today so that when he died, they would then put his next of king [kin]...I think you get it?
Paul: Yah! I am getting it.
445 **Celestin:** Sure! Sure good, ok right there these certain things of our culture come to hock hand...
Paul: Laughs...
Celestin: He became mad.
Sylvester: Crazy!
Celestin: Crazy! One day he say my father on his way, my father farther says 'please, look, we are
450 **Sylvester:** It is good to understand some certain standards not to die because of shame...do you really know that this is what comes to reveal to you. You can't do otherwise...rather than to keep quiet and die, you must do it to succeed.
Paul: Uhum!
Celestin: They are not asking you to come, but they are telling you to solve the matter that is not
455 correct inside your family...
Paul: Oh Yea!
Celestin: Therefore, this father hesitate[d] and wanted to get missing, just to die...he found himself inside a culture house... traditional house as I can say. He cried that die, he put that next of king [kin], everything of his become truthful as we pray...he is a pastor, her sister put to birth four good twins
460 at once...definitely, her nephew got marriage, and put to birth twins...his own born child daughter put to birth twins in United States and then they leave Cameroon to United States to eat²⁸⁵ that born house of that...

²⁸⁵ Eat here means to celebrate. It is a transliteration from the mother tongue.

Paul: Of those twins...of those twins.

465 **Celestin:** Definitely, you may think of present and forget the past, and therefore, that is where your die will come from because while you thinking for today, you never think for your future of years ago, years ago. Do you think the people that create you was a fool to do all these? Why are you neglecting? Why is it that the Pastor himself could not hesitate... hesitate and there he is. Where is he right now?

Paul: Ok! L-l-let...

470 **Celestin:** Where is he right now? He is a next of king [kin] and he was insisting not to do it and he do it by seeing what comes over him...why is it that he was a man of God and he did not...he's enough to do it.

Paul: Eem!

Celestin: And to die! And to die on shame...why?

475 **Paul:** Alright, alright, that is why I said, this is...it is a very good testimony.

Celestin: He said that 'I will never found myself in a tradition house, and definitely, he did...they saw him there...in the morning right...early in the morning, he was the first person to apologize...that man of God...

Paul: You know...

480 **Celestin:** That man had his Bible.

Paul: Hummm!

Celestin: So today, the future of today has change because Adeline's father, which is Adeline's father...do you see?

Paul: (Unclear)

485 **Celestin:** Adeline's father create by God...by giving him this...this...this...tradition medicine to serve the generation of circumstances.

Paul: I thank you very much...

Celestin: Wait! If I may...if I may go wrong here as I am leaving this house of my sister, God should not allow me to succeed on whatever...

490 **Paul:** NO! No! NO! No! It's a testimony you are giving...it's a testimony...

Celestin: If I am lying here...

Paul: Uhum!

Celestin: This father is a very good father...may I say it... if I may say it, it's just simply because for this our future today, people are bribing people to do many evil things that you have not prayed on it...

495 **Paul:** Yeah! Eeh, I want to give you a bit of... I want to give you a bit of testimony concerning eeh!

Celestin: They would give you...They would give you money to go and kill eh! Eh! Eh! Sister Delphine...

Paul: Uhum!

500 **Celestin:** Sister Ernestinee...

Paul: Uhum!

Celestin: Sister Susan...Why? Why? Why?

Paul: Ok! It's True...I have heard some testimony about Pa right? It's Pa Nyamte all of you are talking about isn't it?

505 **Sylvester:** Pa Nyamte we are talking...

Paul: I want to tell you...that...we are not refusing tradition right? God has said all the herbs he has created are good for healing...and everybody has his gift...and there are people who are being chosen to do...to cut grasses and give to others and they eat and they got...they get well.

Celestin: Exactly!

510 **Paul:** We don't refuse that! We don't refuse that! We don't refuse that but I have my stand, my stand and you have your stand right?

Celestin: Sure!

Paul: I have my stand my stand and you have your stand. And let me tell you; there are many things that we, because we are not able to see that... we argue.

515 **Celestin:** We could see...the others see!

Paul: Ok, for example, I see other things that you may not see, and you see things that I cannot see.

Celestin: I cannot see! Good!

Paul: But I want to tell you that there is one person that if he says no, all of us will not see...will not do anything...we will not do it, and it is ...God who is in heaven.

520 **Celestin:** Weeh! Why it that we happen to...Why is it that we talk? Please! Answer my questions.

Paul: Pa had a gift of... Pa had a gift of healing people...cutting traditional herbs and healing people...he got that gift...he had...he got that gift...by the way, I am not refusing that gift. But an

issue all of us are addressing here brothers are let us be looking as those things that they pass behind—
 525 earthly people pass behind, to kill us because we have not performed some duties or some traditional
 rights. We know that everything on a context, and the context is tradition.
Celestin: Therefore that's two gods that you wanted create...
Paul: No! Listen...listen...
Celestin: I wonder why you know about two gods, or you know about one God?
Paul: I know about one God...
 530 **Celestin:** Then why are you? I do know about one God.
Paul: Alright!
Celestin: Because he is the one that put all those things.
Paul: Good! Eeh sit on the ground...
Celestin: If Satan tempts you... If Satan tempts you...
 535 **Paul:** Uhum!
Celestin: Then you do evil things.
Paul: Good! Now we are coming...we are coming...but do you know that evil exists behind our
 tradition?
Celestin: Why...if you lose...if you lose the respect not to understand, then evil will enter you...
 540 **Paul:** No I am asking that do evil...
Celestin: No, I know.
Paul: Ok! You know...that is what I want us now to know...to understand that evil exists...
Celestin: What church have you attended?²⁸⁶
Paul: I am a Baptist.
 545 **Celestin:** A Baptist?
Paul: Yea.
Celestin: Thank God.
Paul: But it's not the church that will take us to heaven. But it is knowing Jesus Christ...
Celestin: A believe [belief]...to know that somebody exists.
 550 **Paul:** Is to know Jesus Christ as our personal saviour and Lord. So that is what we are talking
 here...that's what we mean here, right? Everything is taken in a context, right? The Bible is written
 in the Jewish context and the Jewish culture and we need to transcribe those...that tradition...let me
 call it the Jewish tradition right? We need to transcribe that tradition, and we look at those things
 which are not suitable to us to keep...away from those things...are you getting me? For example...
 555 **Celestin:** I understand, I will ask you.
Paul: Let us came, let us came, let us came...if they come to bury you today...if the Fon dies, and
 they say they need giant people to bury with the Fon, and they come to catch you to go bury with the
 Fon alive, Will you be happy?
Celestin: That's culture.
 560 **Paul:** Will you...no! The question is 'will you be happy?'
Celestin: No, I will not be happy.
Paul: Is the culture now fair?
Celestin: Ok, Is the culture now fair? Ok!
Paul: No! I am just asking...lets reason like young men.
 565 **Celestin:** It's coming out from our fore fathers that they do...they did.
Paul: Uhum!
Celestin: From the Banso clan, and we heard that they buried two male and men, on his burial...on
 his burial...that was a tradition...
Paul: Yea!
 570 **Celestin:** and you cannot change it.
Paul: I am asking 'is that tradition fair?'
Celestin: No wait...it's fair for...it's those who created it its fair...its fair.
Paul: He! Be! He! Brothers, I don't think it's fair...
Celestin: It's fair.
 575 **Paul:** The Bible says 'do not kill a soul created by me'.
Celestin: Why they do it?
Sylvester: Why?
Paul: (Unclear)
Sylvester: As their own development...it's their future.
 580 **Celestin:** If they don't do it, they will see...they will see...

²⁸⁶ Challenge to **Paul's** religious acts

Paul: So if you are the one to be taken to go and [be] kill [ed], you will be happy, isn't it?
Paul: So if you are the one to be taken to be killed. Will you be happy...you be happy isn't it...?
Celestin: I cannot do otherwise...if I die today, not me die tomorrow...please allow the consequence on me.

585 **Paul:** Ha! Ha! Ha!
Paul: that is the issue we are talking.
Celestin: Let me ...let me...
Paul: Let us address evil to be evil!
Celestin: Let me abind it...let me ...abind it...will you kill me today not tomorrow you will still kill me...

590 **Paul:** We are reasoning our own level...
Celestin: And you will have the consequence...
Paul: Hum!
Celestin: if you kill me...

595 **Sylvester:** ...father will give you more detail...
Paul: Uhum!
Sylvester: you know the detail from me now and I cannot unable to give you that one.
Paul: I know...I am saying it that brother, let us reason it in our level...I mean in our level—our age level...each level...

600 **Celestin:** Definitely what do you really want us to really put in consideration to understand it?
Paul: At our level...our level...
Celestin: What do you really...do you really want us to do? Right now it has been fair.
Sylvester: Celestin...Celestin...Celestin...
Celestin: It has been fair right there...

605 **Paul:** Yes!
Celestin: Right there we are sitting here to only talk of the past and to put it in present tense, and this is our own ways of reasoning of which it has been fair...ok right then let me ask...what are we going to do right here because it has been too late of what we are saying...they have already been doing it, and they grew over it...

610 **Paul:** Uhum!
Celestin: There is nothing to stop without doing and right here we are sitting, we are just talking on our own.
Sylvester: On our own behalf...

615 **Celestin:** Although we believe that it is not fair for us to do certain things...that God has not created.
Paul: Uhum!
Celestin: If I may wrong, I have been born again...I am born again in Presbyterian Church and I have been Baptized, take my cognition...and I am a member again also to be born again in so many aspects...but to sit here and focus sense into one group form rule that our forefathers and forefather before this future of today *exclaims!* We sit here talking about our future of tradition right there...
620 why is it that is not unfair concern and that they are doing it? It's fair right there...of which absolutely...nothing is not unfair for us to sit here and see them doing it... Ok, here we are just talking on our own...person like me...how are we going to do? Are we going to cleanse the place it has been there?
Paul: Oh! That's what I want us to reason now...

625 **Celestin:** Ooh! Come back to me... Come back to me...because when you are just talking, you talk as if you have sense or you have never...or people are just blindly...I do my own ways of reasoning...God create this future of today of his own good as I can say stories...we don't know God—we don't know God, and we don't know where he is right now...he can be found amongst us for this moment...and talk sense and let us reason...let us reason and see that it has been fair and give that honour...that respect...that abomination to him...he will solve it...
630 **Paul:** Amen!
Celestin: I don't see anything of us messing, killing, talking, we would not do it unless him...
Paul: Brother I am very, very! Very! Happy with your conclusion you've come... He's come with the conclusion.

635 **Celestin:** Laughs...
Paul: You know, like an age men...
Celestin: I am trying... I am trying to succeed and to say whatsoever we talk...we knows we talk good...if there can be so many of us to this kind of sensitive ways of ambition of today this morning, I will be very! Very! Happy...and I congratulate us that for sitting and talking whatsoever is not

640 unbelievable for us to say what...because if we go into activities to this our future of today, this generation have been spoiled...isn't it?
Paul: Yea!
Celestin: Am my right?
Paul: No!

645 **Celestin:** Ok!
Paul: You are not...
Celestin: Ok...for today, people are going to the United States to have a daily bread because of what? Can you definitely proof to me in this matter why are we sitting here talking of something that could have made us to grow inside this church...inside honours of powers of God...why are we deserve miracles of which we do not? Why are we seeing all these? Is it fair for us to sit here and still talk...we could have gone in school...this is another ways of coming back home to talk and to continue talk...talk...and you would not...and you would not even make it...you would not...it has been spoiled...let us leave that position to spoil because when they say two cocoyam or three cocoyam spoiled, all that farm has spoiled.

650 **Paul:** Ok! I want us to make a change...
Sylvester: Come back! Come back! We will not make a change...we will settle all these before make a change...leave me say...today, why is it that today, our generation could not sit in this country and make that money, come out with good ambitions of using that money...solving our problems, or creating universities, and be firm in this country? Why is it that they have gone out country to find a daily bread? Why is it we cannot make in this country? Is it...is it in this country of Cameroon of today...Cameroon is not having money...if I am foolish than say all these? Because I wanted to come with good faculty...faculties.

660 **Celestin:** Can I say something?
Sylvester: You may say.

665 **Celestin:** Ok! You might have that now we were not talking about the bounty of Cameroon.
Sylvester: Eh! Eh!
Paul: We are coming back to our gods.
It's our god...its God...without God we cannot sit here and talk.

670 **Celestin:** I know.
Paul: I am coming back in the village of Babanki.

The Dialogue of Ambola David and a Pa from Kom

- David:** Yeah Good morning Pa.
PA: Good Morning!
David: I understand that you are really advanced in age and you have experienced a lot of Kom culture and the beliefs and for that reason, I think you can help me with a better understanding of some beliefs and how we can defend them.
- 5
PA: Ehh, yes! Actually I am out of age. I am actually entering into my seventies and I believe that I can answer a few...a few questions from what you have...if not there is one elderly man in our village named Tomuh Tang who can speak about Kom beliefs better than myself.
David: OK!
- 10
PA: ...and I can...now I am sure that I can give you're a few that I know.
David: Ok! In that case we go ahead and we see what we can be able to have...there is one thing that I seem to see, that when a Kom man builds a house, there is always a ceremony that he does around the house before it qualifies that a corpse can be buried there.
PA: Yes! By Kom culture, you have many stages to be qualified as a full-integrated citizen. When you first build, you have certain things to perform, and when all these things are performed, you the owner of the compound becomes a full honoured citizen where you live. These things are...first of all you have to throw wine in that your compound.
David: Ok!
- 15
PA: The throwing of wine...we call it 'throw of wine'
David: That really seems to be what I am talking about.
PA: Yes! Throw of wine...this throw of wine consist of...you just give a fowl.
David: Yeah!
PA: Wine...for people to drink.
David: Yes!
- 20
PA: And in these modern times, you must give at least 40 salts...forty bags of salt to the people and when they participate in these things, then you are through with the throwing of wine, and then after that, a village head will give you a cup...that is to show that this cup...you can transfer it to a child...can give it to your child.
David: Ok!
- 25
PA: And then there when he is given the cup, he has already stood at the door and spoken, and said many things...he calls...he will call the ancestors of the place and this fowl which was given, the ancestors are participating...that's to show that this fowl...you have sacrificed this fowl for the ancestors.
David: OK!
- 30
PA: And we have a belief that when this one is thrown, the ancestors are there to bless you and the place and when the place is blessed, then you have a fine sleep in that place...
David: Alright!
PA: There you are integrated into the society of being able to bury somebody in your compound.
- 35
David: OK!
David: Now, when the village head stands at the door to speak like you have said...he is speaking to the ancestors or to the living people? He is speaking to the ancestors, for the hearing of those still living.
David: OK!
- 40
PA: That's to say, you invoke the spirit of the ancestors to prove to them that somebody is being integrated into the society which they have lived in.
David: Yea!
PA: And this, it is transferred to the rest people who are still living, then they have now a belief that this man if fit to bury somebody in his compound.
- 45
David: OK!
PA: That is their understanding.
David: Yea! It actually means it is the compound that is fit to receive a ...
PA: A corpse...a corpse for burial...
David: Because it looks like if the person moves from there, goes and builds another compound, he will have to do the same thing.
- 50
55

PA: If he moves and builds a different compound, that means he has already negotiated himself into that society. When he builds a new compound, those things will not happen again, because it had happened where he had first built a house.

60 **David:** OK! Does it mean that if he has to bury a corpse in the next compound he has built, he will not have to...?

PA: He will not have to...

