The Social Character of Belief

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Abstract

“The Social Character of Belief” is an argument that belief springs from social life, language, and experience. It situates the epistemic basis for belief itself in communicative social action. Empirically the work focuses on the Jamaa Catholic movement in the Katanga province of the Congo. In the ethnically mixed mining camps of Katanga, a Catholic belief system articulated in locally significant principles was practiced and applied in ways that the priests who taught it never anticipated. These surprising actions and understandings of Catholicism and the wild success of the Jamaa movement itself are perfectly sensible when these local modes of thought and action are taken into account. The Jamaa is used as an example of the way that action and communication create belief, and of the way that in creating and applying belief they contribute to its transformation.


Introduction

“There is no religion that is not both a cosmology and a speculation about the divine. Further, and less often noted, religion has not merely enriched a human intellect already formed but in fact has helped to form it. Men owe to religion not only the content of their knowledge, in significant part, but also the form in which that knowledge is elaborated” (Durkheim 1912, 8). To Durkheim, the earliest religions were the font of the basic conceptual tools and modes of action constitutive of the social world itself. The fundamental “categories of understanding” (ibid., 8), analogous to concepts, were originally bound up in religion. In the grey area between individual consciousness and ideal-type-collective-consciousness, these categories of understanding cohere into a network of interrelationships, associations, dissociations, and expectations that make up what – if anything so confining a label could be applied to such multifarious beasts – are here called systems of thought. A given society is exactly the systems of thought held and used in common by its members; it can be more only insofar as human biology demands food, buildings require materials, etc. If we are to understand human action as products of a shared social life, we must look to the ways that people come to think alike: the ways in which human thought is at base built by and for communication with others. Within Durkheim, these shared systems of thought are defined by two functions: “One is turned toward action, which it elicits and regulates; the other toward thought, which it enriches and organizes,” (1912, 430).

But, as Durkheim realizes, these intersubjective systems are more than thought alone. Any action, if interpretable by another individual, is at least implicitly a type of
communication: Social action inscribes and discovers the form and content of systems of thought in the world in which we live. Using Durkheim’s *The Division of Labor in Society*, we can sketch two primary ways that individuals come to cooperative action. The first type of cooperation, called mechanical solidarity, is essentially an unconscious similarity, one derived from an essentially similar experience and systematization of activity. In the strongest formalization of mechanical solidarity, individuals act in cooperation toward the same goal because they *are* the same. This cooperation at minimum strengthens the latent order that is mechanical solidarity’s precondition.

The second mode of cooperation, however, arises in cases of difference, and involves a mediation of that difference through reference to a collaboratively negotiated point of similarity. In this interpretation of Durkheim, organic solidarity is an action, not a state. Organic solidarity is the action to realize a bond or bonds of mechanical solidarity in the name of facilitating cooperation across difference; cooperation is brought about either from expansion of extant mechanical solidarity (e.g. “all men are created equal” eventually becomes about non-white men too), or generated newly through some sort of social integration (e.g. staff training exercises). Over time, this process abstracts the bonds of mechanical solidarity – resulting in the “increasing preponderance of organic solidarity” (Durkheim 1997) – because extant commonalities must be extended and respecified to rapidly diverging individual situations, and new ones forged in the name of cooperation that acquire their own generality in time. In turn, the abstraction of bonds of mechanical solidarity facilitates the action of organic solidarity, since it relies on and results in such broadening commonalities.
Since mechanical solidarity is functionally equivalent to the “collective consciousness”, we can think of this as an ideal-type subjectivity (a socially “average” individual), holding a majority of cooperation-motivating concepts. The word “system of thought” thus refers to shared experiential distinctions within the world and consistency in the way in which those distinctions are organized and related. There are thus many systems of thought that coexist simultaneously within a single individual. Professional ethics, religious ethics, legal procedures, family traditions, etc. all bind an individual to other systems of thought in complex and interrelated ways.

The stability and coherence of these systems is here idealized into two important historical stages, adapted from Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. The first stage is one of genesis, which results in the establishment and stabilization of what Kuhn broadly refers to as a “paradigm”. Thought system genesis results from the coalescence of experienced distinctions and a meta-experienced logic that organizes them. It is important to note that these are not independent, both are simultaneously implicated in experience: a logic makes distinctions available, and distinctions in use can cause the reevaluation of that logic.

The second stage of development in the life of thought systems is a form of elaboration and enrichment; this is essentially parallel to what Thomas Kuhn called “normal science”. The thought-system members have necessarily come to share it through mechanisms that make their experiences of the world similar. Kuhn's choice of science and his discussion of exemplars in the postscript is the perfect example. Textbooks have example problems, with keys to describe acceptable answers. The
membership and progression of individuals in each scientific community is highly structured and demands a very similar set of experiences at all but the very highest levels of disciplinary divisions; contributions to the system of thought then take place in extension and accumulation of experiences consonant with it.

While these two stages express the historical development of systems of thought, they do not address the actual functions that Durkheim highlights: “One is turned toward action, which it elicits and regulates; the other toward thought, which it enriches and organizes,” (1912, 430). In this work I will refer to these functions distinctly as the action and elaborative systems of thought. We will begin with an introduction of the “turning towards thought” that Durkheim describes: elaboration.

This “turning towards thought” makes objects in the world available to our perception and use. The availability of any conceptual object is predicated on its distinction against another concept or concepts. As Hegel argues in *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1977), the existence of a single concept belies its participation in a totality and in negation. The existence of one is always *vis a vis* another, and as such their difference is encompassed in their mutual reliance on the fact that they both have the quality of being distinguished from each other. Without these socially anchored divisions between perceived objects, the world is not “revealed” by the abstract qualities we would ordinarily develop in the course of social life. Without concept embedded in a system of thought that confines and explains its relationality to other concepts, perception regresses to a corrupt version of the Hegelian totality, embracing all possible individualizable specific and general abstract qualities of a given perceptual experience simultaneously,
with no useable differentiation within it. Consciousness in Hegel’s analysis, and here too, is thus the constant movement from abstraction, which embraces many qualities in experience, to specificity, which expresses the relations of these definite qualities to a larger system of which they form a part. This movement is the essential function of what I have termed the elaborative system of thought.

The action function of the system of thought, however, is predicated on the elaborative system. Action relies on the distinctions that our social thought system imparts to us. It is impossible to imagine, for example, that a person would understand how to communicate via cell phone if that person did not have an idea of what a cell phone was and the qualities and manner of its use. Buttons like “power” and the numbers needed to successfully dial a call are concepts within a system of order and meaning, and the evaluation of their effect on each other and instrumentalization of that effect is the key to the action system. The action function, therefore, is concerned with the effect of concepts on each other, while the elaborative function is concerned with the relation of concepts to each other.

Consider the classic Geertz example of building a dam, meant to contrast between his idea of models “of” reality, and models “for” reality. When a person is reflecting on what it means to build a dam, the material components necessary, what a finished dam looks like and the components involved or whatever, they are using the elaborative system of thought. When a person is physically acting to build a dam, however, that person is using the concept of water and considering how its flow is obstructed or not by certain materials, how those materials will change when brought into contact with water
or when left in place for a long period of time, the effect of the water stoppage or flow on
certain observable facts about the river, etc. To put it more formally in the terms I’ve laid
out here, when a person thinks about the effect of a dam, that person anticipates certain
conceptual features of the world to present themselves as a result of that action.

While an individual’s passive uncovering of the effects of things on each other
may seem a plausible starting point in the development of human understanding (and is
indeed a common misconception of the process of learning) such a picture of learning is
fundamentally inhuman.

To communicate qualities of specific individual states, language depends on
collectively held signs and systems of expression that correspond to a common
understanding of what experience those signs call out. This cognitive demand for the
limitation and routinization of concept use demonstrates that as learning and action
progress, the accretion of socially revealed facts of order must take on a normative
character, with certain uses or perceptions of order being rejected as falling outside what
is commonly understood as right.

Human thought depends upon this systematization; individually developed
conceptual frameworks, imagining that this were even possible, would be impossible to
share without developing methods of producing relevantly analogous experience of and
associations with each articulated concept, in each utterance, in each interlocutor, at each
point of communication.iii Given this demand for normativity from communication itself,
we can safely conclude that normative structures inherently develop within thought
systems.iv The normative component falls within the action system of thought because as
it is concerned with the evaluation and instrumentalization of concepts. This even includes the elaborative and action system itself as subjects for its normativity, since these are also manifest conceptually as actionable objects.

With the skeleton of this argument in hand, we can now begin to speculate as to the perfect empirical case for its application and evaluation. I am aware that the systems I have proposed seems reified from any practical concern. This problem arises from two concerns, one epistemological, the other political. The primary concern appears in most accounts of the change of thought systems. The argument from Durkheim, McDowell, Kuhn, and others, is essentially that humans' conceptual frameworks reach all the way out to the empirical world, and as such the only evaluation of the success of these frameworks relies on similarly human concepts particular to certain social realities themselves. The fear to make conclusions about the viability of thought systems results from the view of the evaluation of thought systems by some sort of omniscient or true-judging neutral language as the height of stupidity and unconscious colonialism. This epistemological concern comes from the fact that if two completely different logics come to an internally coherent account for some problem, only a sort of divine intervention seems to be capable of establishing one as true or more “successful”. This leads many to avoid the problem. Bourdieu, Foucault and other theorists who focus on power resolve this issue through a veiled symbolic materialism: the thought systems that come to dominate are not necessarily more “successful” or more “truthful”, but rather achieve their success by their ability to enforce their accounts of the “true order”.

This avoidance of the epistemological assessment of thought systems leads into
the political concern mentioned before: even if we could find a basis for such a claim that would allow us to evaluate the “successfulness” of a system of thought, the implementation of such could result in the suppression and dismissal of a diverse array of thought systems, creating exactly the symbolic materialist domination that a responsible work about systems of thought would attempt to responsibly prevent. Premature or wishful conclusions in this vein are implicated in great atrocities in human history, and a theory that claims possible the absolute divination of value or assessment of a thought system is a precursor to terrible misuse.

That said, if this work is to attempt an explanation of thought system evolution and change at all, there are two principle ways of grounding that explanation. One was alluded to in the case of Foucault and Bourdieu, who in some cases make arguments that externalize the cause of these changes to certain material conditions. These conditions are the raw material for the collective representations and action required for the instilment of particular thought systems. The other, and one relatively unexplored other than elliptically in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, works at the basis of thought systems and the distinctions and actions they generate, and asks if socialization into separate thought systems or if divergence within socialization of thought systems themselves is capable of generating spontaneous change and producing distinctions that demand systemic reorganization.

The ground for this type of evaluability is, again, hinted at in The Elementary Forms. “There can be no society that does not experience the need at regular intervals to maintain and strengthen the collective feelings and ideas that provide its coherence and
its distinct individuality. This moral remaking can be achieved only through meetings, assemblies, and congregations in which the individuals, pressing close to one another, reaffirm in common their common sentiments,” (1912, 429). In order to evaluate systems of thought and their integration, maintenance, and spread, we must look at collective actions that contribute to that social system, and we must examine the ways in which those actions contribute to its makeup. Though it initially seems trivial as an indicator of what we should examine (e.g. “What, you mean look at any social interaction in history?” or “Why not just evaluate this paper itself and the relation it attempts to articulate with a social history and its reader?”), it points to the value of collective action in the genesis mode of thought systems. If what Durkheim said is true, genesis of a thought system capable of reproducing itself in new individuals must occur socially. This genesis would be marked by certain collective action that routinizes, popularizes, and makes normative its implementation. In this vein, we must evaluate two types of attempted conceptual genesis: successful stabilization of a system of thought, and unsuccessful stabilization. The ideal case, then, is one where similar collective action succeeds in one case and fails in others. The dream scenario would differ only in the minimal amount required for the two results to be manifest, but it is only a dream. This test case assumes that thought systems are assimilated whole cloth. It is just as likely, however, that an ideal case would demonstrate that certain elements of thought systems are assimilated differently by different people. Religious syncretisms are perfect examples of this phenomenon. A version of this case is analyzed as illustration in the third chapter, with a discussion of the experiential base of the parties involved and their interaction with a new system and
social world.

Considering that I have left out relations of truth or comparative “value” of thought systems so far, integration of a thought system seems to depend only on social use and proximity. This has heavy bearing, especially on the acquisition of the first thought systems, since it would seem from where we are now in the argument that it would be impossible for them to fail. This point is addressed later with Jean Piaget's help, especially as it applies to learning at early stages of social development.

A derivative issue with the argument thus far is that the resolution of competition between thought systems seems essentially impossible to predict. Durkheim writes about this that, “It is impossible for me to make a sensation pass from my consciousness into someone else's...All I can do is invite another person to set himself before the same subject as I and open himself to its influence. By contrast, conversation and intellectual dealings among men consist in an exchange of concepts. The concept is, in essence, an impersonal representation” (435). Durkheim's quotation captures the difficulties of specific applicability of thought systems, though he seems to have forgotten something he said earlier: “To be sure, collective ideals tend to become individualized as they become incarnate in individuals. Each person understands them in his own way and gives them an individual imprint, some elements being taken out and others being added” (425). As Durkheim realizes here, each concept, if it is acquired in experienced social life, must differ for each member of the social order, even if the only difference between their observation of a particular phenomenon is one of location. Thus, communication is inherently, in some sense, impersonal representation, and Durkheim, in contradiction,
gets it right. Communication is only as impersonal in the degree that its use differs from
the experiential history of the communicating interlocutors differ; it is as impersonal as
the mechanical solidarity that links the thought systems involved in communication. If
two people have very similar experiences of the same event, their communication about
such event is necessarily less impersonal in its experiential basis than an account of the
experienced phenomena would be to someone at great distance from the event. This
captures the insight Durkheim had when he spoke of society's need to press together and
reaffirm collective representations.

The reality of this basis in mechanical solidarity – as it relates to thought system
comparison, conversion, or intelligibility – is borne out in Kuhn: “Having isolated such
areas of difficulty in scientific communication, they can next resort to their shared
everyday vocabulary in an effort to further elucidate their troubles. Each may, that is, try
to discover what the other might see and say when presented with a stimulus to which his
own verbal response would be different” (1962, 202). The conclusion that results from
this line of argument is exactly the one Kuhn and Durkheim recognize. Argument reduces
to the need to communicate the logical relationships necessary within the particular
system of thought, then the need to place the recipient of the argument in front of
particular experiences (whether through active experience or memory) that seem to
demonstrate the validity of that argument.
Chapter I – Language and the Elaborative System of Thought

“...one may readily conclude that animals and plants are not known as a result of their usefulness; they are deemed to be useful or interesting because they are known” (Lévi-Strauss 1962, 21).

“Concept” is used here to describe the nexus point of a confluence of cognitively separated parts of diverse experiences. Concept can be used to refer to an individual's experience, or a collectively bounded experience and use of a concept, though both cases in practice necessarily result in a Weberian ideal-type reduction to what experiences and elements of the system of thought seem relevant to the analysis at hand. Concepts must be built up from experience; what would the content of speech be if it were not based on experience? An argument for a priori human concepts makes the sudden awareness of historically unknown concepts appear to be a form of providential biology anticipating the world. Language is not necessarily unintelligible if experience hasn't grounded the terms used; we make technologies for rendering relevant or analogous experience: dictionaries, thesauruses, textbooks, instructional videos, audiotapes, this paper, etc.. Language gives us the capacity for producing new concepts, new nexuses, initially based on the experienced distinctions built up through language. “A common language connects the members of a community into an information sharing network with formidable collective powers. Anyone can benefit from the strokes of genius, lucky accidents, and trial-and-error wisdom accumulated by anyone else, present or past” (Pinker 1994, 3).

But where does this experiential basis for language come from? It cannot develop in an individual, socially isolated human mind, nor does it appear without experience (Americans cannot understand Chinese without training in the language, for example).
Here we depend on a synthesis of Bourdieu and Piaget. No human child who develops language is born into an empty, inhuman world. The child is born into a social world, surrounded by social action, and implicated in it as a co-conspirator from the day the child is born.

It is true, as Piaget notes, that there is a form of physical development that precedes the capacity for socialization. This type of physical and non-subjective limitation persists in different forms throughout the course of human life; no person is capable of hearing things that escape the range of the human ear, nor see things that escape the ability of the eye to pick up. This is the paradigmatic case of asocial limitation on systems of thought.

This is balanced against social limitation through forms of collective representation and social power. To use a distinction found in Bourdieu, these forms of conceptual order take on concrete powers in social life. The act of declaring a road “open”, for example, manifests the power of the symbolic system as objective constraint, and makes a noticeable change in the environment; one can thereafter look at the road and see cars moving down it. When this change is not perceptible to an outsider, these changes are manifest specifically to the thought system, the collective representation of reality common to the members within the society enacting it. A ritual of change of title, if not substantiated through any sort of visible change (documentation, vestment, etc.), must have its life in the social responses to it (Ms. → Mrs., etc.). This form of symbolic definition serves to create or reinforce distinctions that form the basis for actions within a particular type of social order. An illustration of this phenomenon appears in Gender
Advertisements: “Display seems to be concentrated at the beginning and endings of purposeful undertakings, that is, at junctures, so that, in effect, the activity itself is not to be interfered with. (Thus the small courtesies sometimes performed in our society by men to women when the latter must undergo what can be defined as a slight change in physical state, as in getting up, sitting down, entering a room or leaving it...)…” (Goffman 1979, 2). This form of display is a collective form of definition; it is capable of reaffirming latent distinctions within the elaborative system held in common, or causing powerful transformations from one social state to another (presidential inauguration, for example). These acts depend on society to make them meaningful; they also depend on society to make that meaning real in action. The Gender Advertisements passage alludes to the display of gender at the initiation of minor interactions. This gender display, in failing to be practiced, does not destroy or undermine gender outright. It does contribute to a change in the bounding and experiential use of the gendered concepts. This change need not be profound. Language uses the same words thousands of times. Meaning comes to be codified in a range of experiences of what words mean socially, and this form of experience is difficult to invalidate through one correction.