David: ...do the ceremony again?

PA: No, he will not have to do it again, since he is already a member of that society.

65 **David:** OK!

PA: Yes we believe that it is a society.

David: OK!

PA: You do it once, not twice.

David: OK!

70 **PA:** Even if you can built twenty houses—twenty compounds, after you have done...gone through that society, you are a member...you are free wherever you move for a new building.

David: OK. Yea, but you talk about becoming a member of the society, it really means becoming a Kom man because....

PA: Yes a Kom man.

75 **David:** ...because it is not a sect of the Kom people but it is really a practice by all the Kom people...

PA: By all the Kom people...when you are negotiated into that particular ceremony...

David: Yes!

PA: Then you become a member of the society wherever you are and you are honoured. It is known that you are a member of eeh Fimang, you are a member of ehh...you are a member of a compound...you are a compound head.

80 **David:** OK! Thank you...

PA: That's your dignity.

David: And now, Eemm...you talked about the village heads talking to the ancestors. What are some of the things that are really said?

85 **PA:** Well...Eehh...it depends...it depends in your understanding...how you know.

David: OK!

PA: When you start, for example myself when I start, I think of those first people who first build in this place...that is the original people. Like here, I am in the compound has been succeeded by many! Many people. I first of all call the first man who first build this compound, then talk to him...and then those who followed him, they followed him in that line. And then the man who eeh who started this village, is the first man that you name and then from there you move to some important people who lived in this village, and then you name them...that's to say all of them, they are participating in the fowl which is being killed, and participating on the mimboo or wine which is to be thrown.

95 **David:** Ok!

PA: Yes.

David: Thank you...so can we imply from here that the Kom man believes that the dead are still living?

100 **PA:** They believe that the dead are living—really they believe that the dead are living because they will always think of them and always think of their importance...what they did...because what they did is more important—is what we...because we live on what the people started and it is there that we have more knowledge to develop our own...but we develop from them and that is why we cannot forget them...we cannot throw them behind, though they are not really living, we believe that they are living because what they did, we are still seeing...

105 **David:** OK!

PA: Yes!

David: And now that they participate in that ceremony also implies that they are also involved in our daily lives...

110 **PA:** Yes! That is we...when we feel that they are participating, that is when we feel that we are for them because we live in a place which ??? by them. And so when we call their names, they will have the ??? that belief that we are being strong and that they are there.

David: So it is like the Kom man does not feel safe when he does not feel connected to the ancestors?

115 **PA:** Exactly! Exactly! Cannot because we believe that they are our foundation. So we still give .allegiance to them...yes to those that started everything before we came and saw. OK!

David: Now if the Kom man must do this ceremony before a corpse is buried in a place. How does this ceremony relate to the sacrifices that are given to the ancestors? Is it that a place has to qualify for...the compound has to qualify in a particular way for ancestral worship to be done there? For example the sacrifices of the goats and the chickens that is usually done during death celebrations?

120 **PA:** Yes! When you do these things, we really have the belief that we have done something that ought to have been done because our ancestors lived by those things.

David: OK!

125 **PA:** Lived by such beliefs, and when we do them, we believe that we have done something. And when we have the belief that we have done something, they will feel eeh... happy will feel we have integrated ourselves into our culture.

David: OK!

PA: Yes!

130 **David:** Now, when you have these beliefs, do you in your culture have knowledge of God who is supposed to be the creator of all things?

PA: Yes! We do these things...some of us who are Christians, we first pray, and then we get into our culture...we know that the living God is different from our ancestors and because the living God is the god for our ancestors, and a god for us who are still living. So we still have that belief that God is there and we still have that belief that our ancestors which were created by God, and they left according to God's will, they are there and we cannot always forget them.

135 **David:** So eeh...when somebody dies, somebody is already an ancestor—the person already died does the person have any power to bless or to curse anybody who is alive?

PA: We have a belief like that—some misfortune can happen. And that is why sometimes, when you have a compound like that and you initiate yourself, then you are free to celebrate the death of your late mothers or you late fathers in that particular compound...that because we have a belief that if you initiate yourself, into that group and fails to do those things, it means that you have failed to honour your late father or your late uncle or your late mother. And once when you have done the celebration, then you live happily with the belief that you have done everything to please your ancestors.

140 **David:** So you are saying that these sacrifices and the death celebrations that are done are done essentially to please or to appease the ancestors...

PA: Exactly...that's it...

David: Eeh...which ...eeh on the other hand could seem to say that these things are done because of fear that if we don't do them, something is going to happen, not necessarily because...just because of love and reverence for the...

150 **PA:** It is not only because of fear—it is what we have inculcated from our ancestors, that this is what should be usually done.

David: Now, knowing that God exists and knowing that we have to do these sacrifices to please the ancestors. What actually is the relationship—according to the Kom man's mind, what is the relationship between God the creator and the ancestors.

155 **PA:** Well the relationship there eeh...is that ...we believe that God is there---the almighty. We ourselves are creators of God...

David: Maybe creations?

PA: Yes...created by God

160 **David:** OK!

PA: And we live on this earth and do our own things as we wish meanwhile at the same time, honouring God as our father.

David: Yes!

PA: And we cannot live without those things because before all of us were Christians—became Christians, our culture had been first and we must not leave our culture and only follow one thing. We believe that God is there, and we believe that we have our culture.

165 **David:** OK!

PA: Yes!

David: OK!

170 **PA:** So we...

David: So you are saying that these ceremonies that are done and the belief that we have to appease our ancestors is just our culture...

PA: Is just our culture.

David: OK!

175 **PA:** Is just our culture.

David: Meaning that somebody can practice all these things and still be a Christian.

PA: Yes! According to us, it is just a way of living, and by living, we are still Christians, we are still following Christ and we are still moving the way our ancestors moved.

180 **David:** OK! Now the Bible talks about a separation that exists between the dead and the living—showing that when somebody dies, he does not anymore have anything to do with the living. Maybe you who are both a Kom man and a Christian know about this passage in the Bible where this rich man dies in the Bible and he is wishing that he could come back and tell his people what happens in the next world. Have you come across this passage?

185 **PA:** Yes! We...we know that there is a separation between the living and the dead and you cannot forget somebody completely where you have lived with him.

David: Yea!

PA: You cannot forget somebody completely where he was your grandmother...where he was your grandfather...where he was your father and died. It is only remembrance—not really that man can...a dead man can come back and do anything. It just remember that comes into our minds that we must remember somebody who lived sometimes and died, knowing that God is there living...but somebody have lived with you and he is away, you always remember him.

190 **David:** Ok! I must appreciate all this information and even your analysis of the things that happen. However, there is something that I am not able to grasp very well here because we have already established that the sacrifices are done to appease the ancestors so that we can sleep well—so that we can live happy lives and at the same time we also believe within the same setting that these ceremonies are only done as a way of remembering our ancestors. This bothers...

195 **PA:** Yea!

David: Me a bit... Can you be consistent?

200 **PA:** Here, we understand that two cultures have come together...two cultures...that is Christianity and our local culture, and Christianity is far better than those cultures, because in some places, some people who have gone so much into the Bible, they have forgotten this...but those of us who are in places like this where many can run to us and say 'my child is sick because this and this...because he has not done this' I must have to remember those things, in order for safety--in order to make people believe that because he has ran to me and I have instructed him to go do this, he will be well meanwhile really as the Bible is saying, it is not quit true. That is what I know.

205 **David:** So you mean...when you say in places like this, you mean in a place...

PA: Yes in a compound like this where many grandsons leave all over and they can come for consultation and many other things. So I believe that when they come and I say ok! Go and cry die and cry die, it means that psychologically, when he does that he will feel that he is completely well because he has done that.

David: OK!

PA: Yes that is a belief—another belief.

215 **David:** Alright, so you mean that you also see these inconsistencies, however, you uphold this sacrificial system because it gives a psychological help.

PA: Yes!

David: To people who believe in it?

PA: Exactly.

220 **David:** Alright, thank you very much.

PA: Thank you too.

David: Then I eeh...I may want to ask you for a favour to give me another few minutes. Can I ask you about what the Kom man calls *Ikeng*? There is a certain ceremony that is done around the house with eyes painted around it. Eh, would you want us to talk a little about that?

225 **PA:** Yes! I have them in this compound, dotted in all the houses and to me as a Christian, whenever my sister comes to do that, I am there—not there because I think that it can do anything to me...just to pretend that since I am a Christian, I cannot throw their way of life.

David: Ok!

230 **PA:** It is there. But first of all those of them who do not know God, they believe that it was their god but to those of us who are seeing it as mere—mere eeh...mere tactics.

David: Yea!

PA: We hold that those things are just too...to psychologically to make people feel that when you do it, they are ok.

235 **David:** Yea! You seem to be talking with...you are both a Kom mam...a traditional Kom man, and an enlightened person. So you are able to interpret these things and give psychological significance to it.

PA: Yes!

240 **David:** Do you think that people in Kom who have not been educated like yourself...who have not been exposed to the external world has this understanding that this thing only has a psychological significance?

PA: Most of them nowadays are...know that. But our ancestors didn't know... They did not know?

David: Yea.

245 **PA:** thought that whenever they are sick and they consult that pot, they will become well...They and some of them, when they did that, some of them became well because they were to be well and they just believe that they are well because they have done that...they have sat near the pot. That is what I reason. They have a belief...complete belief on such things.

David: Now do you mean that there is nothing supernatural in these practices? Do you mean that there is no power behind it?

250 **PA:** No! There is no power. The power is only the spirit of doing it...the spirit of doing it because it is a thing we inculcated from other people and we do not want just to throw them away. I still remember when the church was entering into Njine Kom. Those things were taken and thrown, some were buried, some were carried to different villages where the church had not reached, and now they are going back to it just as a pleasure...just to maintain their culture.

255 **David:** They just believe that they are maintaining their culture and that is what I believe that doing such things, we are just maintaining our culture, not because they have super power...know that God is the super power.

Ok. And the church came in to Njine Kom I think around the 1920s.

David: 1920.

260 **PA:** And after this long time, people are going back to pick up? Believing that they have thrown their culture.

David: I seem to have heard a good number of people talked about who are...some people are insane and different people have gone into different difficulties and people think that they ran into these difficulties in life because they threw away these things.

265 **PA:** Yes!

David: What do you think?

PA: It is just a belief... It is just a belief that because I threw my father's juju, that is why my child has died...

David: Yea!

270 **PA:** But it is not true...

David: Ok!

PA: It is not quite true.

David: We are therefore coming back to that conclusion again that actually, there is the belief that... there is the belief in people that one has to do these things to be saved.

275 **PA:** Yes. To be saved from his people...

David: To be saved from his ancestors and at the same time there is a belief in the enlightened Kom man that these things only give a psychological solution to the people's solutions—it does not really have a spiritual significance?

PA: Exactly!

280 **David:** OK! Now that it is only a psychological thing we could be Christians without necessarily throwing away our culture but by transforming our culture, helping our people to worship God the way the Bible requires them to worship, without necessarily giving the sacrifices. Maybe there is a ceremony that used to be done and people were given food to eat then that aspect of it that has to do with giving sacrifices to the dead is omitted but the food that was given to people is given and the people do the rest of the ceremony that does not really give worship to the ancestors. How do you think?

285 **PA:** Well it is true that eeh...there are certain things that we do in the church which are not Biblical...like singing in Kom, singing in Mungaka, singing in Aghem...all these are not from...the songs are not from the Bible. We form in order to sing in our own language, to believe that we have a language which can actually be sung in a church...

290 **David:** Yea!

PA: But they are not songs that come from the Bible.

David: OK!

295 **PA:** So there are certain things that we do which we can still do them in the church and they will not harm the church. We can still do these sacrifices with the belief that we want to keep our culture, and maintaining our culture and not that we are doing them because we are not Christians. I know that killing a fowl is not a bad thing to kill a fowl. Is not a bad thing because when we kill the fowl, we eat it—we just eat it. Sometimes we make some fufu, we call achu.

300 **David:** Yea!
PA: And then go under a shrine and pit it there. When rats eat, we just believe that our ancestors have eaten and when we do that knowing that God is there.

305 **David:** Yea!
PA: When we do that, we know that we have actually...we have maintain our culture, meanwhile, those things, really speaking, they are nothing—they do nothing. But when you leave them and still have the belief that you have not done this, then psychologically, you feel ill...
David: Ok!
PA: You feel ill.
David: Yea!

310 **PA:** And then when you feel ill, and consult your sorcerer, he says ‘you forgot something there from doing, then you run there. When you do it, psychologically, you become well but knowing that you can die at any time because God has time for everybody.
David: Ok!

315 **PA:** Yes! We just want to maintain our culture because man from Wum knows his own culture, man from Kom knows his own culture. A man from...people from town...sometimes when you come together, they forget their culture but meanwhile when you are at home, you still remember what your father was doing and what your mother used to do.
David: When I look at the way you are dressed now, it looks quite beautiful to me. This is an expression of our culture. That is—this is the expression of Kom culture, and as you said, we sit in the church in Kom that is worshiping God in our own cultural tongues, which means really receiving the word of God in our own cups...eeh, however, when you look closely, you will see that our culture does not envelope all of our beliefs.
PA: Exactly!
David: The things we do constitute our culture but the beliefs that we have actually constitute our religions.

320 **PA:** Yes!
David: And if we have a religion, and we put it together with Christianity, it’s like we are trying to have two religions at the same time...however, the Bible has said that...Jesus has said in the Bible that He is the way, the truth and the...
PA: the light...
David: ...the life, and that no one comes to the father except through him, which means that we cannot go to God through any other religion if God is the true God who created the universe.
PA: Yes! We are doing this...we are not doing this because we want to go somewhere...
David: Yea!

325 **PA:** We are doing this to maintain our culture, but the way to go to God is through Jesus.
David: Yea,
PA: Yes! So we are not doing this maintaining our...keeping our culture because we want to go somewhere. We are just maintaining our culture to prove that we have lived with a culture...and that Christ came...before Christ came, we had a culture, and that we maintain our culture, and then follow Christ.

330 **David:** Ok!
PA: Yes!
David: Thank you very much, it has been a good time talking with you and you have given quit some relevant information that I think it’s going to be helpful in answering the questions I had in my mind. If in the near future I have other questions, I may have to come back to you.
PA: Thank you ...
David: Thank you...
PA: I will be ready...I will be ready.
David: Alright.

335 **PA:** Though I know that I may not give you all your answers but sometimes we may go through.
David: Ok!
PA: Yes!

355

David: At least this paves the way for me to be able to go ahead with some other things.

PA: Thank you.

David: Thank you

Appendix Three: Interviews with Apologists

Interview with Agbor Cyprian 25 June 2008

Interviewer: Now, Cyprian, today is the 25 of June 2008. We are here at Kumba. And, uh, we had a conversation some months ago actually, where we spoke about the issue of questioning or questions within a cultural context and you responded to me that within the culture permission must be given or permission is given to ask questions. Would you explain what you mean by that?

5 **Cyprian:** Yeah, I want to talk about the fact that you need permission for you to ask questions within the cultural setting or context. I refer to the fact that...uh children or younger people according to the culture do not have the kind of authority, or right, or power that the older people have. What I mean is that truth is in the hands of the older people and so you... as a young person or as a child you can really impose an idea or you can't really project an idea...personal idea except that you just need to accept that which is laid down by the older people and if you have to maybe question what is already there you need to kind of follow...uh...a kind of procedure. That's when I talk about the fact that you need to ask for permission, you need permission to ask any kind of question.

Interviewer: There are different kinds of questions. Does the culture make a difference between a...uh...a question that is simply a fact finding question or a question that is a challenging question?

15 **Cyprian:** Generally, within the culture it is hard to differentiate the two. Especially that information... general information, whether facts or what is in the hands of the elderly. What I mean is that it is the elderly or the father that has the right to tell you that this is wrong and that this is right, this is what is and this what is not. This is the way the culture has laid down things. And so whether you have an idea, whether you think the right is not right maybe for some reasons you can hardly challenge the truth that is already laid down or presented by the elderly.

20 **Interviewer:** Uh...Let's ask it another way. There's a question that is aimed at explanation.

Cyprian: Okay.

Interviewer: Okay. How does the culture as you know it, and you're from the southwest. (We'll talk about that in a minute.) How does the culture as you know it handle the issue of explanation?

25 **Cyprian:** When it comes to the issue of explanation, the culture do, or does, creates avenue(4:00) where some kind of stories, some kind of tales, where from the tales you can get some kind of explanation as to why things are the way they are. That's exactly, that's the way the culture handles it....

Interviewer:...the way the culture handles it...So, for you to ask an older person why you believe this or why is this true...uh...does not, as we say, fly. It is not normally accepted.

30 **Cyprian:** Yes, because generally they might not even tell you why they do believe that. They just tell you that is how it has been and that is what should be followed.

Interviewer: Now, uh...let's talk for just a few minutes about you. Your full name is Agbor Cyprian...Besong.

Cyprian: ...Besong Cyprian...

35 **Interviewer:** ...Besong Cyprian. I leave off the middle one. You are how old?

Cyprian: I'm thirty years old.

Interviewer: And you are from...

Cyprian: Uh...Minu...from a small village about fourteen miles away from Mamfe town, called Mokoyam. It's commonly called Smonyam. That's the very first village into Akwaya Subdivision.

40 **Interviewer:** Okay, so you are from Akwaya itself. Okay. I didn't know that. But you were reared...you were raised in what area?

Cyprian: In Fako, in Fako, that's in Limbe...Bakingi, particularly

Interviewer: When did you go to Limbe...when did you travel?

Cyprian: The age I got to Limbe? I'm.... I was about nine, ten years, nine and ten years old.

45 **Interviewer:** So you did have your first...uh... memories from out in Ako, the Akwaya area.

Cyprian: Actually I was not born down at the village. I was born down here, at...somewhere around Muyuka. That's where I was born. So all of my life I have been around the Fako division...

Interviewer: So you've never really lived in Akwaya...

Cyprian: No, I've never really lived there. I've only gone there for visits and all of....

50 **Interviewer:** Ok. Ok...Uh...Coming back to questioning. Do you know? Or was it part of your experience that you were given permission to ask questions? How... Is that...is that...done in the society?

Cyprian: Uh...Not very often. But if it becomes very necessary, it is done and uh children or younger people generally do not ask questions in public per the culture. Sometimes they will have to ask their

55 parents and sometimes the father might tell the child to ask the mother. And uh...so it's like you have to ask the question from a lower authority. And that's the way it's presented.

Interviewer: How did your father handle questions? He's been deceased now, I know. He's been dead now for how many years?

Cyprian: Uh He died 2000. So it's about eight years.

Interviewer: You were about 22 when he died.

60 **Cyprian:** Yes.

Interviewer: Ok, how did he handle question?

Cyprian: Generally, he was an intelligent man. And...uh, he use to tell me that I am too inquisitive.

Interviewer: Ah!

Cyprian: And so it's from him that I learned the word inquisitive. That made me find out what that meant.

65 And so each time I get into a finding, most of whom I hardly ask, but I go doing things to find out questions... answers for myself. And so he gets to saying that I'm too inquisitive. So by that, I will come to him sometimes...even when I have...uh...school work I come to him and then (he)...when I ask if he has to do a book work, he goes ahead and answers. Sometimes if he has to do a general information, sometimes he gives me the answer and other times he tells me to see my mother. And uh...my mother

70 will kind of give answers to the questions. But there are some of those things that he might not say anything about them and just tells you this is how it has been. That's how my father taught me. And that's why I'm teaching you this way, and that's how it is. And that's how we're supposed to take it.

Interviewer: That's how you are supposed to take it. Was he a Christian?

Cyprian: Uh He wasn't. But close to his death I shared with him and then he made a commitment. But

75 all along he used to tell me that he used to go to the Presbyterian Church, but since I was born I never saw him went to church. (Laughter)

Interviewer: Ok. Ok. It was a one-time...it was a one-time experience, maybe. I don't know.

Cyprian: Maybe. Or another thing could be that, since it was a Presbyterian Church that first went to the village, so everybody like...it was a village church. So everybody that was born in the village was kind

80 of like a member of the church...a Christian I'm sure it was from that perspective he was speaking, maybe.

Interviewer: Let's go back to questions just for a moment. Let's say you wanted, you had a question in your mind. It was burning on your mind, but you did not know...you knew you were supposed not to ask it. Ah, what would you do? How you handle a question if you could not...you've...you've already said that you would go find out for yourself. You've told me a little about that. But is there a way that you

85 within your cultural context would... uh...

Cyprian: ...Would want to find out...

Interviewer: ...Ask a question without asking a question.

Cyprian: Yeah, like I said, you being with a lower authority. And it can go in that procedure. The lower authority might not have an accurate answer...might shift to another person which is a little higher than

90 them and just like that to get to whoever the authority might be. And the other times it might be...uh...like generally (Let me take for example my house) we used to have during rainy season...my father and mother, we use to sit in the kitchen. We have a big kitchen; and so there's a fireside. And they sit by the fireside and we sit on the extension. And we are there and we roast corn and give us and they tell us stories. Now, when there have been some kind of questions and they know that at this age we start finding

95 out things about this, so they start in on stories relating to those issues. An uh, so from those stories you know you can get answers to different questions and they sometimes might tell you what the application they want you to get from the stories they give. And that's the way they do it. And if you have to find out you might really not be able ask a very straight question, but you might kind of ask it from a situation, which means you allow for a time when something happens, you know, from that situation you can now

100 maybe fit in your question...or your wondering...now the question will be like a kind of wonder... I wonder...a kind of wondering way...

Interviewer: ...a kind of wondering way, okay...That sounds interesting. So you actually create a hypothetical situation and then you wonder about this hypothetical situation?

Cyprian: Yes.

105 Now, thank you Cyprian. I think that this has been very helpful. And uh, have you found the challenge...to go to a critical way of thinking strong, or have you enjoyed the transition to moving to a more critical approach.

Cyprian: I think that I really enjoyed it and I quite appreciate it and honest I am going to pursue it. I want to be very effective in that area.

110 **Interviewer:** Thank you very much.

Interview with Agbor Walters 18.06.08 18 of June 2008

Interviewer: We have before us the scripts of his dialogue with Sons. I need for you to tell me, **Walters**, about this man named Sons. What... How did you get to know him? What's your background with him? Hmm... Describe him as a person, his age or whatever...

5 **Walters:** Sons in the first place is not his real name. Sons is just a nickname because he was delivered on a Sunday. So he is commonly called Sunny and Sons for short. Sunny is old time friend. We were friends from when we entered secondary school. That was when we were in GHSS Mamfe. We separated in 1995 when I went to Ekondo Titi And he went to Bamenda to continue High School. And then the father from there to the University of Yaoundé where he had graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Anthropology. So I just met with him in Kumba.

10 **Interviewer:** So he is in anthropology... Well what is he doing for a living right now?

Walters: He had been searching for a job in Douala, Yaoundé. He had not had one. So he came to Kumba he was working under one of his in laws who is the director of ERAT in Kumba as well as the delegate...of, I think, they call it scientific research.

Interviewer: So ERAT is what? Eh...what is he doing now in terms of his activities?

15 **Walters:** He... I think that they are carrying research...research on food crops.

Interviewer: (on food Crops)

Walters: Sometimes research on yam, rice, corn and many other things. That's how Sons earns a living

Interviewer: So you uh... you have re-established contact and uh... you (uh) you first asked the question about Bate Bisson. (Bate Bisson) Tell me, why did you ask a question about Bate Bisson?

20 **Walters:** I... I don't know about the Bisson in person but I remember when I was trying to dialogue with some people in the quarter intending find out the mystery that surrounds this (Let me call it) doctrine of reincarnation as viewed by the Manyu people ahead of the recent story of the Bate Bisson who just recently died. And so Sons, who is also Cartier boy, as I will call it a quarter guy was also expecting or assuming him to have come into contact with such information. And then my interest in asking him was such that we (I) could establish a rapport from there and we both get into research to find out whether or not these stories are true.

25 **Interviewer:** What were the stories? I think. I think you do not actually mention them explicitly. (Yeah) What were the rumour that you had heard?

30 **Walters:** He had just died in motor accident along the Douala-Yaoundé highway and was conveyed to the village (the corpse) and...and was buried. And a few days later on I heard that he had travelled to Germany. It was...it was...it was impossible for me hearing somebody who died and was buried that day in the village that he had travelled to Germany of recent. It was mischievous. And so I was just like...permit me say...it's not like...but I wanted us to get to the root of such...that kind of practices. I knew that if he must have heard he would surely say something and I would sample his belief of such things.

35 **Interviewer:** Ok, okay, so yes, for the purposes of those who are listening or are reading the transcript here just briefly mention the Manyu tradition of resurrection. What is that about? Just summarize it (sort of). You talk about during the paper but it's helpful to put it in small word.

40 **Walters:** When somebody dies, more especially in those days where mortuaries were not common the person may be embalmed for one or two days to await some prominent family members after which he will be buried and in the next few, two, three days...four days, one month, there will be rumour in town that he had resurrected. Resurrection here in quote. They saw him in a small bush maybe behind the house waiting for the family members to bring him food so he can eat and then go to wherever he had intended going.

45 **Interviewer:** Does the, does the tradition or does the idea of this (we'll call it) resurrection, uh... does it entail disturbing the grave? Do they look and see a hole and the coffin being open. How do you hear about that?

50 **Walters:** I have personally examined some graves when I hear such rumour but...there's nothing that alters from the grave. So it is a mystery, it's a mystery that I myself have hardly had an explanation into it... My quest into these dialogues was also to find out information as per the mystery that surrounds such a happening.

Interviewer: Now I'm going to ask you a question which is pretty pointed. But I think...and you can answer however. These were...I think we had an open agenda on these dialogues. How did you see this dialogue fitting into your Christian witness to Sunny?

55 **Walters:** Well...

Interviewer: Or did you? Or was it something that was just an endeavour on your own as an information-seeking, information gathering dialogue for your own purposes.

60 **Walters:** Okay, pa. The very first thing I will say is that I have personally witnessed to Sunny about Christ but without taking into account his...his...an understanding of his entire worldview. And so I presented Christ to him and he accepted Christ and I've been teaching him the Bible. That was when _____ called to me about Apologetics. (Okay) That's until when I came into contact with a course that had so many challenges that I had to go back to some of those to whom I've witnessed Christ to them to start sampling their worldviews. And uh...my interest also was not only to know from Sunny some of the things that have been happening in Manyu, but to also understand how he thinks and how he sees the world. And I discovered that though he had no wish to practice it or he might never had any trouble with his family he also had the belief that those things really happened. And...The truth is, as far as this practice is concerned it is a shameful attitude in the Manyu context in the sense that there are some people who may be proud to see it, but there are some who may not be very proud to see it in the public about their people who die and are resurrected. So it's kind of a hidden agenda. It can be happening with the family and only the members of the family really know what is really happening and just like I have found out from the field, they can be receiving money from their members from abroad, abroad here be whatever, if necessary out of the town or the village or the city in which the person was living and buried. So he can be somewhere (as per my research) working and sending money to the family where they are used for investments in sending children to school. And...uh... those who are really benefited from it will not love to stop such a practice, it's true, if at all it is literal.

75 **Interviewer:** If at all is very true. That's the theme, that's the ambiguity that I see running through, UH running through the dialogue. Uh...and the issues of whether or not this is a fiction or whether it is actual event, or these things actually happen. Now, page 2. You [He] raise the issue of somebody who was resurrected and was burnt. (Okay) And they caught him...this person who was resurrected and burnt him. Why do you think that...Is that evidence for the actual phenomenon? Do you think that Sunny sees that as an evidential foundation for resurrection? Or is he simply reflecting on what he knows?

80 **Walters:** Pa, this particular experience, it happened when I was in the village. I was in Mamfe as well as the village. I was in secondary school, then early secondary school. But the manner in which it happened is the issue at stake. Because if we explain it on the basis of the fact that the person was caught red handed, maybe in the bush or a small farm behind the house or far in the forest. It's different. But the person who came into contact with this (uh) this man say...said that he had been walking in the farm and kept his food somewhere and before he came back to eat, because it is a practice as usual in our...in our region people go to the bush with small amount of food. When they walk and they get tired they come and eat. So He came back to eat and discovered that somebody had already eaten his food. Eh well, I don't know, the assumption may be that it may be some...any, any other person. And so, immediately when he discovered that that was fufu and eru, the food was not there, he also heard... he started crying and weeping in the farm and he heard some other people from some other neighbouring farms also crying and weeping about the same issue...complaining of their water and people had been complaining about such kind of practices within the same village or villages around for a period of time, about three to four months. And so it was notorious. And...they came back to the village and have chosen the father of the boy who had died, that the son is responsible for all of those things. He had died for quite a number of months and they said he had to dig his grave. So they summoned all the villagers and they came and the grave was dug. And they remove him and he was still fresh with fufu on his hand and eru fresh. It's a visual opening.... Personally, I was not there on the day he was drugged but those who went came back with such testimonies. Uh...I was in the village but I could not transport myself to the neighbouring village to find out exactly what happened but it was reported that it was d[r]ugged, the grave was d[r]ugged, and his (corpse) his box was opened and it was fresh, not smelly and there was fufu and eru on his hands fresh.

95 **Interviewer:** So who was burnt? The corpse?

100 **Walters:** The corpse. They immediately took him to the market square and summoned; every...other person came with firewood, with kerosene with petrol and they took him into a region far into the forest and he was burnt. He was burnt. Some small, small reports stated that while he was being burnt some small creatures, sometimes a lizard who attempt running away from the heap of firewood and they kill it assuming that it is his spirit that wanted to escape or one thing or another. Yes, Pa.

110 **Interviewer:** This is an interesting question. Uh...I think that a lot of this is kind of based upon. And that is the issue of testimony. Uh...how do you as a young African intellectual and I will certainly call you that because I think you are. How do you sort out? (We use the word 'sort out') What do you think about testimony that... things that people tell you. How do you...Let's say...let's assume that some people are telling the truth and that some people (you know) they have a large imagination or it is a rumour that blows and all...Do have any way that you reason to any criteria that you have for actually determining what you think is the truth and what you think may be a rumour or tale?

120 **Walters:** There are some persons in our villages, key persons, persons may be of some dignity or authority, whom when they say something we...we easily accept it to be true. Uh...some sages in our community who witnessed to the burning of the corpse of this boy on the fire. They actually witnessed it and came back with such testimonies. And so there was room for us to believe. Cause when they came there was a small counsel summoned in all our villages. With the chief of the village, the chiefs of the villages always present. And the issue at stake was discuss how they would be handling corpses of people when they die...they will treat it so as to avoid such kinds of shameful embarrassments.