These two modes of limitation, asocial and social, broadly constrain the development of thought systems, and specifically constrain the development of particular concepts, which also take the two idealized historical stages from Kuhn discussed in the Introduction: 1) genesis of new concepts, nexuses of experiences or 2) extension and incorporation of new experience into existing nexuses. To explain the first form of development, I look to Jean Piaget. The genesis and incorporation of these nexuses of
experience into a thought system would initially seem very problematic from the profoundly subjective, relativistic perspective here. This is resolved by noting that, through language, symbolic gestures can be used to connect common abstract qualities across diverse moments and experiences through abstract representation made possible by language. That is to say, when a father says to his child “Truck” in a variety of circumstances to describe a variety of phenomena that the father indicates by that rubric, he makes that abstraction a part of the phenomenological world through social action, giving an objectively (insofar as language can be perceived) common element across situations. The assimilation of these concepts and systems of thought, presented essentially whole cloth by the social system the child is born into, at first takes on a character we would anticipate if these socially relative concepts actually first seemed to be simple associated features of the natural environment. Piaget writes: “This [egocentric] stage begins at the moment when the child receives from outside the example of codified rules, that is to say, some time between the ages of two and five. But though the child imitates this example, he continues to play either by himself without bothering to find play-fellows, or with others, but without trying to win, and therefore without attempting to unify the different ways of playing” (1997, 27). Later, when through action it becomes clear that certain concepts are socially relative, rules and systems of order taking such malleability into account can develop through cooperation. The first symptoms of an awareness of this malleability are described in Piaget:

For the habit of repeating a given gesture ritually, gradually leads to the consciousness of 'pretending.' The ritual of going to bed, for instance...is sooner or later utilized 'in the void' and the smile of the child as it shuts its eyes in carrying out this rite is enough to show that it is perfectly conscious of 'pretending' to go to sleep. Here already we have a symbol, but a
'played' symbol. Finally, when language and imagery come to be added to motor intelligence, the symbol becomes an object of thought. The child who pushes a box along saying “tuff-tuff” is assimilating in imagination the box’s movement to that of a motor-car: the play symbol has definitely come into being. (ibid., 32)

The social malleability of certain components of systems of thought\textsuperscript{x} is discovered through experience; this malleability derives from the experiential basis of human action and communication. This is a necessary outcome if you accept that the content of experience informs concepts: Since experience is never homogenous, concepts are inherently differently constructed for all individuals. This heterogeneity in concepts across the social network entails a type of negotiation that attempts to bring abstractly analogous experiences into line in an attempt to make things interpretable\textsuperscript{x}.

Turning back to my earlier point, certain forms of abstract order take on a life that seems independent of the observable, physical constraints of the world. To use Piaget again, notions like “the rules of the game”, or “the spirit of the game” are not necessarily qualities that describe or detail qualities of the marbles themselves, they describe a socially variable set of institutions that the child has some effect in recreating and constructing. This speaks to the types of limitation. Systems of thought are confronted by objective things, autonomous features of the universe that exist “asocially”. Systems of thought are also constrained by things like socially variable symbolically “objective” facts, such as socially acceptable language use, manners of expression, etc.. This distinction is absolutely crucial in a comparative analysis of modern religion and modern science\textsuperscript{xi}. The awareness of socially constituted concepts like “charisma” or “femininity” escapes, in a profound way, the objective asocial “facts” of the objective world. That more relative concepts exist, however, does not call into doubt the ability of concepts to
genuinely elicit qualities of experience (such as pain, edibility, experiences of color) that can be “useful” in a socially independent, cross-cultural way. In this way, the use of concepts as I have put it does not efface the “asocially” effective power of systems of thought. The avoidance of a destructive relativism relies on this fact: systems of thought may change, but asocial realities of the world that systems of thought can sometimes elicit do not. If experience can in any way grasp objectively significant qualities through its conceptual work, then we need not fear the profound relativism that sacrifices progress.

Systems of thought are capable, then of expressing empirically, cross-culturally effective properties of the objective world. They are also capable of expressing socially relative qualities of the “objective”, enforced social-symbolic world. The differences between the two were historically much less defined, and the division less concerning, than they seem to be now.

The greatest weakness of what I have laid out here is implicated in adaptation. How can a nexus-of-experience, a concept, or a thought system in aggregate integrate experience that necessitates its transformation or adaptation? This point is resolved by adapting a Hegelian mechanism.

Let us consider that individual thought systems and concepts are profoundly colored by individual experience, and that that experience is effaced and recharacterized by its collaboration with society and other, relatively common experiences. The society, in a Hegelian way, is made up of the heterogeneous, profoundly individualized subjective experiences that constitute it. But society, in totality, is a shifting network of negotiating
these subjectivities, through interactions, into a representation of the whole that effaces
certain qualities of individuals' experiences. This effacing is required to unite some
qualities of experience into a reductionist uniformity and is key to cooperation\textsuperscript{xii}. This
uniformity undergoes constant revision, as individuals in society are always experiencing
and using concepts according to their individual relation to society and their own
experience. The individual, also, is constantly reevaluating these nexuses and systems of
thought in relation to the society that he relates to. This heterogeneity of concept use, and
variability in anchor points for conceptual nexuses, results in a fundamental imprecision
of language.

This fundamental imprecision means that a society's account and use of a word, a
proxy for concepts, differs from the individual's experience of it. This imprecision
enforces and elicits distinctions made on the part of society that evade the contingent
understanding and experience of the individual. Just as society fails to perfectly match the
individual in concept use, individuals' concepts are also not perfectly consonant with the
society's understanding; their action presses back against society's use of concepts not
congruent with their understanding. When these individualized distinctions and
deviations become systematic, innovation, social differentiation, and re-systematization
of seemingly “old” distinctions occurs. This systematization was alluded to in the
introduction; it is necessary in the case of language in order to communicate. Through the
inherently imperfect mapping of social concepts onto individuals' experiences,
divergences in experience become differentiations in the meanings and actions that
constitute systems of thought themselves.
We haven't yet begun to talk about the content or direction of these divergences, though their systematicity can at least in principle be anticipated. In presuming imperfection of communication, it appears I have destroyed the basis for its commonality. Here the way out is through the idea of effective truth, whose foundation comes from. *The Division of Labor in Society* and *Mind, Self, & Society.*

G. H. Mead's three part structure of “meaning” and Durkheim's structures of solidarity have pragmatic definitions, both essentially defined as a cooperative relationship. “If the individual can [put himself in the place of the other person and say, in effect, 'He will act in such a way and I will act in this way,] and the attitude which he calls out in himself can become stimulus to him for another act, we have meaningful conduct,” (Mead 1962, 73). I treat Durkheim's notion of mechanical solidarity similarly as the unconsciously understood basis for communication; mechanical solidarity is necessary insofar as it can engender cooperation, beyond that is a superfluous (for the given moment of cooperation) commonality. Thus, I define “effective truth” as a sufficient conceptual overlap for the anticipation of future conceptual extension. To restate, in order to communicate, individuals rely on previously utilized experiential nexuses that anticipate extension into new experience. The degree to which this future convergence and similar labeling of experience is anticipated on the part of the individuals involved is the degree of “effective truth” in the particular concepts that are used. This reproduces Durkheim's notion of Mechanical Solidarity and combines it with Mead's structure of meaningful action.

Effective truth thus consists of the collective representation that effaces difference
across cases but preserves functionality. By calling animals by a particular species, we efface differences among the individuals while engendering an abstract commonality. This form of reduction occurs in communication between individuals just as it does in individuals' relationship with conceptually mediated empirical world. Effective truth is the effective overlap of nexuses of experiences, or of experience's relative consistency with past experience in the same vein. Just as no experience may perfectly duplicate a previous experience, no human utterance can express perfect consonance with a listener's interpretation. This presents us with an idea of effective truth based in collective action.

To sum up what I have laid out so far: the elaborative system of thought is made up of concepts; the function of the elaborative system is that these concepts segment experience into usable parts. A concept is an abstract commonality, simultaneously engendered by and serving as the nexus that connects the diverse parts of individual experiences that limit its content: “truck” in the earlier example comes to signify, through its commonality, an abstract quality that is common across cases. These nexuses are often represented linguistically through signs or symbols, but the precise cognitive basis for these nexuses cannot be arrived at in this work. These nexuses form the basis for the future segmentation of experience into the conceptual categories already constructed (earlier referred to as conceptual extension)\textsuperscript{xiii}. Since experience of these nexuses is heterogeneous across society (that is, individualized), conceptual nexuses are renegotiated, reevaluated, and limited by interrelationship among individuals. These concepts are reinforced, and are meaningful in interaction, as a result of effective truth. Effective truth is the likelihood that future experience will be segmented into existing
nexuses. Effective truth, though operative, cannot overcome imperfections in communication and the ambiguity of language. This ambiguity makes space for the continued renegotiation of concepts. The renegotiation of concepts has two effects: if concepts can be taken to elicit objectively useful, culturally “independent” properties of the objective world, this renegotiation has the capacity to create an ever growing divide between socially constituted conceptual distinctions that manifest socially independent effects (properties like heat, or electricity), and socially constituted conceptual distinctions that manifest effects that are not cross-culturally manifest (properties like style of dress, moral codes). Individual experience produces exigencies for the social system of thought and demands renegotiation of socially held understandings; these exigencies provide the basis for different systematization, reorganization, and integration of conceptual distinctions never before seen, another effect of renegotiation through communication. The systematization and reorganization of systems of thought derives from the action system of thought, which will be detailed in the next chapter; reorganization relies, however, on the experiential segmentation provided by the elaborative system, and derives ultimately from the imperfection in communication of human experiential nexuses.