125 **Interviewer:** Okay but... We will take that as a beginning point. But did you hear directly from these people, uh...these people who are sages, these people who are the source of the account? Did you hear directly from them or did you hear through other people?

130 **Walters:** One of them was living in my father's compound in the village. He too is of late now. He was not necessarily a sage. He was like a town crier. Town crier... whenever something happens...he summons those who are living in the same compound in the village. And most often when those things happen he's always there. So he's the one who comes most often and gives the report in our own house. So we get almost ...information from him. But it's unfortunate he's already late. The junior sister of this boy who died who lived in the same compound with her in Mamfe when I was in secondary school. And I discovered that throughout when that thing happen.

135

Interview with David Ambola by Gary Stephens 26.03.08

Interviewer: We are this evening at about 6 o'clock in the evening, and in Mbingo 1 in the NW Province and I am visiting in a home with Ambola David. The date is the 26th of March 2008. David it's a pleasure to be with you after so many years.

David: The pleasure is mine...

5 **Interviewer:** It's a delight to see you prospering in ministry. David, tell me how old are you?

David: I am... I will be thirty eight in the next two weeks.

Interviewer: Thirty eight? Wow! Happy birth day in advance.

David: Thank you!

10 **Interviewer:** I won't be around to celebrate it with you...but I hope that there will be plenty of people who will celebrate. Did you grow up... where were you reared?

David: I grew up, the...my...first ten years, I spent them at different places. I spent part of the first ten years in Bello, part in Nshow, and part in Kekune still, all in Bello Sub Division in the NW Province.

Interviewer: Ok! That's not too far from here, is it?

David: No, it is not too far.

15 **Interviewer:** Ok! So you say your first ten years, you spent in those places

DAVID: Yeah!

Interviewer: Eh just for the record, after your eleventh, where did you go?

David: Eh, after those years I spent the rest of the time, I spent part of the time at Ashim, still in Bello Sub-division, living with my uncle...

20 **Interviewer:** OK!

David: And I had to...after my primary education, I went to secondary school in Fundong

Interviewer: Fundong is not another name for Bello but it is eh...

David: It is quite another Sub-Division...

Interviewer: Sub-Division of all this area?

25 **David:** Yeah.

Interviewer: Further up the road here...

David: Yes!

Interviewer: So you graduated from secondary school, then what happened?

30 **David:** When I graduated from secondary school, I... my parents were not able to send me to Secondary school. So I had to struggle on my own doing some gardening, and that is how I survived for the next six years.

Interviewer: OK! After secondary school?

David: Yeah!

35 **Interviewer:** Wow! Wow! So...so that is. You're producing food as a small garden producer, as basically a business man.

David: Yes!

Interviewer: Now you finally went to seminary...what happened? What caused you to go to seminary?

40 **David:** Between this time when I left the secondary school and when I went to seminary, I got exposed to the preaching of the Gospel and during one of the Christian youth camps, I came to an understanding...I came to understand the Gospel message and this was in 1993. When I understood the Gospel message and I believed in Jesus Christ as my saviour, I had the desire in me to share the Gospel with people and I started sharing the Gospel, teaching Sunday school, and I joined an evangelistic team which was called God's Volunteers Forever and while I was working with this team, sharing the Gospel,
45 I felt deeply in me that the only thing I could really do to feel satisfied was to preach the Gospel full time. And some people experiencing my ministry really came to me and told me that the right place for me to go was the seminary...

Interviewer: So you were home weren't you?

50 **David:** Yes! So when I really got the conviction in my heart that the right thing for me to do was to be a Pastor, I went to the seminary in 1996.

Interviewer: Yes, I remember that...

David: Yea!

Interviewer: Yes, well, well let's backward a little bit and clarify one thing...your parents did put through secondary school or you said they didn't have the money to put you through secondary school?

55 **David:** They put me through and at the end of secondary school, they were not able to continue.

Interviewer: Continue it? Ok! Ok! There we go. Ok! Tell me what kind of home did you grow up in...eh traditional, I was a traditional Christian? Or Christian...tell me about your early memories in terms of what you were taught.

60 **David:** Well, em...actually I was born out of wedlock and I spent part of the time with my grandmother, spent part of the time with my uncle, and I had to go through living with different relatives at different times and some of them did not attend church at all, but I attended mission school...that is where I first knew about God—the Christian God. Em, my grandfather was a Roman Catholic Christian...my mother was a... I mean my mother is a Baptist. So I got patches of things about God from them and from school. Actually, generally I grew up in a kind of traditional setting...

65 **Interviewer:** Hum! Hum!
David: I was not really exposed to town life.
Interviewer: Traditional...a traditional setting patching of things OK! What in your traditional setting impressed you the most, I mean what em...was there anything traditional that really stuck with you or affected your thinking or your way of development or your latter education?

70 **David:** Em, well I may not be able to lay hands on one that particularly thing that impressed me most but I know that I am that type of a person who always wants to ask “what’s is the significance of a thing and when a traditional practice was going on, I wanted to know but why is this thing done and when I had not yet come to a clear understanding of the Gospel, the things that were practiced in our, I did them, I did not just do them lightly when I was getting myself involved in anything, I gave myself to it.

75 Asking what the significance of this thing is so that I am not just doing it emotionally but really getting involved in it.
Interviewer: Uhum!
David: Yeah!
Interviewer: Where do you think of that? Of asking what is the significance of this thing...where do you think that came from? Or can you put your finger on any person or any part of your life or any time that you began to ask that you began to ask those questions?

80 **AD:** It is quite difficult for me to understand but I know that I had, I think that I naturally had that potential in me, but it did not all come from that because even in my education, I came to a point where I had a teacher in form one, my first year in secondary school who encouraged me to study sciences and he used to come to class with some students—senior students who will motivate us to think more in

85 terms of significance...
Interviewer: What do you mean by significance? Let’s clarify that word...
David: I mean asking, what is the significance of the thing you are doing? So you are not just doing something because you see people doing it, you ask what does this mean and what are the implications of the thing you are doing?

90 **Interviewer:** Ok!
David: That is what I mean by significance.
Interviewer: Ok
David: Yeah!

95 **Interviewer:** Or maybe what are the reasons...did you ever ask the question why we are doing this or what are the reasons for doing this and was that ever a question that was on your mind?
David: Yes, that is ...that really help to develop that potential in me to always ask, what is the significance of what I am doing?
Interviewer: So you studied sciences...

100 **David:** Yes
Interviewer: What kind of sciences did you study, I mean what was your secondary education about?
David: Yeah! I concentrated on Chemistry, Physics, Biology, and Mathematics. Eh... I did Geography too, then I did the languages—English and French.

105 **Interviewer:** You are very...you have a very fine skill in English; I guess you probably have a fine skill in French, though it gets rusted after a while. I know about French. Eh...you said you had one teacher that stimulated you. Let me ask you for the record was there ever a parent figure, was there ever a parent figure who gave you permission to ask questions?
David: NO! No! My parents did not give room to a lot of discussion.
Interviewer: So somehow, God gave you the urge, a sense or desire to know...things.

110 **David:** I strongly believe so.
Interviewer: That’s wonderful if you can see these things as gifts not just as things we make up for ourselves.
David: Yes!

115 **Interviewer:** Tell me about your seminary education just again for the record. Now I taught you...I realize this...so I might be asking this in a...In fact, you need to mention whatever good or bad things I did. But what are some of the things that impressed you, maybe both the positive things and the negative things about education—theological education here in Cameroon. Can you remember back...is that question too eh...too heavy a hammer just to ask on the spot at the moment?

120 **David:** No! It's is not too heavy. I it is difficult however because I am trying to...I am trying to talk about seminary education in Cameroon but I have no other experience to compare with.

Interviewer?

125 **David:** Yeah! I feel that seminary education, I am talking only about the one that I experienced... Yeah! I feel that it had good standards. I think that what I went through is up to what is required for to train a contemporary Pastor for Cameroon. And While I see that, I must place a finger on some of the things that I think that actually shaped me. One thing I learnt that really helped me very much on my seminary education was that I learnt that while I was there, I was not receiving all that I needed but I was given the skills to be able to study on my own after that, and I think that has helped me significantly, and one particular course that really shaped me very seriously is logic which I did with you. It helped me to think, not to depend on somebody's thinking to do ministry but to think on my own and to be able to arrive conclusion after reasoning through.

130 **Interviewer:** Ok! Well now, we are on that topic I think there is something that that maybe researchers in Oxford and everywhere else in the world will like to know, and I am going to talk here...I am going to ask the question and I'm going to talk for a moment just to give you a chance to maybe formulate your thoughts. What I am going to ask you is that in studying logic, how do you compare the way you perceive things or, thoughts through things, prior to the course? In other words people will say that Africans have a different logic that logic. I am not so sure that's true. Eh... I detect traces of logic in the African thinking without...you know and I have always believed that. But there is the contextualization of it and to be contextually sensitive to the context that you are working with. How did that impact, maybe some specific ways...you know you look back upon the way you thought, the way you reasoned through things before, eh...how did things change afterwards? Eh how could...if you have any insights on that, if you don't that's alright OK!

140 **David:** I must confess that many people ask me what happened to me to be thinking the way I do, because it looks to some people that I don't normally think the way people think in our culture. I am not in any way saying that our culture is inferior to what I think, but I am really saying that there is a kind of uniqueness in the way I think. Well logic...when I did logic what it did, it did not really change the way I think, rather, it deepened my reasoning. It helped me to be less emotional in my reasoning and more rational, but it did not really change the perspective, it rather just deepened it.

145 **Interviewer:** That is often...you know it was said by...it was said that reason is Western and emotion is African...Leopold Singer made that comment in his studies on Aquinas???

150 **David:** I agree with that...

Interviewer: You think so?

David: I think so and I can defend that.

Interviewer: You can?

155 **David:** Yes! When you move into a church building just before the programme begins, and then you see Africans. They hardly wait quietly—they wait in singing, or they wait in playing the drum but when you move into a church building and you see Americans waiting, they are quiet. While they are quiet, they are thinking, they are reasoning. So the emotions...the African is emotional, so he turns to do what his emotions are driving him to do and the Americans tend to give time to think. And when you see even when music is going on you see that the African will go with the drum and go with dancing, the Americans goes with singing in meditatively which is indicative that these are a deep thinking people.

160 **Interviewer:** Well, we are not all equally deep thinking and that is certainly a complement but then of course, what part do you think just for the purposes of ...this is very interesting discussion...How does emotion figure in a healthy living and...you know I have been here long enough so that I am not looking down upon the thought...the way of thinking here in a condescending way. But how do those two relate together—reason and logic within thinking. When you deepen yourselves marriage, divorce, and remarriage, what part does emotion play for you now? You are still very much African.

165 **David:** Yes I am and I like being that. I think that I think quite deep but at the same time, my emotions cannot be suppressed because I think but there are times that I cannot contain my emotions—I express myself as...that is when I think, what I arrive at is expressed in my emotions and when I am excited about something, I can explain what makes me excited because I thought about it...

170 **Interviewer:** You thought about it...

David: Yes!

Interviewer: Ok!

175 **David:** Yes! And when I have thought about it and if I am prostrating, I can explain to you that what moved me to prostrate is that I...while I was meditating, I saw the goodness and the greatness of God so much so that I found myself nothing before him, so I prostrated.

Interviewer: Marvellous...marvellous! You are the best of those??? Do you think the emphasis on thinking and reasoning for you maybe major more inwardly reflective?

David: Sure!

180 **Interviewer:** You know the Socrates...was is Socrates who says an unexamined life is not worth living...believe that was Socrates' mouth...Plato perhaps with the mouth of Socrates

David: Well I do not know who said that...

Interviewer: Whether you know...they kind of merged together in their dialogues...

David: Ok!

185 **Interviewer:** But you seem to be a man who reflect on whom he is, and what he is at any particular point...eh...how...are you leading people to move in that direction yourself?

David: Through the deep thinking, I seem to see that I am able to produce sermons and lessons that cause people to reflect deep and in leading people...when I lead people in worship, I avoid arousing the emotions of the people without really getting them to a point where they have a clear understanding of the scriptures and leading them to meditate and allowing them to be themselves, not requiring a particular emotional expression---not requiring people to dance or not to dance, I let them see God as He really is and I allow them to be themselves.

190 **Interviewer:** I want to tell you with great sincerity that I spent part of the afternoon getting some test done at the hospital and one of the young men that was working with me...your ministry has deeply impressed him...he is delighted with God's hand in your life. And I cannot tell you how happy, and what joy that brought me and encouragement to you.

195 **David:** Ok!

Interviewer: Ok! As we say, stay the course in terms of doing what you know to be right.

David: Ok!

200 **Interviewer:** David we are not going to spent a lot more time here. I like to ask you about the dialogue itself. I may not get back to see you with the transcript. I will try to put it down so that you can have a transcript for yourself. We are typing them as we can.

David: Ok!

Interviewer: But are there...is there anything particular left that you are about to...for me to know...eh...about points of interest or things that really stood up to you within the dialogue itself?

205 **David:** Yeah! When I did this dialogue, I came to notice that there is a flux In the African believe system at this moment especially as many Africans are getting exposed to Western culture and to Christianity, and most of the people are tending to practice syncretism. Like the person I discussed with...he upholds Christianity as superior to ATR but he is not ready to throw it out and what really came very clear to my mind which I did not really know at first is that the African does not practice his religion to go to heaven. He thinks here and now. After here and now is not more his business.

210 **Interviewer:** That's interesting!

David: Yeah!

Interviewer: Well you have endorsed or confirmed something that I have always felt that ATR is a matter...is this worldly matter...

215 **David:** Yes!

Interviewer: And it is about success and health and all these things that we want about happiness in this world.

David: Yes!

220 **Interviewer:** That seems to explain the lacuna—the absence of who is to be ancestors and who doesn't get to be ancestors or even how the ancestors actually live...

David: Yea!

Interviewer: You know in terms of not...no...missiology or speculation or whatever...

David: Yeah!

225 **Interviewer:** They just are there.

David: Yeah!

Interviewer: Other notes that might have come to your own mind? About the dialogue? It maybe that we will have another chance to talk latter on...you know, I am supposed to come back to check on some things and I am not sure how quickly that will be but sometimes in May. When your holiday...is when is your leave?

230 **David:** It was normally supposed to be in May but em...I think we may post pond it until July...

Interviewer: July.

David: Yeah!

235 **Interviewer:** Well maybe we may chance another chance to talk. What we will try to do is we will try to type the interview, and see if we can get you a copy and we will look and type this interview actually. I will get those things—those things will be yours. We need to have the release forms, but actually you need to sign a release form too because that way your interview...your observations can be used in terms of people's understanding???? You know I am concerned that the outside world finds the African

mind and character almost impenetrable...you know my heart is in this project to help expose it in a good way...you know in a very productive and encouraging way to the world outside...

240 **David:** Yeah! Actually when I discussed with this person, I really arrived at this point where I saw a clear...a clear contradiction in the mind of this person. It is like the person is upholding two opposing views in his mind at the same time. He says one thing, and later on he says another thing and he does not seem to be conscious that he is contradicting himself.

245 **Interviewer:** Why do you think that's true? Let's have a closing question Ok! Why can you...I do not believe it's entirely a weakness...I don't think it's because the African mind is illogical, but the question is why does he upholds two composing points without being...

David: He...maybe under pressure...he knows that Christianity is true, and he really wants to accept Christianity but at the same time, he feels threatened by the fact that if he has to accept Christianity the way it is, he will feel like losing his identity he will not more be an African, so he feels closely tied to his culture and he defines...his culture engulfs everything—his religion and his social practices²⁸⁷ and it also seems to me that the preaching of the Gospel in Africa in many cases does not really scratch where it itches. The application does not really come to a point where it makes a distinction between the religion of the people and the culture of the people so that while the people stop the religious practices,

250 they continue to be Africans without having to throw away all their culture.²⁸⁸ So when the Gospel comes like requiring them just to become different people, the people want to protect their culture, and at the same time hold Christianity at another arm. So under this pressure, they are forced to speak like Christians at one time and at one time speak like ATR'ists. But I think that if we contextualize the Gospel so that people can see how an African can be a Christian and still be an African, it will be helping a lot of people to come out of this type of thinking.

255 **Interviewer:** Ok! How will you characterize an African Christian...our question is going to be different from anybody as far as individuals but how will you characterize an African Christian identity? I mean you were talking about being an African and being a Christian.

David: Yeah!

260 **Interviewer:** You know but you only have to give a pure identity as an African. But what are the core things within...of being an African that are important you think and this is your subjective perception. I realize that I could ask somebody else and they will have some other ideas...

David: Yeah!

Interviewer: But what is the core guide you are using for the African? This is important for the African identity.

270 **David:** The Africans want to stay closed to the family, so if Christianity in Africa has to make meaning, we must target family heads, share the gospel with them and also make the family heads to know that when they have accepted Christianity, they are supposed to use their position as Christian family heads to leads their families where they are expecting them to do sacrifices for them, they pray for the people.

275 But in most of the cases since the men look like they are a bit too difficult to reach, eh...evangelists give more attention to the children and to the..., and the children and the women are subject to the men. So when these people accept the gospel, it is difficult for them to practice because they face a lot of persecutions and most of the times, they want to stay quiet and be secret about whatever they do and when they really have to stand in public and speak, they cannot speak or they cannot really act out Christianity.

280 **Interviewer:** It seems like you are shifting the core...the identity problem from a generally identity problem to the identity of the family heads because they generally do have a very strong role to and they are within the cultural context, very important identity so to speak...

David: Yes!

285 **Interviewer:** ...in offering the sacrifices. That's why they are...I am not disagreeing with your...what might happen, but this is a very significant shift for them anyways

David: Ok! Yea! The African values unity in the family, and believing in Christ and staying away from the sacrificial system that is going on in the family means you are separating...you are tearing the family apart. But the person who has this strong power to hold the family together is converted, he also has a strong hand to influence the rest of the family. Though he cannot convert people by his position because it is God who knows who will be converted. It is true that he will influence the rest of the people and the pressure on the people will be reduced which gives room for Christianity to go with relative ease.

290

²⁸⁷ I think the basic issue is at the level of the hopeless fate of ATR which therefore centres around manipulation—one must play hard to get what he/she wants—make the best out of life's situations.

²⁸⁸ What is really the difference between culture and tradition?

295 **Interviewer:** I...these are very interesting ideas here and I think it replaces the unity of the family and sacrifice, it is almost like the conversion for the family because under his leadership, the unity of the family then becomes that of love

David: Yes! Not more of a strong tyrant who stands on the people and require that they stay together whether they like it or not.

300 **Interviewer:** That's right...well David thank you so very much for your time...it's been a real pleasure to talk with you.

David: You are welcome sir.

Interview with Teresa Nganga Mokake 18.05.2007

Interviewer: Teresa, we've known each other for a long time now, quite some years, but would you for the record would you give your full name? Your age right now and the place where you were born.

Teresa: Okay, uh...I'm Teresa Nganga Mokake; and uh...I'm 30 years old, I was born in Buea, Fako Division, Southwest Province of Cameroon.

5 **Interviewer:** And again for the record, you're from what tribal background?

Teresa: I'm a Bakwerian.

Interviewer: A Bakwerian. I thought that, but I just needed to ask you. Okay. Teresa, did you spend your time in Buea? Were you born outside? You were born outside in a small village.

10 **Teresa:** No, I was born in a village called Vasinge, in the neighbourhood of Buea, just a few kilometres away from the town. And all my life I have spent in Buea, I've spent in a village until I was at about sixteen years, when I was entering the second cycle That's when I went, still in Buea, but I left the village to a neighbouring village, to be closer to the school.

Interviewer: Uh how would you...What would be some of the differences between being in Buea and growing up in your little village?

15 **Teresa:** Uh, the differences will not be all that because the village is very close to the town (Okay) and so we just say that our village is in the town. Yeah. So everything is just mixed up like that. Yeah.

Interviewer: So from a...being a very early childhood you were exposed to lots of influences lots of things that maybe other things maybe other children were not exposed to.

20 **Teresa:** Yeah, at least, I'm happy mostly becoming a Christian. I can now compare some of the things I learned as a child and then as a Christian now I am able to put them vis-à-vis because at least I know, I know I can say that I know a great deal about our culture.

Interviewer: What...Your parents, were they Christians when you were growing up?

Teresa: Uh, no, from the definition of Christianity as I know now. But when we were growing at that time my mother used to take us to church. But my father was not going to church.

25 **Interviewer:** What is your definition? Uh... we're going back there....in a moment... we're not leaving there... But what is your definition of being a Christian right now as you understand it?

Teresa: Okay, I know that a Christian is a born-again child of God. That is a child who has accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Saviour from death and resurrection. So when I said my mother was not a Christian because I know when my mother accepted Christ as her personal Lord and Saviour. Therefore all the years we used to go to church I can say were just church-goers.

30 **Interviewer:** Just church goers. Well, what are some the things that you learned, your stories and the things that your mother and father told you? Uh, memorable things that stand out in your mind. Maybe a few. It doesn't have to be many.

35 **Teresa:** Yeah, as we were growing as children... we know there used to be traditional dances and then they used to teach us the significance of each of those traditional dances. One of which I would like to share with you is a female cult that is known as *liengo* in the dialect. They use to initiate young women for about 14 years old when you are frequently sick of headache they will say that you are manifesting the symptoms of that cult. There you will be taken to the forest and then they will build a small house there for you. Only women who have had that kind of experience will be allowed to visit you and talk to you so you will be kept there for some time where taken care of and some rituals will be performed to you which to them they believe they will not disclose, but the only thing we know is that there are days you use....when a person will go on a trance unconscious and then the full initiation rite will take place. And now you come and then they will add to you names the name diengo. So now in our generation we know people called diengo but in those days it's not any person who was called diengo except it was some person who had passed through that process.

45 **Interviewer:** Were you ever involved in the process? Did you go through it?

Teresa: No.

Interviewer: No...Okay. How many days did it take? How long was the young woman out in the forest in her?

50 **Teresa:** At least two weeks.

Interviewer: At least two weeks.

Teresa: Yes, That's what needed.....?

55 **Teresa:** And then another famous story that our parents used to tell us is that in those days we have what is known as the god of the mountain. And uh, they call it in the dialect *efase-motutel* meaning half-human. So, some people say that half of it, the beast, or let me say, half of the god is a human being and half is an animal. And others say half is a stone and half is an animal. And they believe that this god needs to help the villagers like in the days when they had no files to keep their machetes sharp. They would take it go and leave it to where they knew he was staying, and then the next day they come and collect it. He has

60 done it for them. And then, uuh, it is believed also ...it is believed also that when an albino dies they take
it, they don't bury it in the land...they go and give it to that god. That is what the god feed on. And then
our parents used to tell us that practice died down because some people were anxious to see who is doing
the work and so they discovered the god and he decided not to be rendering services to the community
again. And that is the god of the mountain, like when Mt. Fako had the eruption, they were saying that the
65 god of the mountain is annoyed. The Bakwerians knew that that was the god that was annoyed, that they
were trying to appease like that...

Interviewer: For those of you who are listening, Mt. Fako is what is normally called Mt. Cameroon, a
fairly high mountain of about four thousand metres. And the village, the town that Teresa is describing
lies on the southern edge of the mountain. Uhh. You may think of other stories or other things later on...
70 What impression did these have on you as a child? How did you process them? How did you think about
them some of your earliest memories?

Teresa: Well, as a child, as I was growing, I knew that that was life. And uh, not until when I became a
Christian, that is when I began to understand some of those things, their sources one of the things that led
me to accept Christ as my personal Lord and Saviour was still some of these, I can say, African Traditional
Religion because as I was growing at the age of nine, my father died. So all along I was grow with my
75 mother and my mother used to tell us these stories and in the village there is so much belief about
witchcraft. And my father had two wives and before my mother, my father died, my mother was accusing
the maid [the other wife] to be a witch and it was alleged that those women who passed through the cult
that I told you, most of them would end up being...uh witches. So my step-mother had passed through
that process. So she used to warn us again about societal things, about not walking at night, late at night,
80 not standing at road junctions, that those are areas where evil spirits are concentrating. So as a child I
didn't know; I just felt that it was just caution. So when my dad died some years later, my mother was
also very sick and it was alleged that she was being bewitched by the maid.

Interviewer: You use the word 'the maid'.

Teresa: Yes, that is the other...

85 **Interviewer:**the other wife.

Teresa: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, the other wife.

Teresa: Yes.... So I also supported; I moved with him. We moved from one traditional doctor, sorcerer
and all those kind of things. But to no avail. And uh one thing I would like to share with you which is
90 interesting. That, at time in the house, around two a.m. we use to feel like grains are being thrown on the
zinc, and then immediately after grains fall on the zinc, you get the sound you have like something is
thrown, a heavy something. And you hear it rolling on the ceiling. We used to experience that, but we
didn't know. But when we use to go out to find out from these witch doctors, actually they were telling
us things that are happening and then you began to see people who were far off, who didn't know us. They
95 could narrate where the compound is situated, some of the events we see, or strange things that are
happening in the house and the family. So we believed them, but they told us that my mother was sick of
stomach, that she had stomach problem and they have placed something in her stomach. That's why she
cannot eat and all those things. So the man accepting things for us to bring. When we brought them, when
my senior brothers and sisters have all gone the way out in school. So I was the only one staying with my
100 mother. So I had to go with her So when the man said he was to remove the things he used a blade and
cut my mother some little places on the stomach, and then use an egg, placed it on her stomach and when
she said, he said the stuff, the egg will drain the stuff, and when he was trying to pour it I saw how an
insect fell from his hand—meanwhile the egg white was struggling to come out. So I knew he was telling
lies. So when we were leaving, when we left I told my mother what I saw, but being a child I was unable
105 to say it there. So my mother told me that that is how those people behave, but spiritually she believes that
the man has removed something. I said, "Okay."

Interviewer: Let's go back. You saw an insect.

Teresa: Yes, the man had an insect (like this).

Interviewer: Uh—huh.

110 **Teresa:** That is, the man had an insect on his palm and held the egg that he has broken a bit but meanwhile
instead the egg will pull the stuff from my mother's stomach and then he will pour it in a plate. But
meanwhile he knew how he will allow the insect to fall and then fall the egg white and say that this was
what was inside.

Interviewer: ...that is what is inside. Okay...Okay. So he was using something we call a slight of hand.
115 He was wanting you to see something.

Teresa: ...'Something'.

Interviewer: something that was not actually...actually there. But he had his interpretation.

120 **Teresa:** Yes. So the man had to come and remove the (in quotes) we call it *'burddle'* that is, what the
stuff that has been tied to together that used to fall at night on our roof. So fortunately or unfortunately the
man did not come. So my mother had to look for another witch doctor. And when this man came he didn't
125 know where the other man had searched the thing is found in the house... But he went to the exact spot
and said that is where the thing is and asked the boys around to start digging and so they dug, dug and
then they brought out some little thing like an egg. I was really anxious to see. When they brought the
thing he threw some concoctions there, and then took a knife and then opened it. But the content that came
130 out you could not imagine could come out from that small bundle and then we could see some things that
were missing in the house inside there...so many things and I was very inquisitive. And I was asking
questions...this one signifies what; this one signifies what. Some which I will share with you. There was
like a padlocked that was locked. And uh his interpretation was that that was to block the progress of the
children in the house. And then there was a piece of foam. This kind of stuff. Yes, that was the case when
you just get up in the morning and you just feel tired, your body broken. And those things. So those things
they all had interpretation. So he burnt them. When he burnt them he took the soot and give us some cuts.
You can see some of the sites.

Interviewer: I can see; I can still see the sites.

135 **Teresa:** So he cut every member of the family and used the ash and placed it on us, that it would serve
like protection. That....

(Interview with Teresa Nganga Mokake Part II)

Interviewer: Theresa you were talking about the witch doctor rubbing the eggs in your hands—and the
cracks in your hands, would you continue on with that story?

140 **Teresa:** Yes sir, it not actually only in my hands, all over our body we had these cuts, legs back, and so
on. And they said it was for protection, and I asked “how long will it be? They said “we need to renew it
after three months. After three months, we need to call that man to come and cut, and if not we are exposed
again. So I was not very satisfied. So that’s when I went to the church pastor at that time, Rev. Emi Beng
145 So I talked with him the experience I have had and all those things so—that’s when he told me all those
things are false powers. That Jesus alone is our protector. If I believe Him—if I accept Him as my personal
Lord and saviour, He will be able to cleanse me from all forms of unrighteousness, and then he will be
able to protect me from all those things that a witch doctor cannot give us for protection. That is when I
accepted Christ. When I accepted Christ, I came home, I told my mother, and my mother said “ah! Where
150 was the pastor when she was sick?” So we left it and when the three months came for us to renew the cuts,
I refused. It was not easy but I stood my grounds. So my mother said, well! If anything happens to me, I
should be responsible. And I took the challenge though I had some fears in me because he will tell you
“when you are moving, somebody can do this,” you know coming from the village culture with all that
mentality. It was not just accepting Christ and staying comfortable. That fright was still in me, but I
155 realized that since then, nothing had been done to me and I am fine. And if I can compare with my other
brothers and sisters who are still in the church and then doing those things...

Interviewer: What makes difference between you and the people who still hold to the sources of their
fear?

160 **Teresa:** Pa, There is much difference. In the sense that, I spent little health wise, and then nor such strange
experiences, I don't have them. I know God is protecting me. But because they live in fear and suspension.
As we are sitting here, they can see even a lizard. They will want to find out how the lizard got here. And
those people will have something for it because there are stories told in the village where...like one of the
165 stories was that a man tied the leg and went to the witch doctor, and the witch doctor said “the wound on
that your leg, the person who has done it says that ‘that wound will never get well,’” and when the man
loosened it, there was no wound. So you see, those witch doctors do like what we can say, try and error.
They don't really give full truth. And so our people have entangled themselves, and then they keep wasting
their money because they want an interpretation for everything in life. If you are sick, they believe it is
not normal...and those kinds of things.

Interviewer: Tell me, I'm going to ask you an interesting question that you don't have to answer. How
do you hold to the spiritual powers? You made a very subtle statement a few moments ago and you were
170 speaking about the not having complete powers to protect. OK...em...what about... what about spiritual
powers that people will fear and things of that nature...em... in our conversations in the past, it seems
like that you have there are really significant religious believes that you do still hold. It's alright, you
know, this is not to judge you or to...but it seems like eh, you do continue to hold to certain kinds of
believes. Are there beliefs that have kind of survived these analytical questions, spirits that you have, you
175 know as a Christian?