Levi-Strauss writes in an illustration of this phenomenon: “The characteristic feature of mythical thought is that it expresses itself by means of a heterogeneous repertoire which, even if extensive, is nevertheless limited. It has to use this repertoire, however...because it has nothing else at its disposal” (17). “Once it materializes the project will therefore inevitably be at a remove from the initial aim...” (21).
As more segments of experience are brought under a nexus, the nexus itself increasingly refers less to their specific content, forming an abstract representation that unites the content of the segmented experience under it through abstract commonalities.

It is fundamental here to understand that abstractions, a unity of conceptually segmented and diverse moments of experiences, thus must themselves constitute a concept that may be “experienced”. We would not be able to reflect on something like “morality” if it was not itself a nexus uniting many different components of experience into a system. We can access the word “morality”, though it expresses a system of concepts and relationships, in a similar way that we experience the word “truck”, though the specific content of experience and syntactic relationship of concepts within each are profoundly different. In this way, there is only one form that experience can be accessed: the conceptual nexus. Systematization of concepts themselves constitutes an argued field of relations between syntactically “lower” elements, united as constituents of an overarching category. Just as words form phrases, phrases form sentences, and sentences form clauses and embedded, recursive sentences, so do conceptual nexuses exist in a hierarchical relationship of complexity and relation of dependency. An investigation of this dependency is conducted in Chapter 2.

The reduction inherent in abstraction creates space that admits alternate specificity and variation to integrate under experience segmented and organized by the abstraction. This process allows new specific content to be introduced into segmented experience through conceptual nexuses. This is essentially the benefit of the routinization of science talked about in Kuhn:
It suggested which experiments would be worth performing and which, because directed to secondary or to overly complex manifestations of electricity would not. Only the paradigm did the job far more effectively, partly because the end of interschool debate ended the constant reiteration of fundamentals and partly because the confidence that they were on the right track encouraged scientists to undertake more precise, esoteric, and consuming sorts of work. Freed from the concern with any and all electrical phenomena, the united group of electricians could pursue selected phenomena in far more detail, designing much special equipment for the task and employing it more stubbornly and systematically than electricians had ever done before. Both fact collection and theory articulation became highly directed activities. The effectiveness and efficiency of electrical research increased accordingly, providing evidence for a societal version of Francis Bacon's acute methodological dictum: 'Truth emerges more readily from error than confusion.' (1996, 18)

In conclusion, we see that the conceptual nexus expresses a limitation, organization, and selection within the field of experience. This is the foundational form of experience. The foundational content of experience is limited in two ways: the objectively, socially independent limitation that constrains human action and perception, and the socially dependent, human modes of limitation like law, morality, language use, codes of dress, etc.. With these tools in hand, we can look away from the elaborative system, which reveals and unites diverse experience into unified patterns, giving content to our experience. We can then turn towards the action system, which is concerned with the manipulation, manifestation, and destruction of these revealed patterns as revealed through that content.
Chapter II: Response and the Action System of Thought

A tree is, as it were, strongly motivated so far as its lower parts are concerned: it must have a trunk and the trunk must be nearly vertical. The lower branches already allow more arbitrariness: their number, although it may be expected to be limited, is never fixed in advance, nor is the orientation of each and its angle in relation to the trunk. But these aspects nevertheless remain bound by reciprocal relations, since the larger branches, given their own weight and the foliage-laden branches they hold up, must balance the pressures which they apply at the common point of support. The part played by motivation, however, diminishes, and that of arbitrariness increases progressively as we turn our attention higher: the terminal branches can no longer compromise the tree's stability nor alter its characteristic shape [though a poorly constituted terminal branch could technically do this -NS] . Their multiplicity and insignificance has freed them from the initial constraints and their general distribution can be explained either as a series of repetitions, on an ever-diminishing scale, of a plan which is also written into the genes in their cells or as a result of statistical fluctuations. The structure, intelligible at the start, in branching out reaches a sort of inertia or logical indifference. Without contradicting its primary nature, it can thereafter undergo the effect of multiple and varied instances which occur too late to prevent an attentive observer from identifying it and classifying it as a genus. (Lévi-Strauss 1962, 160)

When Lévi-Strauss writes about motivation and arbitrariness in the quotation that leads this section, he takes this distinction from Saussure about language and applies it to culture: “‘The two extremes [arbitrariness and motivation] are like poles between which the whole system moves, two opposing currents which share the movement of language: the tendency to use the lexicological instrument (the unmotivated sign) and the preference given to the grammatical instrument (structural rules)’ (Saussure, pp. 133-4)” (Lévi-Strauss 1962, 156). Lévi-Strauss describes, through Saussure, the analytical thread that connects the elaborative and action system of thought. The quotation that begins Chapter 1, “…one may readily conclude that animals and plants are not known as a result of their usefulness; they are deemed to be useful or interesting because they are known” (Lévi-Strauss 1962, 21), refers to this property of arbitrariness; usefulness refers to the outcomes of the action system. A useful argument taken from Lévi-Strauss in *The Savage Mind* states essentially that arbitrary distinctions are foundational to action itself.
Inherent in the always social application of these distinctions is a transformation of the organizing nexuses. In the course of their use in segmenting experience, initially arbitrary concepts can transform into motivated concepts, participating in a structure that implicates them more broadly. The consequence of this motivation is that certain concepts, like the trunk of the tree in the example, become indispensable to the functioning of the system of thought that operates on the basis of these concepts.

In this analysis, motivation takes two forms. Extended motivation is the degree to which further conceptual nexuses rely on the concept (sign). This is what Saussure referred to in the use of “structural rules” in language; productive functional words or grammatical elements – like the suffixation of -able to turn a noun into an adjective – are implicated strongly in that many conceptual divisions stem from the use of this functional element\(^\text{xxvi}\). Foundational motivation, the second form, is the degree to which the concept in question depends on extant concepts. To restate, foundational motivation is the degree to which the nexus of experience in question is derived from other nexuses within the system of thought.

The tree metaphor is a beautiful example of this process. The trunk, is, as it were, a profoundly motivated element of the total tree. It operates primarily on extended motivation, since the trunk powerfully affects the rest of the tree's visible structure, which builds upon it; the individual branches are not necessary for the constitution of the tree. Foundational motivation, however, comes to the trunk only from its basis in the roots. The highest branches have extended motivation only insofar as leaves attach to them. The upper branches have the highest degree of foundational motivation in that they depend on
all the preceding parts of the tree that make possible their growth. If motivation were a sort of zero-sum system, then it would appear that as we increased in distance from foundational concepts that derive motivation from extension, we gain foundational motivation in equal proportion that motivation by extension was lost. This would mean no concept is motivated any more than any other. This cannot be true, if we are to depend on motivation to lend a structure or inflexibility to parts of the system of thought. Instead, these types of motivation can have different functions. Extended motivation implies the dependence of other concepts upon that concept, and hence its centrality and importance; foundational motivation is thus the dependence of that concept upon others, hence its contingency and subsistence.

As systems of thought develop, there is a tendency for these divisions to become interrelated, and, as such, for them to become derivative from a fewer number of propositions (or conceptual systems and orders themselves).

Not only do theoretical propositions stand in logical interrelations to each other so that they may be said to constitute “systems” but it is in the nature of the case that theoretical systems should attempt to become “logically closed.” That is, a system starts with a group of interrelated propositions which involve reference to empirical observations within the logical framework of the propositions in question. Each of these propositions has logical implications. The system becomes logically closed when each of the logical implications which can be derived from any one within the system finds its statement in another proposition in the same system. It may be repeated that this does not mean that all the other propositions must be logically derivable from any one – on the contrary, if this were true scientific theory would be sheer tautology. (Parsons 1937, 9)

To use the previous example in consonance with Chapter I, it is as if the tree grows to express its trunk through the evolution and interconnection of the branches. This is, in at least one way, the process of abstraction discussed previously\textsuperscript{xvi}. Because this
form of abstraction depends on the integration of new experience, it is fundamentally
captured in the process of social action. The directedness, effective truth, and
organization of systems of thought are borne out in the actions that bring out or fail to
bring out the experience that they segment and, in part, anticipate.

Lévi-Strauss uses his classic story of the “bricoleur” to talk about the
structuredness and structuring of the system of thought through action.

[Mythical thought] works by analogies and comparisons even though its
creations, like those of the 'bricoleur' always really consist of a new arrangement of
elements, the nature of which is unaffected by whether they figure in the instrumental
set or in the final arrangement (these being the same, apart from the internal
disposition of their parts): ‘it would seem that mythological worlds have been built up,
only to be shattered again, and that new worlds were built from the fragments’ (Boas I,
p. 18). Penetrating as this comment is, it nevertheless fails to take into account that in
the continual reconstruction from the same materials, it is always earlier ends which
are called upon to play the part of means: the signified changes into the signifying and
vice versa. (Lévi-Strauss 1962, 21)

Bricolage is inherently a mode of social expression. The efficacy and power of
this bricolage derives ultimately from the social order and history (“the signified changes
into the signifying”) in which it takes place: its negotiation and codification into a
communicable system occurs through repeated interaction. Subsequent acts depend on a
historically continuous, but evolving, structure. Piaget writes about children and the
codification of rules in marbles that

A third stage appears between [ages] 7 and 8, which we shall call the stage of
incipient cooperation. Each player now tries to win, and all, therefore, begin to
concern themselves with the question of mutual control and of unification of the rules.
But while a certain agreement may be reached in the course of one game, ideas about
the rules in general are still rather vague. In other words, children of 7-8, who belong
to the same class at school and are therefore constantly playing with each other, give,
when they are questioned separately, disparate and often entirely contradictory
accounts of the rules observed in playing marbles. Finally, between the years of 11
and 12, appears a fourth stage, which is that of the codification of rules. Not only is
every detail of procedure in the game fixed, but the actual code of rules to be observed
is known to the whole society. There is remarkable concordance in the information
given by children of 10-12 belonging to the same class at school, when they are
questions on the rules of the game and their possible variations. (1997, 27)

This form of codification may derive ultimately from the need for facile
communication. If systematic concerns like “morality” or “due process” are to be
portable across situations and easily taught, then it is sensible that we observe the
tendency for systems of thought to become logically closed. If, as Parsons argued, the
more logically closed systems can be derived from a fewer number of propositions, then
it is clear that these systems require a narrower experiential base to impart all the
necessary knowledge for their application.