Teresa: em...I don't know but I think they play a great deal in my worldview. Because like, when I got
married, and then Paul got involved into this deliverance ministry, it opened my eyes to some of those

180 things I had learned as a child, and as these children testify. So...personally as I can say that witches and wizard, and these people have powers—they have spiritual powers but the power of God surpasses them all.

Interviewer: Ok...Ok, so what kind of spiritual powers do they have? OK! From your perspective.

Teresa: Eh...I know they have powers to manipulate over people's intelligence. They have powers to displace things, they have powers to like health...disrupt somebody's health. They have powers to curse. Like eh... when I was sick, this time that I was down like this, eh...my mother...when I went to Limbe and I was afraid to tell her because I knew her worldview. But when she heard I was sick and the illness kept progressing, she told me that eh...we have just met Christianity and embraced it, and we think that we can completely cut off from tradition...that...because we have different rituals that when they performed, you are not to fellowship with your brother or sister who has not partaken. But I told her Christ has done it all for me. So I fellowship with my brothers and sisters...cousins, free. So with her own interpretation, she was saying that "the gods are angry," and that is why I had the head ache and the experiences I was having. So she told me I am spending much money...something that I needed just highest a 1000 FRS and they will go and bring me those concorsions, drop on my nostrils, the blood will cease, take some and leak. So I stood my grounds—I told her "from what I have experienced God, if it means dying, ok fine and good. So when it reached the stage where they were saying that I should go for surgery, she was very bitter with me and she was using statements like "you think your husband has money, that's why you just want to spent the money that way." Well I told her that "I believe God and I know that whatever the case, God will not allow me go through surgery—He will intervene. This is just to tell you that even after I became a Christian, we still have this battle, mostly from our own people. They still look at the past, they try to associate some of those things. So even as I am here now, I don't share everything...there are certain things I prefer to share with my Christians brothers and sisters, because of the worldview that sharing with my own blood related brothers and sisters because they look at it from a traditional angle. They will say "oh you are passing through this because you have not performed this kind of ritual.

Interviewer: It seems like the idea or the feeling of cause and effect is very strong in the village life.

Teresa: Yes!

Interviewer: It almost dominates everything...

Teresa: Yes...

Interviewer: Because you have not done something...

Teresa: There is a consequence.

210 **Interviewer:** There is a consequence. It is very! Very! Very interesting. Well Theresa there is a lot more that we could talk about, and maybe we will continue on with our conversations. I am very! Very appreciate for you and thank the Lord for you.... We are signing off on the 18/05/07. Thank you!

Interview with Ngam Ernest Nangambi 18.8.07

- Interviewer:** Today is August the 18th 2007. I'm here in Kumba with my friend who has been doing some apologetic dialogues and we are going to talk casually and in an informal sense about his life and just some things about him that he might want you to know or might be of importance to his own dialogues and his ministry. Earnest, what is your full name?
- 5 **Earnest:** My full name is Ngam Ernest Nangambi.
- Interviewer:** Earnest you are from what tribal group?
- Earnest:** Kom!—a native of Kom, NW Province Cameroon.
- Interviewer:** How long did you live in Kom or how long did you live there in your life time?
- 10 **Earnest:** I have lived for 10 years, because my father was working with the Palm 'or in the SW Province here-- Palm 'or, a company.
- Interviewer:** OK! That's the company that makes Palm oil...
- Earnest:** Palm oil.
- Interviewer:** For cooking...
- Earnest:** For cooking! Yeah!
- 15 **Interviewer:** Eh, what years did you live in Kom?
- Earnest:** that was in 19...from 1984, then I studied there, I did my first primary school, after I went to my...after I went through my primary school, then I left Kom, then I came to secondary school in Bamenda.
- Interviewer:** Ok, so that means you were how old when you left Kom?
- 20 **Earnest:** By that time I was around...around 15 years old.
- Interviewer:** around 15 years old.
- Earnest:** Yes!
- Interviewer:** OK! And you are how old today?
- Earnest:** I am 34 years old.
- 25 **Interviewer:** 34 years old.
- Earnest:** Yes!
- Interviewer:** That means you left Kom about 19 years ago?
- Earnest:** Yes!
- Interviewer:** Do you consider yourself that Bikom is your identity?
- 30 **Earnest:** Yes I consider that Kom is part of my identity because my mother and my father, they are all from Kom...they are indigents.
- Interviewer:** OK! So and...why should that be the case, what did they pass unto you regarding the Kom tradition of Kom people that makes you feel that you are a Kom person today?
- Earnest:** Eh...actually, with us in Kom, as I can say, my grandfather, that's the father of my mother was purely a traditional herbalist and he also at times practiced what we call...they call... in short witch doctor...he was both witch Doctor and a herbalist.
- 35 **Interviewer:** Do you make a difference, ok! From your perspective, what's the difference between an herbalist and a witch doctor?
- Earnest:** A herbalist, eh...what I know, according to me, a herbalist is a somebody who treats...a doctor who treats with herbs, then a witch doctor is somebody now who do not only treats with herbs but he has some mystical powers which he operates under.
- 40 **Interviewer:** OK! Is the word or term witchdoctor, is that always a bad term or what kind of tem is that in the Kom...
- Earnest:** Witch doctor according to the Kom tradition is not considered to be bad... is not considered to be bad because actually if you have been listening to the Kom History, you will notice that the origin of Kom is mystical...like according to the history of Kom, Kom originated from Bamesing, and it was a serpent that...a python that led our fore fathers from Bamesing to Ila-ekom where the headquarter of Kom or the chieftaincy is located. So that is why witch doctor to us is not considered as something bad.
- 45 **Interviewer:** What would be considered to be bad in Kom?
- 50 **Earnest:** In terms of...in what light are you talking of?
- Interviewer:** Well, let...
- Earnest:** In the verbal aspect or in the...I mean I have not understand, the bad now of which dimension?
- Interviewer:** Ok! That's a good question, ok! Let's say someone was accused of being a bad person.
- Earnest:** Yeah!
- 55 **Interviewer:** And they...they...they dealt with powers...ok, mystical powers, eeh, why will the person, who, will be feared or will be considered to be an evil person...what will they be called in Kom?

Earnest: A person who is considered to be evil in Kom when he is doing or his deeds are against the customary law or the Kom tradition. That's the one point and two, if his actions are poisonous to the society. That is for instance like when I talk about eeh, witch doctor, we have some who are good at destruction, we have some who are good in healing people mystically...getting from the mystical powers.

60 **Interviewer:** Uhum!

Earnest: Eh?

Interviewer: Go ahead! Go ahead!

65 **Earnest:** So with us, like what I have said, like for instance, we have eh...a two type of witch, we call it eeh evil forces or mystical forces that are operational like we call in our dialect, we call it mosuh. We have...that is...mosuh it's a mystical society and it is generally known. So there are people we call them they are from the back side of that mosuh, that's the mystical society, and there some who are of the good side of that society. That is what they do is that they bring good things to that society. But the other, now they are good at destruction. Like for instance, when we talk about the wind...for instance that people do

70 operate in the wind, truly, and practically, it is true...it is true because...because it is not...it is something that takes place...something that is known, its popularly known in the village and those like for instance I quote like my grandfather—the father of my mother, he belongs to the good side of what we call mosuh. that is he operates in the spirit world...operating in the spirit world...that's operating in the spirit world in the sense that at times you don't see it except you are a member of that society or you are a witchdoctor,

75 or you have something to deal mystically, before you will be able to understand how those things operate, but at the...generally you know people who cooperate, because when they are operating, they don't hide it, they tell you, and they know, and they have what they call like eeh...that they are people who...they call it foreteller, they see things and tell you...and they can tell you what is going to happen and it happens. So there are people operating under that kingdom or that...that mystical society. But if you are not

80 initiated, you will not be able to operate, and at times they initiate people into that society

Interviewer: Is there any...are there any people in Kom who try to keep one foot in one society and the other in the other society? Are there any who try to be on both sides?

Earnest: Actually it is difficult for somebody to belong to the two sides because the two sides don't agree. Like for instance...like that my grandfather...that my...the father of my mother...he belongs to

85 that...the... the good side and according to the history...not only history, from my mother...because my mother was the closest daughter or the closest child to Him. He...the history that lies behind the death of that my father was that the people from the opposite side or the bad people ...who belonged to the...for the bad group. He now went and collected some group of children, and now they went and keep these children spiritually somewhere...they want...these children were to be killed. So now...how now...that

90 my grandfather was of the opposite side...of the good...those who do good but they are all from the evil society...ok now, he was a captain in that society, so he went now and struggled to revive those children—to free them from where they were tied up...waiting for destruction. So when he went and brought those children out of that...where they have entangled them, or they have framed them, in the course now he was now trying to bring them out so the people from the bad society traced him out—they followed him

95 until, when he succeeded to free those people, they hit him...they hit him around his male organ until the male organ was affected...when he came...the good news is that he succeeded to free the children. So when he arrived home, he became sick and finally...physically, he was taken to the hospital he himself declared that he is not sure that he is going to survive. Finally he died, and before he died, he said the person who is responsible for his death is not going to be buried as he is buried...as he has been

100 buried...that they are going to cut him...he is going to die in parts, that is how the portion of the body will be sick and when the person is taken to the hospital, they will cut it and just like that progressively until they will arrive at the heart and the person will die. And precisely when he died, that is actually what took place—the person immediately fell sick because they were popularly known...that man they was calling, they called him, he was named Gopteh Chia...and even in the village if you ask any of the Kom man of

105 those strong people in Kom...they ask of my grandfather in Kom...they called him Ndekwe...he is somebody who was popular in the whole village...they knew him even to the chief's palace as one of the greatest man in the village. So that is why I am not assuming, but from facts...from reliable source facts like my mother and others. I am able to give some highlights so far as these spiritual forces are operating. Only that when he died at that time I was still little...yes! At that time we were still...

110 **Interviewer:** Were you still living in Kom at that time?

Earnest: No at that time I was in Palm or Ndian. My father was working there as I told you and he was retired in 1984.

Interviewer: Ok! He was retired in 1984. Eh, let me ask you, I am interested in your beliefs, I am also of course interested in how your beliefs relate to Kom traditional beliefs.

115 **Earnest:** Yeah!

Interviewer: Eh! You mentioned this battle with the children, let's clear off something.

Earnest: Yeah!

Interviewer: Was that a spiritual battle or a physical battle?

Earnest: That was a spiritual battle.

120 **Interviewer:** A spiritual battle.

Earnest: Yeah!

Interviewer: So your father...your grandfather went in the spirit and freed these children?

Earnest: Yes!

Interviewer: And while he was freeing these children, he was...you used the word struck OK?

125 **Earnest:** Ehe!

Interviewer: He was struck by this...

Earnest: The opponent.

Interviewer: The other side.

Earnest: Yes!

130 **Interviewer:** What we say the evil side.

Earnest: Yes! Evil side

Interviewer: He came in returning in his spirit, he felt ill and then he died.

Earnest: Yeah! He died.

Interviewer: Eh, I' am wondering in this context, Em! How do you relate these concepts of spiritual

135 powers to Christianity?

Earnest: Well as ehh...

Interviewer: This is very important because your dialogue with Dr. Emmanuel....

Earnest: Yea!

Interviewer: So now, how do... what's going on in terms of the connection for you?

140 **Earnest:** So now...what is interest me mostly as I have said that there is no course I appreciate here more than the courses that you teach us like apologetic because I relate what I learn from class...I juxtapose them with the Kom context of believes, then now I make sure that I don't take side...

Interviewer: You don't take side...?

Earnest: I don't take side, neither for what the Kom people hold or what I have seen or believe or what I

145 hear from you but I make sure I balance it and try to carve out what is actually...that's the truth about it. Though I know I have studied the Bible, not that I will like the traditional believe to overweigh the Bible or the Bible to overweigh the tradition, I believe. I want to balance it and to actually see what I can come out of it...

Interviewer: Ok!

150 **Earnest:** I try to see how I can relate the two. And it is on the bases of this fact that fastened my relationship with Brother Emma because what I hold and what I have been hearing from my mother...the history that I know about my grandfather, and then what brother will tell me will not only be a surprise...I will not only be surprised to hear, neither I will be so flexible for him to deceive me, or for him to convince me to hold his idea, or neither am only I out to convince him to take to the scripture, but I am out now to

155 use the scripture and the knowledge of apologetics, juxtaposing all together and trying to see how I can also use the apologetics dialogue and with the knowledge which I hold and which concerning the Km believe and see how I can also help to bring into the scriptures in the light of the scriptures so that we can both reason together.

Interviewer: Ok! Ok! That's fair enough, I appreciate your encouragement, and I appreciate your pilgrimage. Eh, tell me let's change the subject just a moment; I want to go back to that. But tell me about your education. You say you got your first School Leaving Certificate in Kom? In Bello?

Earnest: Yes, Yes! In Bello.

Interviewer: What about as a young child, your mother told you a lot of stories?

Earnest: Yes! She told me a lot of stories.

165 **Gary:** And your father did too? Ok...

Earnest: You mean about eeh...ok about my education.

Interviewer: Yeah! Let's take at one hand your education and on the other hand your family education...

Earnest: Ok!

Interviewer: Ok? Eh...how do you see those in your early years?

170 **Earnest:** OK! Eeh...actually my family and my education is in a very interesting story. Actually, we are 11 of us in our house.

Interviewer:

Earnest: Yes one mother.

Interviewer: And you are what position?

175 **Earnest:** I am the third.

Interviewer: You are the third...

Earnest: I am the third. Actually in according to Kom tradition, a son or a child don't succeed the father's property. So it is the cousin or the brother that succeeds the throne. So this...believe that they already hold weakens them to sponsor their children because they believe that their children belong but to another person—to another family. So now it is just sure persons—those who are educated that they have actually come to the reality that it is good to educate their children. As I have said, we are 11 of us. My father actually went through primary school; they call in those days standard. So he was not so learned. So after he retired or he was retired, he came to...that time I was still around class three or four like that. There are a good number of us. You know with the Cameroon government being what it is, financial problems becomes a problem—to take care of the 11 of us. So now the tendency was...he was just struggling that if one was...if any of the child graduates from the primary school, he knows that he has done his best. The hung number of us which are there...he was only trying to see that everybody should have at least a bit of education. Until when I succeeded my primary school, now going to secondary school...I went there form one form two...in form three now he said I should abandon school. And when I asked, what was that problem? He said "no" his policy is that everybody should have at least first school, but now if I am to proceed, it will be a problem to others for now. I told him that I am not ready to leave school I am interested for my studies. So because of that now he said OK! since I have decided to continue in my studies I should abandon school, or I should never ask him anything because my term of office of education is already over on his side...but he is now diverting to see how my junior sister will go to work and all the like—they will go and learn work. So with the zeal of education, I told him that no! I not surrender—I'm going to proceed. So that's...at that time that he abandoned me in form three, so the problem of school fees became a target—I was not able to cope, so I decided to leave that form three now, I went but to evening classes at progressive comprehensive college Bamenda. But as I left there because they have an evening section where they train people who are to write O level and advance. So as I went in there, struggling...struggling...I had a very good friend—a woman who was also coming for the studies. At that time she was a teacher in one primary school in Bamenda. So now I was so closed to that woman because at times he do assist me—the son's mouth to feed myself. During that. Eh. It is through our relationship before I expressed my problem to him...I said, she sees me like this. That is the situation which I am passing through and being in town, life is very difficult. Before now he asked me a question that if he can look for somebody that where I will go now and be working house boy, render house services to the person and in the end of the month he gives me 10,000FCFA, based as allowance so that I will be able to assemble this money and pay my fees, will I be happy, I admitted, I accepted. I embraced it with all my heart. So now he went and met one man, they call Dr. Akah Amah...

Interviewer: OK, now, this is your father doing this or who is doing this to helping you?

Earnest: Is my friend—a friend that I just met in the school who was also a student in the evening classes...

Interviewer: OK! You said she was... this was a woman...

Earnest: yes! At that time, my father has abandoned me.

Interviewer: Ok!

Earnest: So now I went in there, that year came and I registered the O levels. So unfortunately, one unfortunate thing is that this man was a very wealthy man because at that time...one bank they call credit agricole...there was a bank they have closed the bank they called it credit agricole. He was the assistant bank manager. He has a woman... he was also married to a white in Yaoundé...I learnt the wife has left...it was a German woman, because he did his course but in Germany. I worked with this man for one good year, the man could not pay my money. So now education was a problem to me. So the only mean solution...at times they will drive me for fees...I will play! Play! Play! Until the proprietor...at that time they called him Tah Protus—that was proprietor of the evening school—the name of the proprietor. At times he will sympathize and allow me. I have never used a text book in my life...my first place I am offered an opportunity to use a text book is here—in the seminary...even these exercise books. At times when students...well you know where they throw this dust bin now? Where they throw papers...

Interviewer: Uhum!

Earnest: I'll go and pick but these rough books. Then now where children go and throw them. Then I will open and remove those free papers that they have not written on. That is where I will come and use a needle and stitch...

Interviewer: stitch it up?

Earnest: Yes! Stitch it up. Then I'll look for a pen. That was my highest note book in life. So just like that but I spent sleepless nights every day. I will read morning afternoon evening. Morning...when I' am free since after my service...I've rendered my house service. The only thing that gave me courage was that I use to ask myself a question that if my father who brought me into this world abandoned me then what more of somebody who is a neutral man? So the advantage I had there was that I could eat since I was living with them, rendering good service, they made sure that they take care of my feeding, and I

have also a place to lay my head in, and I have...after my house...after I have done all my service...I render all my service in the house, then the rest of the time now I spent in reading...reading. That year came fortunately, I succeeded with four papers. So as I succeeded in having that four papers in O levels
240 now, I think that going out, I will not be of opportune again to get into any other school. So that was my highest chance to study, but I said I will try again the next time because with that evening classes, it is just for those who are writing. So now the following year now, I decided to go in for advanced level. So when the Advanced Level...they were registering, I just decided to register. I continued with my struggle. What
245 assisted me much in my education was that I associated myself too much and I...we formed...with those groups we call...there in the NW the students are good at studying in groups...they have study groups. So now, I go and mingle myself in one group. That group was comprised of students from the various schools in Bamenda. So we were able now to compare lectures from different, different schools. Every topic we compare...bring down...we compare. Then from there now we have...I have the access of getting their notes and also reading, helping...asking then for help and also enlightened me. And at times
250 there are some who will have time to teach me that this is like this...this is like this...just like that throughout the whole year. And when the advance Level came out, I also succeeded by...
Interviewer: What levels did you do? What subjects?
Earnest: I did Economics, History and Literature but I failed...I failed in Economics. I had compensatory in Economics.
255 **Interviewer:** OK!
Earnest: And what assisted me because there we were specialized only on answers...approach to questions and answers... questions and answers. So I was fortunate that most of the questions which we specialized—we speculated...
Interviewer: They came. Ha, ha! You got the right questions. That doesn't make for a very complete
260 education but you certainly pressed on.
Earnest: Uhum!
Interviewer: I have a question for you, going back just a step. With all these passing of these examinations and such...what about your father, is he still alive?
Earnest: No he is of late.
265 **Interviewer:** Oh! Sorry. Did he live to see you get your O Levels, or did he live to see...
Earnest: No he lived to see me...I had my advance Level...before he died, he apologized because after my advance level, I raised up those who were behind when I came in the SW, I started working...working farm. I was able to raise some money from the farm which I was working, and now I decided to help those who are behind so that they can also have that entrance of education. So the first...first brother that I sent
270 in secondary school. He is now working at home.
Interviewer: Oh good!
Earnest: Uhum! He had his...I sponsored him right at advance level.
Interviewer: Good! You and your father reconciled.
Earnest: Yes before he died, he apologized.
275 **Interviewer:** Oh that's good!
Earnest: He really apologized, because actually among all our...all the children, I was the only person taking...the one who...had the desire of taking care of them. So even now, if you find me with a lot of weakness in education, it's the background. So it is actually a task. Even when I was working...that is why when Rev. Cheng was here, Rev. Cheng know about all the history. That is why he usually at times assist me because he knows about my edu...even last time when I called him, he said how is education? I said actually education is really tensed but ehh...tensed because of the train—the line through which I passed. I never had the opportunity to go through successful education nor have the basic material to study
280 **Interviewer:** OK! Now, let's go back now to your home education. Ok! Your mother told you the stories about your grandfather...
285 **Earnest:** Yes!
Interviewer: How do you think your life was impacted by her...let's ask the question about who she was. Tell me about your relationship with your mother.
Earnest: My relationship with my...
Interviewer: Sounds! Sounds...sounds like you really respected her.
290 **Earnest:** Yeah! I respected her but at times we don't agree...we were not agreeing because actually, she is an illiterate...not that illiterates don't reason, but you know, they have a particular pattern like I have said...according to our tradition...what they believes. So now, I was enlightened because throughout my life, I have played the role of a servant to people who are workers...working class. So I was good at helping others. Mostly in their various homes. So now this gave me the opportunity to know or to have a high view of life—that life does not only end at a certain level but there is the necessity to have...that is
295 to have a vision of a better life of the future because of people through which I have passed or with whom

I have stayed. So now, it was now my tendency now to bring such changes to affect my family so that they can look at life in a different dimension. I don't know if you are following what I am saying...

Interviewer: I think so...did your mother disagree with that?

300 **Earnest:** Yes! She disagreed because she had her own pattern...

Interviewer: what was her pattern?

Earnest: Her pattern was just that the concept she holds in life is just...just...like what we use to call hand to mouth...she was interested only that children should bring all...all she sees, she eats. As far as the life...the future of the children is concerned, she was not paying...she had little or no vision towards them

305

Interviewer: But was she a kind woman? Eeh, that's a personal...

Earnest: Actually she is a kind woman, but she disagreed with me because I was bringing a strange doctrine

Interviewer:???

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Earnest: We could not agree because our views were different because she was not seeing...she had not seen the importance of education.

Interviewer: Yes! What...you said that you spoke about the difference in reasoning.

Earnest: Uhum!

315

Interviewer: If you could give me...you need to think about this...this is not an easy question. If you could try to pick out maybe one... perhaps just one...maybe two, I don't know differences between the way she reasons and the way you came to reason. You came to reason certainly very early on that is eh...you finished your first school leaving certificate and you wanted to go on but how do you think? What was the difference between her reasoning and your reasoning at that time?

320

Earnest: The difference relies on the fact that...like we have...like I have said. I have grown...most of my life I have spent as a servant to people...a lot of people. So now I have been brought and cultured in a different way though they are my biological parents. So I see the disadvantage of the life which they are living, or this our family life because as I have said my father was...was somebody who graduated in primary school in those days of what we called standard. Also taking into consideration the Kom culture, that when you die, it's but the...your brother or your cousin who comes and inherit the throne but not your children. So your biological children are considered as a different family instead of your own. So little attention is...more attention is paid but to your cousin than your biological children. Because you know when you will die, it's your cousin or your brother who will come and inherit the throne. So they believe that tomorrow, even if they sponsor you consequently you will go and inherit but a different thorn. So your property does not really belongs to you.

325

330

Interviewer: Ok! So in this case when you use the word inherit the throne you mean the...

Earnest: Next of king...

Interviewer: The person who is...

Earnest: Next of king...

Interviewer: Next of King, but the person who will inherit the property of...

335

Earnest: Yeah!

Interviewer: Your property.

Earnest: Yeah! So now when the...with these differences implies now that I need to ...at one time I will use but harder measures to reinforce it because they were not seeing the gold, but I was...I have a higher view because I was able to ??? How the family life will look like in the future if at all we remain or I allow the...I allow them to remain that my brothers should follow their train of reasoning. So that change now goes with pains because I was looking at things at different angles while they are looking at it in a narrow way.

340

Interviewer: Eh...where do you come up with this different vision of life?

345

Earnest: Well actually the way I am seeing is actually a blessing from God because as God use to say in every family, God actually must pick out somebody to lead the family...but because I don't actually believe that I learnt it from somebody, though my humility makes me to learn much, as I have said from being a house servant, and working with people also inspired me.

Interviewer: When did you become a Christian?

350

Earnest: A Christian? Just from primary school.

Interviewer: You then...you did become a Christian from primary school?

Earnest: Yes! Yes! Because I was baptized in Bello field...by that time I was staying with the father of Pastor Cheng...Rev. Cheng.

Interviewer: Ok! Ok, what age were you at that time? Can you remember?

355

Earnest: Primary school...

Interviewer: About what age?

Earnest: Age should be around...just around...just ten eh...I was still small...I cannot still remember eh...but I was still small.

Interviewer: Ok! Did you pay attention as a...when you were baptized. Were you aware of what you were doing or was it something that...

360 **Earnest:** No I was aware...I was aware.

Interviewer: What did you think about Christ at that time?

Earnest: I know that actually...because with us though, one good things about my parents that though my mother, father was a witch doctor as I can say, but were not brought up in that light. My father himself was a believer.

365 **Interviewer:** He was a believer!

Earnest: Yes! So we were all groomed in that way—a Christian life.

Interviewer: Ok!

Earnest: Though their problem now lies on their limitation—their shallowness in reasoning according to their standard of education, the Kom cultural background, the background where they come from.

370 **Interviewer:** We might not be able to talk about this at this point of our conversation, and maybe it is wise that we... but eh, I'm still very interested in the idea of the shallowness of their reasoning, and what I want you to think about... what I want you to think about is what that means and maybe you will have an idea of it right here...you can tell me now if so. But also I think that is...those are very important concepts... those are very important ideas...those are very important slots.

375 **Earnest:** Uhum.

Interviewer: And maybe you need to think about that a little more to really see clearly...to reflect. What is your idea I mean when you talk...when you talk about your mother living hand to mouth?

Earnest: Uhum!

Interviewer: Is that what you mean the shallowness of reason or is there something...

380 **Earnest:** Actually you know...like...for instance just the time that I have spent here, if I am to go out there, I will not remain the same again—I will not remain the same in the way I reason, and what I reason is what I have learnt.

Interviewer: Uhum!

Earnest: From people either through hearing, or through seeing, or through actions what I have seen them doing. Though...and if you don't have the opportunity to learn...either to learn through...

385 **Interviewer:** Through those three aspects.

Earnest: Through those three aspects, the fact is that you will never reason above what your...

Interviewer: Ok! I think I hear what you are saying. What you are saying is that there...we should put it in a philosophical term now...I mean put his words into your mouth, but to put...to put in a philosophical term, they did just have the presupposition on which to reason from...

390 **Earnest:** Yes!

Interviewer: They can only think in a certain way...

Earnest: In a certain form...

Interviewer: ...Certain way. But they do reason though...

395 **Earnest:** Yes they reason according to how they have been groomed up or what they have experienced.

Interviewer: Ok! Their foundation...

Earnest: Yes foundation. And you know as days are changing or days are passing by, you know things are also changing. So we also have to meet up with the standard of...of life. You know what I mean to say like for instance if they were using this place in preparing, like for ditches but today we use but pants.

400 So somebody who is use to these clay pots or eating in a clay pan must certainly try to change because knowing that with the changes...to meet up with the changes of time and also with civilization. And you know civilization also counts on the experience, what you experience and your willingness also to meet up with the standard of life, you must be devoted, and you must be enlightened in one way or the other. You must have learn...you have to learn...you have to study before you can be able to arrive at that

405 standard. But if you don't have that opportunity, you are bound to live under...ehh...under...under the level which you are.

Interviewer: I can understand—I understand what you are saying. Well, let us reach a point here where eh...we are going to...maybe we will do a part two, because I am interested in following up Dr. Emmanuel's discussion. I have been transcribing it. It's been very slow. But I want to finish the transcription and then we can talk about his eh...your discussion...your dialogue with him, and then we can look at some other things with respect to what you have already said. So eh...Earnest thank you very much. Can you like to stay here in closing?

410 **Earnest:** Yeah! Actually eh...because as I have said, it is just by the grace of God that I have come back because I had already decided to give up.

415 **Interviewer:** Already decided to give up?

Earnest: Education.

Interviewer: Here at the school?

420 **Earnest:** Uhum! It was last year. It was just by the grace of God because last year, I was owing an arrier of 100,000FCFA that was brought forward. So now thinking now how to cope this year and last year was very difficult. I even discussed it with the president. That's why even my coming here...I was not even coming that I am coming to school...I was coming that I will just come and park my things out. Actually I have said with us, according to my family background, everybody is but looking unto me.

Interviewer: Oh! Yes.

425 **Earnest:** Because I left camp here to school, the programme was not so easy because what I anticipated, I came and met but a different situation...so but thanks to the glorious fact that on my arrival I met but the account that Rev. Cheng since he understood. It seems somebody hinted him because before then I have told my friends that I will not be able...so I came and just met that he had paid the account

Interviewer: With a clear account now?

430 **Earnest:** So now...the problem now has to lie...like now, I am still preparing—I just came to the school that my friends should not be...because if I am out...it will disturb me too much. So now I decided just to come to the dormitory—as for now. But what was keeping me here in school was the farm...I have a farm which I manage to cultivate while working and the farm now I gave it out when...every year, I gave it out for pledge. They gave me some money and every year, the man was supposed to give the money in December and even the money, I see that it will not be enough. That is what prompted me that I make my mind to change... not actually that I don't love the desire to study...actually I love the desire to study because...

435 **Interviewer:** So are you going to try this semester?

Earnest: Yes! I... will...try.

440 **Interviewer:** You will try Ok! So let's re-visit our conversation later on and we are going to talk about how you are going to about these issues that have already come your way ok! The ones that we have already spoken of. Now this is again Saturday the 18th of August (2007) I have been talking with Earnest and we will continue this conversation in part B of our interview.

Interview with Vulgar Paul by Gary Stephens 06.12.07

Interviewer: Today is December the sixth, 2007 and I am with Vinan Paul Vulgar?

Paul: Yes!

Interviewer: Yes! Yes! Here in Kumba, and Paul has done some dialogues eh...with traditionalist, or people with traditionalists or people with traditional ideas in his own village and we are here, to get to know Paul and to ask some questions just to find out eh...about his background and his own Particular—
5 Particular beliefs. Paul I will let you begin by telling us where you were...where you were born and a little bit about your childhood and the informative influences on you as a child.

Paul: Yeah! I was born in Babanki, and I lived...I have been there...I trained...I have been trained up in Babanki and I have grown up with my grandmother and grand Parents...with a lot of wisdom...they have
10 impacted in me a lot of wisdom when I was still a child... a child...when I was a child, and at a certain age, about the age of thirteen, I left the village...for my education—my secondary education.

Interviewer: Tell us where Babanki is.

Paul: Oh! Babanki is situated precisely in the Northwest Province along the road going to Mbingo—Mbingo Baptist Hospital so Babanki is between Bambui and Kom.