Despite this argument in presuming parsimony, there are many examples where
systems of thought are treated as a diffuse, heterogeneous repertoire. These systems exist
instrumentally for the structuring and use of the individual to fit whatever situation at
hand (Swidler 2003). Lévi-Strauss’ example of the bricoleur seems to fit this
characterization, though with some subtlety he avoids the problem of cultural atomism.
For this, he turns to the notion of a socially constituted repertoire. Again, “The
characteristic feature of mythical thought is that it expresses itself by means of a
heterogeneous repertoire which, even if extensive, is nevertheless limited. It has to use
this repertoire, however...because it has nothing else at its disposal” (Lévi-Strauss 1962,
17). These understandings of what it means to make sense (impose cognitive order) on
experience illustrate something that up to here has been avoided for the sake of simplicity
by treating systems of thought as ideal-types (Weber 1991) and relying on the idea of
concepts that do not overlap in terms of experienced content. When we incorporate
heterogeneity – presumed based on the differences in the experience informing concepts – into the model of systems of thought, we begin to see systematic overlaps and different systems of thought vying to segment and use the same experience.

In Kuhn's example of arguing scientists, we saw that Kuhn realized the capacity of a “common language” to communicate some sort of experience about the situation.

Briefly put, what the participants in a communication breakdown can do is recognize each other as members of different language communities and then become translators. Taking the differences between their own intra- and inter-group discourse as itself a subject for study, they can first attempt to discover the terms and locutions that, used unproblematically within each community, are nevertheless foci of trouble for inter-group discussions...Having isolated such areas of difficulty in scientific communication, they can next resort to their shared everyday vocabularies in an effort further to elucidate their troubles. Each may, that is, try to discover what the other would see and say when presented with a stimulus to which his own verbal response would be different. (Kuhn 1979, 202)

Thus, there is a cross-referentiality across systems of thought with regard to thought objects. That is to say, if we truly can at least partly describe scientific phenomena in plain-clothes terminology, it is suggestive that there is some sort of thought-system “autonomy” to the concept, the nexus of experience, as articulated here.

To avoid the idea of nonconceptual understanding, we depend on the alternative segmentation provided by multiple systems of thought. Speaking of units of measure of distance, for instance, shows us that a measure of what we call “distance” is arbitrary. Inches, miles, meters, and kilometers are all related to each other in that they form units that can constitute a segmented understanding of experience. But in being segmented by these units, an experience of “distance” is not drawn away from the conceptual world – on the contrary, in using comparative, arbitrary measurements, we gain the sense that “distance” as a quality may be arbitrarily segmented in a different way that preserves, in
some part, similar qualities of its character and usefulness (effective truth). This transformation is an abstraction itself; the idea of phenomena as distinct from the concepts we use arises conceptually out of the conceptually mediated recognition that arbitrary measures may elicit analogously effectively true experiences. This homology occurs similarly with socially limited elements of experience as well.

This notion of multiple systems of thought coexisting in the mind of an individual or on a social-typical level creates much complexity for the analytically ideal model I have put together here. We will see empirically in Chapter III that these systems can be profoundly affected by the elicitation of effective truth by other systems, at times driving these interrelated systems to transform, integrate, decompose, or denature. But to understand the basis for this affect, we must dive into the idea of effective truth, this time from the perspective of social action.

“In religious belief and practice a group's ethos is rendered intellectually reasonable by being shown to represent a way of life ideally adapted to the actual state of affairs the world view describes,” (Geertz 1973, 90). In this quotation, Geertz realizes the fundamentally self-referential way in which religious orientations operate. They operate by taking distinctions made by the elaborative system, articulating an expected relationship of those qualities to be observed in action, then evaluating their accuracy through experience. This amounts to a different type of effective truth, one that, instead of a conversation with another individual, is a conversation with one's past expectations. Kuhn's discussion of exemplars shows this process in action.

After the student has done many problems, he may gain only added facility by solving more. But at the start and for some time after, doing problems is learning consequential things
about nature. In the absence of such exemplars, the laws and theories he has previously
learned would have little empirical content. ...One...example is Newton's Second Law of
Motion...The sociologist, say, or the linguist who discovers that the corresponding expression
is unproblematically uttered and received by the members of a given community will not,
without much additional investigation, have learned a great deal about what either the
expression or the terms in it mean, about how the scientists of the community attach the
expression to nature...Of course they do agree to a considerable extent, or the fact would
rapidly emerge from their subsequent conversation. But one may well ask at what point and by
what means they have come to do so. How have they learned, faced with a given experimental
situation, to pick out the relevant forces, masses, and accelerations? (Kuhn 1979, 188)

The works quoted repeatedly all substantively realize that systems of thought, in
use, reach for a response. It is through certain ritual forms that a person becomes more
sacred, and certain theories by which one synthesizes particular compounds. These
applications of systems of thought find their response in the forms of limitation earlier
discussed (social and asocial), and in the social case, can contribute to their
transformation. As Durkheim noted, failure to enforce a norm causes decay in the “life”
of that norm (1997).

These examples point to the source of belief that engenders commitment to
systems of thought xvi. What, in Geertz, seemed circular, we must attempt to structure and
explain in a way that makes the two processes he refers to independent. We have already
attempted to get at “the actual state of affairs the world view describes”. This is
Durkheim’s “turning towards thought”. We now look to the action system as that which
elicits the representations of the world view described in the elaborative system. Effective
truth, while built from a social perspective, can be equally applied to the individual
himself if we separate past and present experiences into a constructed conversation that
negotiates between the two. To return, reiterate, and enforce the idea of effective truth,
effective truth is an overlap of prediction in segmentation. That is to say, what is
segmented in experience must be relatively homogenous from position to position, whether historical or social, in order to constitute effective truth. A belief that it rains when one raises his right hand will not hold forever if in action that raising does not make available experience that is segmentable into the concepts set up by that belief.

Emotional commitment to systems of thought takes two forms. The first, which structures and limits the expression of emotion, lies within the system of thought itself. This is the way in which the system of thought characterizes emotion in experience, and the way in which this emotion is dealt with through action. A related form, analogous to a thought-systemic “unconscious”, depends on the prior notion of thought systemic limitation. If emotion arises that is not systemically interpretable (possible in light of the imperfection in communication, and due to the second form of commitment to be laid out below), these unconsciously felt forces must take the form of objective, asocial constraint on action even if they cannot be integrated or effectively used in experience because they are not manifest conceptually.

Emotional commitment enters in the second way in response to the threats against the motivation of the thought system itself. The motivation of the concept in question and the effective truths that derive from it affect the commitment to its existence. The first form of emotional commitment, the socially regulated emotion management, derives from this to keep social systems reproducing stably (e.g. righteous fury at blasphemy which denies the existence of a central, religion organizing god). It is important to note again that the dual types of limitation influence the types of thought system threats that evoke emotional response. There is very little anyone can do to destroy our ability to
perceive the effective truths that units of measure give us. There is, however, a lot
humankind can do to destroy or denature our idea of ethical behavior. As such, there are
much stronger conditioned responses that have evolved in society to fend off and to
account for these threats. This is the system internal development of emotion
management and structuring that was referred to as the first form, while the second form
takes power in the fact that if we allowed people to act immorally, moral action would
cease to make sense for certain modes of thought and behavior.

Thus we can see that action rises to use the elaborative system; together they
provide effective truths that are borne out in experience. These effective truths constitute
the usefulness of the system of thought in its own terms, and as such, and indexed with
the level of motivation of essential concepts articulate a level of commitment to the
defense and maintenance of those concepts themselves.
Chapter III: The Jamaa Movement as Illustration

“The impact of the Jamaa on its Congolese members is multifaceted, stretching into every sector of their social life. Their attitudes and behavior in their familial, economic, political, and educational roles, as well as their religious roles, are significantly influenced by the values, beliefs, rites, social structure, and organization of the movement.” (De Craemer 1977, 105)

Jamaa was a Catholic movement that began around 1953 in the Katanga region of what is currently the Democratic Republic of Congo (De Craemer 1977, Fabian 1971). It arose from the ideology and teaching of a Belgian, Franciscan priest named Placide Tempels and found its greatest successes in the ethnically diverse indigenous mining camps of Union Minière (UM), itself governed by massive Belgian “holding company” Société Générale de Belgique (ibid.).