Interviewer: Tell us a little bit about the village itself...just talk...talk about what life in that village is like.
15

Paul: Oh yeah! From the information I got from my grandparents, Babanki, they migrated from the north of Cameroon and they have got a series of movements from Babanki, they went to Banso, to Oku...from Oku, they went to Kom where they call Njine kejem, from Njine Kejem they came to their present place
20 where they are found. So that is some of the things I can say about Babanki and it has been a village which is full of beliefs—they believe in eh! Eh! The people, the indigenes there, they have their own beliefs and they believe in many gods and with one God being the supreme. There so, that is the belief of a Babanki man. So he knows that if you can communicate well, you communicate through the ancestors to the Supreme Being.

Interviewer: Ok! But Babanki is situated kind of in the mountains there isn't it? With the mountains surrounding it. Eh! What effect does the setting—does the place have on the minds of the people? I have often gone through the village and looked around and, did the people relate much with the environment?
25

Paul: O yeah! Before coming to their present site, Babanki has been their area where they are presently found. It's not really where they came and settled. So they settled on the up hills, and up hills, they were...it
30 was for defence...for defence purpose, and when the Germans came, they saw...they had to construct the road leading to Kom so they say it's not good for them to be living far up the mountains...it's good for them to come down. So that is why you see Babanki man at the foot of the hills.

Interviewer: Were they...did they get along with the Germans or were they allies of the Germans during that time?

Paul: Oh Yeah! Babanki has been one of the intimate friends of the Germans...up till as I am saying, they still have that intimate relationship with the Germans because there when you go there, you see some proofs...you have the flag given by the Germans, you still have some relationships they had with the Germans even with the Fon who was to be ... the Fon was to be enthroned in Babanki and in Germany.
35 So yeah...so that is some of the...

Interviewer: What effect or what influence did the European culture have on the Babanki if they were that close to the Germans...was there any serious effect?
40

Paul: Oh Yeah! There has been a lot of effects because some of their culture has been influenced in different ways. Things my grandpa was telling me that happened years back, now when he was telling me...he says some of the things are no more because the white man came...when the white man came, he
45 came with his own religion...he came with his own talks, he had to wipe out some of these things and the cultures have died down. Like formerly, they were burying their chiefs with two widows, but when the white came, when the Germans came, they had to talk to them and that was being changed from there to another thing and so it has influenced a lot...it has cost them a lot of influence.

Interviewer: What did your grandfather say about the influence? Was he happy with it or would he look back to see the times Past eh! As being better times or worst times or what type of times?
50

Paul: Oh yes! It's true he...he...he appreciated what they did...yeah...on the other hand he...like ...he...since he was somebody who was so tied with culture—with tradition, he was like saying that the coming of the Germans have changed the mentality of the young—the young ones who are growing...so, so the young one now they reason differently from the way they were reasoning.
55

Interviewer: Ok! I now I need for you to help me with that now. You can think a little bit and answer them.

Paul: Uhum!

Interviewer: How would your grandfather have...how would he say that the reasoning is different? Or would he have said that...would he have said that the reasoning is different...you've told me that, but how is the reasoning different now than it was let's say in his day?

60 **Paul:** Oh yeah! Because a child...now a child is very inquisitive to know more about things they thought it was only for...it was reserved only for people in a certain age...yeah! So when a little child is very inquisitive, he says, Oh, young man you reason more than your age...so wait when you grow up, you will know more. So that is from eeh! That was the perspective of his own idea.

65 **Interviewer:** So the acquisition of knowledge is what you mean...what he meant by reasoning.
Paul: Yeah!

Interviewer: Eh! Paul Tell me about...I am really interested in some of your grandfather's strong beliefs. Is he still alive?

70 **Paul:** Oh no! He died... he died...actually he died in my arms...that's actually the father of my mother, yeah! Because my paternal grandfather, I didn't see him.

Interviewer: Uhum!

Paul: He died when my Parents were still young...so that's somebody I hear him by history, but my maternal grandfather, he died within my arms...and some of his beliefs...is somebody who...he believed so strongly on his herbs...because he was a traditionalist also, he believed so much in his herbs and also

75 on the issue of the ancestors...that the ancestors...like he says...eh...what they call in Babanki *Nkwesey*...that is somebody who dies then gets up again in the spirit...yeah! He believes so strongly that such people exist...they are existing and they are causing havoc if they are not being appeased...

Interviewer: Hum!

Paul: Yeah! Those were some of his beliefs.

80 **Interviewer:** Hum!
Paul: Those were some of his beliefs.

Interviewer: What about his herbs...did he believed that eh...was he a herbalist in the sense that he had medicines or did he see spirits in his herbs or relating to his herbs ... what was he in that way?

Paul: Yeah! Growing up with him, he never told me the origin of his herbs...yeah! But there what I saw is he believed in using natural herbs to heal somebody who is sick.

85 **Interviewer:** Hum!
Paul: Yeah! And I have never seen him consulting spirits...probably...maybe he was doing it in the hiding but I have never seen him consulting spirits.

Interviewer: Ok,

90 **Paul:** I strongly...I saw him strongly believing in using those herbs to heal.
Interviewer: How old were you when he died?
Paul: Oh Yeah! He died when I was at the age of thirteen.

Interviewer: Thirteen?

Interviewer: You said he died in your arms...tell us about that.

95 **Paul:** Yeah! When...because I grew up with him...and when...he was a man who had a problem with the leg, so, and he was a lover of songs...a lover of children, so he told my Dad that it's good for him to send us to come and be with him so that we can be helping him since he could no more work...we can be helping him to do one thing or the other... there so...we will carry him out and in, then while at times when he is fine, he sings us good songs, he narrate us stories...

100 **Interviewer:** Oh wonderful!
Paul: And finally the day he died, he first of all sent me somewhere, I went, came back and we had to carry him out, carry there he gave up...and he gave up. And so that is somebody who has really impacted my life.

Interviewer: Did he ever become a Christian?

105 **Paul:** Oh yeah! He spent his life...he was a cook with the Catholic priest.
Interviewer: A cook with the Catholic priest?
Paul: Yeah! Who came at the Catholic seminary presently at Bambui...and so that is where he retired and was a Catechist...had been a Catechist for long.

Interviewer: Uhh!

110 **Paul:** Uhum! Then he died as a Christian...he died...I cannot say he died as a Christian because I did not know other things that he had...but with me with my own perspective, I saw that he died, he died as somebody who knew who God is...

Interviewer: Uhum!

Paul: Uhum! Because even the children—the children are so devoted in his own...let me say in his own church, yah, being a Catholic like my mum...yeah! She has been...she is a...she is a...Catholic, and my Dad is a Baptist, so that is something which has been strange to me...

115 **Interviewer:** Yeah!

120 **Paul:** But all of them, they live together as a goal as a husband and a wife...no quarrels and my mum has been in the Catholic as a secretary for women for about thirteen good years—a devoted some, a devoted Catholic that you cannot tamper with her beliefs. So that is a little bit of the history I know about my grandfather and the children concerning ecclesiastical matters.

Interviewer: Did your grandfather find that he could resolve his Catholicism with his, or he could hold to his Catholicism and to his ancestors at the same time? Would he ever talked about that?

125 **Paul:** We...I have never asked him but I discovered that he is somebody who believes both in his tradition and the church that's...yeah! Because he hardly says something without quoting to the ancestors...

Interviewer: Hum!

Paul: Yeah without saying that the people who died are living spirits, so they need some appeasement, they need those things. Yeah! And warning us not to be...not to abstain from appeasing the ancestors, so that is a little bit of trouble you know...

130 **Interviewer:** A bit of trouble?

Paul: Yeah!

Interviewer: Tell us, tell us, why is it a bit of trouble? Why do you...how do you process that?

Paul: I was like, when I came to Christ...when I was like...when God really touched me, I was like reasoning out some of the things that was happening and how I can stand my own feet as a child of God and to be...to be also...to take care not to fall in other mistakes, so I was like asking, taking his life as an

135 example...somebody who has been with the Priest for long and he is still believing in spirits, in spirits...believing in other things. How could he reconcile that with the Christian belief? Especially with the issue of pots to them. Without you putting the pots, they believe that you will go off...you can... you will die, all those type of things...

140 **Interviewer:** Putting the pot.

Paul: Yeah!

Interviewer: What does that mean?

Paul: The pot is eh...they usually say is...eh...god for children...so they say if you don't put it, your children will be sick all the time, they might risk dying, so you must put that pot in your house so it is...you usually find it behind the kitchen with two eyes drawn on it. Yeah! They have a time that they

145 usually come. Probably two or twice a year to come and drink from the pot and to do some rituals. So that's what I mean the pot...that's what I mean.

Interviewer: You said that as though you seem to indicate that you are having troubles with the spirit world.

150 **Paul:** Uhum!

Interviewer: How did you came to your scepticism or your questions? Eh, what were the sources that produced that in you or where did you start reasoning about the spirit world from?

Paul: Yeah because since they have been telling me about the spirits that lives...first of all I was like being inquisitive to encounter one... Yeah encounter one so that that can prove to me that actually those

155 spirits are living, but after some time I was like moving late in the night, because they usually say they move late in the night and even...especially in the cemeteries...when you pass there you will see most...so like I...I like a young man who was so inquisitive, like tried that, to see if those things really... if they are really existing, but I never discovered them, that was where I was like being put to ask a lot of questions

Interviewer: Ya! Lot of questions.

160 **Paul:** Why do they say things exist while I am not seeing them? If they are existing, is it that they are existing just for special people?

Interviewer: Uhum!

Paul: Or what? So that was something that was troubling ...has been troubling me.

Interviewer: It sounds like though you were not only asking or were inquisitive about knowledge, you were also inquisitive about proof.

165 **Paul:** Oh yeah!

Interviewer: Where did you get the idea as a young man of proof? Did it come from some place...did it come from the teacher or how did you come by that?

Paul: I cannot really tell... I cannot really tell... I cannot really tell...I just discovered myself being anxious to do that.

170 **Interviewer:** Ok! You just discovered myself being anxious to that?

Paul: Yeah!

Interviewer: That's wonderful.

Paul: I cannot really tell...even when I go back to the village...because...eeh...like myself now when I go back, I am always trying to know how those people they do operate so that I can be able to see where I will start to tie them down or to ask to come to resolve my own personal questions.

175 **Interviewer:** Ok! How are those people operating? Which people are you talking about...?

Paul: The Spirits! That's what I mean.

Interviewer: So you are really searching for proof?

180 **Paul:** Oh! Yeah. I am still searching for proof.

Interviewer: That's interesting. You think any evidence...do you think that there's any evidence that will falsify the spirit world? Do you think you will ever come upon any proof that the spirit world doesn't exist in the way it's supposed to do?

185 **Paul:** Eeh...until...that's a question I will answer when I will come finally at the end of my research. Yeah! Yeah! Because I still think there are things to say and there are more things to find. Yeah! And by the time I will find it then that's when I will be able to come out with an adequate answer...

Interviewer: Now when you talk to people about Christ...when you talk to people about God, how do you handle the issue of the spirit world or what...how do you reason with them about the issues of the spirits? Whether it is the ancestors? I take it that you're talking about the ancestors and not about necessarily the spirits of rocks or...

190 **Paul:** Yeah! Yeah! The ancestors...I mean ancestors. So you know, talking about Christ, I usually...because it depends the way I see you reasoning, thinking about Christ, because most of them when you want to talk with them, they have their own way of coming out, and others, you discover that that they really know that Christ exists. Yeah! So depends the way you come out to me, then I will be able now to see how I can help you out with the issue of Christ. So that is my own strategy I usually work with them.

195 **Interviewer:** Ok. There are some people who believe Christ does exist.

Paul: Yeah! That Christ exists.

Interviewer: But there are other people who reason in other ways...what about those people? Tell me about those people.

200 **Paul:** Those who reason the other way round...that those people who will think that there is no person...that there is no person who can talk to god except the ancestors. Yeah! That's what they do believe and they say there are others who believe that the ancestors will live at a Particular place...that they need to go there and they perform some traditional rites...to have them...to listen to them talk. Yeah,

205 so, when I am talking with them now I try to relate with them...I try to tell them no, if you are going to that place, that place will never tell you anything—it will never make you to know what you are looking for. So what you have to listen is come and let's reason together...when we start reasoning now together, I push you towards the scriptures yeah! When I push you towards the scriptures, we will be working...at times you might be so offensive to me I will not say anything yeah after we separate, with time, with time,

210 when you start listening, talking with the scriptures, when you reading it, coming and you ask me certain questions, then after that I will... I will tell you look, there is something telling you, somebody is speaking to you through that words, now can you learn something from there. You share with me, yeah there is something I have learn...yes share with me...since you have ever been going to that your shrine, what message can you tell me. You see, from there we would be...you see the person will be finding it difficult to bring a message from where he was going to, but he will obviously bring you a message from the scriptures. So that is some of the strategies I have been using with them...especially my own country people.

215 **Interviewer:** Yeah! That's interesting. It seems like you have a very definite idea that...well you are still on the quest...you are still on the journey to prove either the spirit exist or they don't exist.

220 **Paul:** yeah!

Interviewer: But it seems like you have decided that they don't have even if they do exist, they don't have much to say.

Paul: Oh yeah! Even if because...eh...now that plays with my own beliefs.

Interviewer: What about...what about that interview.

225 **Paul:** yeah! Yeah! yeah!

Interviewer: What about that?

Paul: Yes I believe that even if they exist, they don't have any message to communicate to me, yeah! that's what I believe, they don't have any message to communicate to me because I already know there is somebody who is already communicating the message, yes I know nothing else can communicate me that message except that person .

230 **Interviewer:** Ok!

Paul: Yes, that one eeh...I just...I am interested to know if they really exist.

Interviewer: If they really well...I am going to ask you...how would you reason it out ...eh...this is a really strange question. Please, please, maybe you really can't have a real answer for it maybe hypothetical but if...if one day you actually stumble about something which actually stumbled past something that to you demonstrated that at least some spirits existed...eeh how will you reason ? What would that mean to you? What would be your conclusion?

235

Paul: That if I stumble to something and discover or know that the spirits do exist?
Interviewer: Ehe!
240 **Paul:** What will I say about it?
Interviewer: Or what will you do with it? **Paul:** That's really a question which is a bit eh...I think by that moment, that's where I will decide what I can do...
Interviewer: I can appreciate that.
Paul: Yeah... Yeah...
245 **Interviewer:** That is a tough question.
Paul: yeah...at that moment, I will discern what I can do at that particular moment because I have to love God, and He will direct me??? [in] difficult situations.
Interviewer: Well tell me a little more about your education after you left...you were back your grandfather died when you were thirteen.
250 **Paul:** Uhum !
Interviewer: And I am sure we can talk a lot more about the stories, the songs and all those things but we want to maybe keep this interview to maybe twenty-five or thirty minutes or so rather than make it too long.
Paul: Yeah!
255 **Interviewer:** But tell me after thirteen, where did you go then?
Paul: Oh after thirteen, by then I was doing my class seven education, then after thirteen I went to CCAST Bambili where I schooled there from form one to four...that is where I actually was like...ehh...I lived like independent because my parents had to detach me from them and I was alone experiencing a student life and living in the house alone. Yeah then from there...from one to four, I was in CCAST and from
260 form five I wrote my O Levels back in the village, but staying off my parents...I was not with them together...
Interviewer: Why were you set away...I mean did they have a reason for your...?
Paul: Yes, actually by then, we never had a secondary school in my village that was the year I was to go to CCAST. That was the first year...they bringing the secondary.....