The political situation of this mining company gave them great control over the region in which they worked. This policy was not atypical for the Congo after Belgian King Leopold II's death and subsequent transference of rule to the Belgian Parliament. Partly due to the small size of the Belgian state, and partly due to his desire for control, Leopold II had originally relied on foreign companies for the development and economic exploitation of the region (Hochschild 1998, Birmingham & Martin, et. al. 1983, 12, 97). These companies were given free reign over vast regions. Leopold, in the interest of profit, covertly authorized those working in the Congo to turn profits by any means necessary in the ivory and rubber trades. This horrific period of Leopold's development of the country was stylized famously in Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness.

Development relied on forced labor, brutal punishment of dissent, and scorched earth responses to any resistance (Hochschild 1998). In this time, Leopold II nationalized all “vacant land” (including land left fallow to restore minerals for future harvest)(ibid.,
117), had the Congo State declare itself “owner of all natural products of the forest” (Birmingham & Martin, et. al. 1983, 96), and managed to garner praise for “humanitarian work” against “Arab slavery” and Congo development efforts (Hochschild 1998). Despite a successful global humanitarian effort to expose Leopold’s crimes, the transition to Belgian national rule did not stop human rights abuses within the territory, and left companies extreme freedoms (ibid.).

Katanga was distinct geographically and economically from the rest of the Congo. It was set apart by its climate, agriculture, and mineral wealth, leading to large economic and social differences between Katanga and the rest of the Congo when the Jamaa movement began to take hold. “The climate is not favourable to agriculture; the soil is so poor that trees and crops do not thrive on it...The fecundity of Katanga lies below the surface.” (De Craemer 1977, 38) “Katanga's agriculture represented only 10 per cent of the total agricultural output of the country, [but] 75 percept of the mining production of the Congo originated in Katanga” (39). “South Katanga, then, is characterized by a high degree of industrialization, which surpasses that of other regions in the Congo and in Central Africa, and is second only to the Johannesburg area of the Republic of South Africa... the work at Union Minière is almost futuristic in the degree to which it is mechanized and computerized,” (40) (Comparative development also attested in Birmingham & Martin, et. al. 1983).

UM was an economic force in the country, and essentially a country in itself.

Right from its inception in 1906, [UM] was the chief employer in all Katanga. On 31 December 1960, for example, it had on its payroll 1,755 management personnel (of whom 86 were Africans) and 20,876 manual workers (all of whom were Africans)...By the end of 1954, it had been instrumental in launching no less than 2,600 firms in the area...its portfolio
included participation in 17 Congolese, 10 Belgian, and 5 other foreign companies...the location of...the three principal mining centres of [UM] in the heart of Central Africa necessitated the building and maintenance of a vast network of railways for the transportation of the ore and the metals...

The [UM] complex also needed vast amounts of electric power...Between 1930 and 1960...a subsidiary of U.M. built four power stations...

It is not an exaggeration to say that virtually everything in South Katanga other than its mineral ore and its ant-hills was imported, built, or manufactured by [UM]. Even the African population is largely an immigrant labour force... (De Craemer 1977, 39-40)

The mostly foreign Africans who began working in the mines and the related industries under Union Minière's (UM) control encountered social roles and rules for behavior they had never felt at home. Migration was typical for Africa between the late 19th century and mid-20th. In the course of industrialization – and increasingly in the years after WWII – poor agricultural policies alongside costly exploitation of the crops, land, and farmers caused mass emigration to urban centers. (Birmingham & Martin, et. al. 1983). Those employed by UM in Katanga were from heterogeneous backgrounds:

“Before the arrival of Europeans... the area had the lowest population density in the Congo. Two local tribes predominated, the Alunda and the BaYeke. The first wave of workers that [UM] brought to South Katanga in the early 1900s came from Northern Rhodesia. During the 1920s and 1930s, workers were recruited in North Katanga, Lomami, and South Kasai” (De Craemer 1977, 41).

While our focus on the Jamaa takes its emergence as a “shift” in the effective truths and social circumstances of heterogeneous groups, it can also be seen as a unification and reapplication of extant systems of thought. The need for reapplication and reunification resulted from rapid destruction of the social orders that once structured and guided action, and the subsequent entrance into a new field of activity and socially
The adequacy of traditional systems of thought in stable areas is illustrated by the failure of missionary William Sheppard, the first “Westerner” to contact the Kuba people of Central Africa, and the sanctity of these domains illustrated by the subsequent destruction of the Kuba empire:

Not surprisingly, the Kuba were happy with their existing way of life, and, despite their friendliness toward Sheppard, showed little interest in Christianity. The mission station Sheppard ran among them made few converts. But Sheppard had become so well known back home for his discoveries that the Presbyterians were afraid of an adverse public reaction if they closed his mission to the Kuba and stationed him elsewhere...Some eight years after Sheppard's historic visit, Leopold's forces finally reached and looted the Kuba capital (Hochschild 1998, 158).

The heterogeneity of urban areas was ultimately not unconscious, though the relatively underpopulated Katanga province initially “made it necessary to recruit workers from distant regions. Such recruitment...was very costly for its employer, since it was subject to considerable losses (desertion, death during transport)” (Fabian 1971, 57). The company thus embarked on a policy called “stabilization”, detailed in a manual given to administrators of various camps around UM mining operations. Important directives of the manual are, quoting Fabian's assumed paraphrases, “duration of the contract should be at least three years so that the links between the workers and their traditional environment can grow weaker, while at the same time their adaptation to the new world and their performance are likely to increase”, “as many workers as possible should be married; at the same time, concubinage and polygamy should be discouraged, 'but without force'” (ibid., 58). Once recruited, “camp administration hardly ever considers tribal affiliation in allocating homes. The worker who joins the [UM] has to put up with
the neighbors he meets...open conflict would result in considerable difficulties for him and his family” (ibid., 54). UM eventually “based its camp organization on ethnic mixing. The company wanted to breed a new 'tribe' of workers, the Thsanga-Thsanga, with the idea of mixing people of different ethnic origins” (Birmingham & Martin, et. al. 1983, 161).

This practice of instrumentally displacing or mixing African social systems was not uncommon. “Stanley, the American [actually Welsh, see Hochschild 1998 -NS] explorer, en route from Europe to the Zaire estuary, went by way of Zanzibar to contract with the Sultan for 620 porters. Such an arrangement had the double advantage that foreign Africans were less likely to collude with local peoples and had more difficulties in deserting since the territory was unknown” (Birmingham & Martin, et. al., 20). Leopold II also utilized the diverse African social groups to his advantage by recruiting and conscripting distant Africans to his mercenary cum state army, Force Publique, and through the army's manipulation of indigenous rivalries to subdue other ethnic groups more easily (Hochschild 1998, 124-125).

Despite the diverse origins of African immigrants to South Katanga, surveys showed a high percentage of people in UM company towns were called Luba, a smaller ethnic group falling under the label Bantu (De Craemer 1977). There has been much disagreement about the ethnic groupings assigned to Central Africans, especially the broader category “Bantu”. “In a text dating from around 1901 the Nouveau Larousse Illustre had defined 'bantou' as 'he or she who belongs to a cluster of populations that includes almost all the human populations of sub-equatorial Africa' and went on to
explain that it was not an ethnic or racial term.” (Vansina 1979, 319). There has been much work and little consensus on exactly how the various ethnic groups under the Bantu label fit together in linguistic, cultural, economic, and genealogical terms, and little work of merit has been done on a broader cultural level (Ehret 2001; Kuper & Leynseele 1978; Oliver 1966; Vansina 1979). There is a uniform agreement that, in a period basically coinciding with the Iron Age, the Bantu language family dispersed at a tremendous rate and came to be essentially ubiquitous in Central Africa, forming trade routes of loosely interacting, loosely structured lineage groups, up the eastern coast and to the Indian ocean (Ehret 2001; Kuper & Leynseele 1978; Oliver 1966; Vansina 1979). These trade routes, often transacting slaves destined for Arab countries (Hochschild 1998) or other Bantu groups, strained kinship systems through increased influx of foreign slaves. The need to integrate new members into the kinship structure cum social order illustrates an important principles in the system of thought – filiality as role-giving. This need is attested in the relative complexity of kinship systems themselves (MacGaffey 1983, 185).

The Luba specifically, a group now under the broader heading Bantu, has been called “a preeminent Proto-Bantu population of central Africa – that is, as the nucleus for expansion by peoples now inhabiting much of Central Africa.” (Roberts & Roberts 1996, 24). De Craemer notes that the Luba were overwhelmingly the most fertile ground for the start of the Jamaa movement, and Fabian asserts that Luba thought was principally involved in the philosophy that Tempels described in Bantu Philosophy, upon which Tempels based the principles of the Jamaa movement.

We will begin with the Balubaxx myth of origin. The myth begins with the
consolidation of an empire under a king, Nkongolo. This king is associated with the transition from an incestuous, “pre-historic” time period, where the land was initially populated by the repeated duplication of brother-sister twins giving birth to more brother-sister pairs, to the “historic” period (Booth 1976, 61). King Nkongolo met a mysterious hunter; his arrival heralded by the king’s “prophet-diviner” who claimed a man would come from the east to establish kingship in that area. While the Nkongolo plotted to take action after the diviner connected the stranger to prophecy, the stranger Mbidi Kiluwe fled, leaving his pregnant wives (Nkongolo’s sisters) behind. One of the children turned out to be a great warrior and helped Nkongolo expand his kingdom. Nkongolo plotted to kill his nephew Kilala Ilunga due to his growing popularity, but he caught word, killed his uncle King Nkongolo, and assumed the throne.

All leaders of the Luba have in principle belonged to this sacred lineage, the unity of Nkongolo and Kiluwe's blood in Kilala Ilunga. There is an “abstract noun” (bulopwe), related to the word for king (mulopwe), meaning: “a sacred quality, vested in the blood...which gives chiefs the right and supernatural means to rule” (ibid. 62). Those who assume the position of king observe rites in keeping with these traditions.

“He is the symbol and repository of communal health and vigor and must therefore never flee from his enemies and cannot be sick. It is said that traditionally a mulopwe who was sick more than four days was supposed to be strangled by his sisters. When a mulopwe approaches death such symbols of authority...must be removed. The individual...dies but bulopwe, the power on which the community is founded, continues. Kingship is not simply an individual matter; it is “collectively owned” by the living and the dead...the death of a ruler threatens the existence of the community” (ibid. 62-63).

One important practice referred specifically to the incestuous mythical period. Installing a new king required that that king enter the “house of misfortune” and have
sexual relations with a close female relative – usually taboo. After a short period he would emerge, be cleansed, and joined once more by his wife, resuming the normal prohibition again. This presumably reestablishes or reaffirms the transition of mankind from a time of incestuous past and “misfortune” to a time of human order and expansion.

Certain features of this mythology are said to be general to many Katanga groups: “A more or less remote 'high God' and creator is known throughout the area; sometimes he was conceived of as the first ancestor, sometimes he was associated with cosmic or meteorological phenomena. Ancestors...were venerated. They were regarded as the proprietors of the land and as the source of life (and sometimes death) for the living” (Fabian 1971, 14). In terms of the sacred lineage referred to in the Luba example: “Most important among [kinship structures] is an emphasis on the vertical aspect of kinship relationships ...Generation/filiation... was always deemed more important than collateral links, and this to such an extent that political or magic-religious ties were expressed in terms of parent-child relationships” (ibid.).

Using Tempels *Bantu Philosophy* as a lens, we can combine the Luba example and some of the vague commonalities described by Fabian into an understanding of certain core principles of the system of thought. “Bantu thought” as Tempels defined it in *Bantu Philosophy* was the basis for his articulation of the Jamaa as a Catholic appeal to Bantu people in Bantu terminology (De Craemer 1977; Fabian 1971). In that work, Tempels attempts to find the inspiration and workings of his personal belief system in the mythologies of those he is attempting to convert, unconsciously filtering that which he saw through the conceptual frameworks he brought to segment his experience. From
De Craemer’s narrative of Tempels’ life we can take several general points: 1) Temples religious and educational ideals were marked by a Franciscan preoccupation with humanity, sociability, and worldly experience. 2) Tempels experience as an agent of the church in extension of the company left him disillusioned from his education and from the wisdom and legitimate authority of the church. 3) Tempels himself was profoundly changed by his ministry, due in part to the assimilation of his so called “Bantu Philosophy” in consort with his own understandings.

Jamaa began in Ruwe, a suburb of Kolwezi, one of the three mining centers of UM (the other two were Élisabethville (Lubumbashi) and Jadotville (Likasi) (ibid. 39)). Tempels returned to the Congo after several years in Belgium to be named head pastor of the Ruwe parish. He was “also appointed a professor of religion at the teacher training-school” (De Craemer 1997, 36). The Jamaa started out of a small gathering of families that met with Tempels informally on a regular basis. “Jamaa” means family in Swahili, a fitting ascription to the informal group of couples that met with Tempels to talk openly about their lives and beliefs, and to a religious movement based in spiritual kinship (Fabian 1971 37-38).

The structure of the religion as occurring between couples pairs of couples, and priests, shrouded in deep privacy, make tracing its evolution difficult. The spread of the Jamaa did, however, depend on principles inherent in the Jamaa itself. The idea of “Jamaa” fit well into certain systems of order that seem to be latent in much of Bantu and Luba society; these systems, while different from the Jamaa, paved the way for the integration of these new understandings and practices in light of Tempels early teaching
and continued instruction. The ability to construct an “ideal type” in this sense relies on abstraction: we attempt, through secondhand exposure to the systems of thought in question, to reconstruct, at a minimum level of effective truth, fundamental ideas that make sense of actions and patterns within the Jamaa.

We must begin with what Tempels believes to be the most central of Bantu ideas: “vital force”. Vital force is at times equated with being itself. “It is the extent, more or less, to which a thing is vital force that constitutes for them the “being” of the thing” (Tempels 1959, 25 [or 36]). This being, or fullness of life, is, at its greatest, called god itself. “God is Force, possessing energy in himself, the mover of all other forces. He knows all forces...he knows therefore the cause of every event.” (ibid. 34 [or 47]).

God, being force, is simultaneously the extent of being of things and also the relationship that affects the extent of being of other things. For the Tempels’-read-Bantu, god is the perfect order of things and simultaneously the most powerful mover of things. “This world order is the essential condition of wholeness in human beings. The Bantu add that this order comes from God and that it must be reverenced. Life belongs to God. It is he who summons it into being, strengthens and preserves it. His great and holy gift to men is the gift of life” (ibid. 56 [or 79]). Thus, the maintenance and strengthening of force is consonant with divinity and life itself, and the destruction and weakening of it is evil and associated with nothingness, the capacity to affect no other's vital force (ibid.).

Tempels argues that this vital force is embedded within a hierarchy that derives ultimately from god, who is the only being capable of engendering force where there is none. Mankind, because it has been given consciousness of how force relates to other
vital force, is capable of affecting the amount of force in the world around him. All other things in the universe, though they too possess vital force, do not have the consciousness to cause willful changes in vital force. This faculty belongs exclusively to the continuum of beings termed *muntu*, loosely translatable as the empowered, knowledgeable, *being* part of “person”. Muntu includes from god, to the physically dead, to man. The hierarchy of empowerment among muntu trickles down from god, who is perfectly attuned to vital force, to the ancestors who are closer to god (ibid.). Tempels shows us a striking illustration of the socially real understanding of these categories:

In fact, just as the vital human force (its being) does not exist by itself, but is and remains essentially dependent upon its elders, so the power to know is, like being itself, essentially dependent upon the wisdom of the elders. How often in a village, when one wishes to question Bantu about some happening — a law suit or a custom, or even some geographical or geological data — does not one provoke the reply: "We younger ones do not know: it is the elders who know." That happens even when the matter in question is, as we think, something which they know all about. Nevertheless, as they think, they do not know, because they are young, because they do not know of or by themselves. Ontologically and juridically the elders who hold the ascendancy are the only ones to know fully, in the last resort. Their wisdom exceeds that of other men. It is in this sense that the old say: "The young cannot know without the elders." "If it were not for the elders," the Bantu say again, "if the young were left to themselves, the village would get nowhere. The young would no longer know how to live: they would have neither customs, laws, nor wisdom any longer. They would stray into disaster." Study and the personal search for knowledge does not give wisdom. One can learn to read, to write, to count: to manage a motor car, or learn a trade; but all that has nothing in common with "wisdom". It gives no ontological knowledge of the nature of beings. (Tempels 1959, 35 [or 48-49])

We can see a trace of the Luba veneration of their King and subsequent feelings of near community death upon his passing in Tempels' description of this hierarchy. Knowledge arises and lives on through a vital lineage. It seems that the older are not only wiser but also foundational; remove them and the thread of knowledge dies. The hierarchy, responsible for transmission of vital force and knowledge, proceeds at its end
directly from the Bantu supreme being. As such, it is a highly motivated concept to the Bantu. Destroy the hierarchy, and the society based upon its distinctions collapses. We can see the action system of thought in their capacity to understand (and action in response to understanding) how other features of the system of thought may interact with this notion of hierarchy to affect its existence. Referring to different retribution depending on variety of offense, Tempels lists three sections, corresponding to individuals' place in the hierarchy and their roles in maintaining it: “wrongs done to superior vital forces”, “evil done to inferiors”, “faults committed in respect of equals” (ibid. 66-69 [97-101]. These hierarchical responses to threat are shot through with the Bantu idea of vital force's interdependence among all beings. Anything that threatens the force of something bound into this order threatens the network binding the lowest on the hierarchy to the transcendent authority that passes through the eldest and even the dead on the way to the supreme being and perfect realization of order among all things: god (ibid.).

Vital force, for Tempels, is sometimes conceptualized as effected, sometimes as affect, sometimes as a relationality. If vital force is a capacity to affect other vital forces, which can be understood to be a fullness and ideal variety of being, then this capacity cuts in two directions. As mentioned earlier, things that threaten the vital force of others are viewed as perpetrating evil. In practice, threats to vital force are not always “objective”; one's ill will, jealousy, or anger towards another is enough to cause the other's vital force serious harm (ibid.).

There are two types of evil, differing in origin. These types are relevant in
discussing the redress and maintenance of order from the “Bantu” perspective we find in Tempels. One arises from an inherent evil. The *muntu* that commits acts of evil and refuses to attempt to restore the fractured network of vital force is classed as something we would call pathological. Rational beings may commit evil acts until their vital force is destroyed. “‘They think that a man may have a 'life giving will', or a 'destroying will'. A man's will may be determined in the same sense that, in respect of life and the hierarchy of forces, he wills in accordance with that ordering of forces that has been willed by God” (ibid. 50 [or 69]). The *muntu* falling under the label of “destroying will” is subject to many ritual acts that endeavor to destroy his vital force permanently, to prevent such a permanent, incurable threat to the community from hurting anyone any further. Here again, we can see that the elaborative system segments experience into an understanding of what “destroying will” looks like. As something that threatens orienting principles of the system of thought, the action system seeks to affect a socially objective change by removing that specific threat from future experience.

The other type of evil is differentiated by an individual willing to restore the natural order he threatened. This threat to the natural order, if not from an inherently ill will, can either come from unconscious, accidental injuries to it, or from provocations. “The Bantu accept this unconscious influence, not only between inanimate beings, plants, or animals, but also from "muntu" to "muntu". They are convinced, as it seems to me, that the man animated with the best of feelings, the best vital intentions, may nevertheless exercise a pernicious influence” (ibid., 61 [86-87]). As long as the individual is willing to redress these wrongs, he is accepted as not having a “destroying will”; there is a general
belief in Bantu that good overcomes evil (ibid.).

This struggle of good and order against evil and disorder is not an idle fancy, but a living attempt to engage with those features in the world. Tempels argues that the Bantu find their beliefs convincing due to the experienced validity of their concepts. “Thus Mgr. Leroy says in "La Religion des Primitifs" that the Bantu sees himself engaged in a constant struggle with the forces of nature which surround him; and he emerges from this struggle, now as victor, now as vanquished. He establishes every day the existence of hidden forces in plants and herbs.” (ibid., 36 [or 50]).

We cannot say how representative Tempels experience is, nor evaluate the accuracy of his characterization of whatever abstraction we take “Bantu Philosophy” to signify. We can, however, note that Tempels spent many years living and teaching among the Africans in South Katanga. Relying on characterizations of Tempels as an involved, sociable, empathetic person, growingly disillusioned with the Catholic-colonial collusion and educational methods, accounts of his frequent informal meetings with Africans, and the fact that he was an eager collector of traditional African music and art (De Craemer 1977; Fabian 1971), we have strong support for the idea that his work and observations arose from a strong, general acquaintance with many Katangese ethnic groups and systems of thought that were articulated in the mostly urbanizing, decentralized, heterogeneous zones he encountered.

If Tempels observed this principle and socially felt idea of vital force where he lived, there are many important social-structural problems that would arise from that idea in an ethnically heterogeneous zone. If lineages and systems of thought were diverse in
application, but fundamentally similar in understanding of the power of vital force, we can understand the effects of a broad Bantu idea that

the universe also throbs with malevolent forces and presences that fall outside the natural order. All that is evil is caused by them, through the [conscious and intentional, or unconscious and unintentional] malignant thoughts and feelings of significant other persons. ...Evil may come from any place, at any time, through the medium of many different categories of people. ..."Behind the smiling face may lurk the hating heart." This is particularly true of relatives, whose very closeness may generate the kind of...pride, envy, malice, hostility...rancor...[that] have the capacity to cause harm...through harnessing the power of one of the...shades of the ancestors [or the] numerous kinds of spirits...present in the cosmos. Illness, sterility, failure, impoverishment, dissension, corruption, destruction, death—all the negative, disappointing, tragic experiences of life are caused [in this way] by witchcraft and sorcery (De Craemer, Vansina, and Fox 1976, 461)(found in De Craemer 1983, 25).

It would seem, according to this Bantu idea, that a heterogeneous cluster of lineages, hence understandings of “natural order”, would result in massive distress, feelings of ontological threat, and uncertainty in appropriate action. In traditional societies lineages were relatively static and understandings of order well negotiated. In an area of relatively fluid social roles, job function, and peer groups, it is unlikely that these heterogeneous systems of thought would come to a quick or easy agreement, or that someone who held his lineage to be so central would find a comfortable space for himself in the social order.

Tempels articulation of the Jamaa movement took this essential principle of vital force, one based on experience of constant contact and engagement with Africans in his ministry, and applied it to certain Catholic Christian principles. “The core concept and central religious experiences of the Jamaa turn on 'encounter', 'vital union', and the state of being ONE. Its essence lies in when, in marriage, a man and a woman open their thoughts and feelings to each other in a mutual search for a deep understanding of
Christian love, and for the ability individually and collectively to actualize it in all aspects of their lives. In Jamaa terms, such a relationship is ‘fecund’” (De Craemer 1977, 58-59). Here we see that the Jamaa is capitalizing on the notion of vital force articulated in *Bantu Philosophy*. A fecund relationship conforms to the ideal order of things; it extends and strengthens the vital force of all things dependent upon it, both up and down the hierarchy. Jamaa recontextualizes the understandings of the Bantu thusly:

From [the relationship] new spiritual children are engendered. These children are not the biological offspring of the couple but adult persons who, through intensive spiritual contact with a Jamaa baba [male parent] and mama [female parent], are 'born' into the vital state of Christianity that the movement represents. Conversion to the Jamaa and initiation into it are effected [sic] by a chain of encounters and births of this kind. Each couple constitutes a fertile micro-Jamaa, contributing to the development of an ever-growing, larger spiritual family...

We can see here that this notion of family provided a new lineage to those lost in a heterogeneous complex world, mapping an already held concept onto new experience. The idea of this as true “lineage” may have been underpinned by the fact that only Catholic heterosexual couples could be initiated into the Jamaa. Despite it being at its most sacred level a couples-and-priests-only religion, the idea of a common spiritual, raceless lineage clearly mitigated the inter-tribal differences that had created the antagonism characteristic of life draining ill-will, and gave Africans a method of feeling united with the whites they interacted withxxvi. That the Jamaa had massive success in destroying tribal barriers is without a doubt (ibid.)xxvii. But the blurry line between divine and mankind as *muntu*, and the reliance of Tempels on individualized “encounter” as qualification for ascendance in the spiritual lineage would result in systematic misinterpretations that threatened the church-sanctioned existence of Jamaa.
A ubiquitous anecdote in studies of the Jamaa illustrates the centrality of
encounter to full understanding of the religion. When asked about Jamaa, or confronted
with a tape recorder, the Jamist responds that it is impossible to simply say what Jamaa is
or to distill it in any way that does not destroy its truth entirely. It must be understood
through encounter only (De Craemer 1977, Fabian 1971)\textsuperscript{xxviii}. Encounter as the only
legitimate means to entering the spiritual family can take on strong anti-intellectualist
character, at times legitimizing Jamaa ideas of superiority to the Catholic Church’s
normal authority structure.

Some Jamists develop an in-group conception that leads them to make invidious
distinctions between their spiritual family and all those who do not belong to it. To a degree,
this makes certain baba and mama [men and women in the initiated couple, respectively] more
intolerant and less receptive towards non-Catholics than they otherwise might be...However,
the super-Jamaa orientation is even more conducive to baba and mama feeling religiously
superior to Catholics who do not belong to their movement. 'In their eyes, we are no longer
Christians,' exclaim indignant Catholics who are not Jamists. (De Craemer 1977, 118)

An extreme manifestation of this superiority supports my earlier claim that
Tempels was thinking wishfully when he repeatedly found the idea that divinity was
permanently separated from humanity in \textit{Bantu Philosophy}. “Some individuals and
groups in the Jamaa are indeed convinced that through their participation in the
movement they have achieved such a state of purity and clairvoyance that they are no
longer capable of sin or in need of sacramental confession” (ibid.). This progression to
divinity is consistent with the Bantu idea of divinity as a continuum.

The newly established spiritual hierarchy had, like the Bantu, its ultimate basis in an
understanding of a perfect and divine order based in a “fertile” union.

Jamaa adherents believe that the first and most ideal Jamaa, the one from which all
others developed and to which all ultimately refer, is the 'union of love', the encounter
between Christ and the Virgin Mary. They are assumed to have given themselves to each other in such a perfect and total way that they became transcendentally ONE. 'Christ did not wish to belong to God the Father all alone, in the isolation of His soul without allowing anyone to be in communion with Him...He wished to give himself to God, together with Myriam.' Christ is the 'new Adam', Mary the 'new Eve', free from the original sin of the first couple....Through their union, Christ and Mary repaired this original sin. (De Creamer 1971, 59)

This notion of Christ and Mary being the “parents” to a family of growing spiritual children has an important parallel in the Luba myth of the incestuous couples that populated the world, and to the Luba ritual practice of sexual union with a close female relative to establish one’s place in the divine lineage –and as symbolic transition to an enlightened world. This conceptual parallel, with teaching and divine progression diffused through “encounter” –a communicative revelation– in private settings led to consistent misinterpretation of Tempels’ vision and to the development of deviant sects (pun intended)(ibid.). These resulted from the way Tempels’ structured the Jamaa.

This progression to greater divinity was symbolically enacted in three stages of initiation. These initiations codified in loose practice the ideas of the Jamaa doctrine, ensuring, as described in previous practices, that the understandings and use of particular understandings were consistent across the Jamaa society. Initiation requires that individuals be baptized Catholics. The pre-initiation phase is open to all people, who attend open meetings where mafundisho, essentially sermons of Jamaa doctrine, are delivered. De Craemer indicates two types of mafundisho, one public, given to all who are interested or members in the movement, and the other private, given by the baba, mama, or priest instructing only the initiates in the ways of the Jamaa.

Eventually, individuals are selected by Jamist couples to progress to the “first way”. “The goal of the first way...is to achieve personal knowledge of Christ and the
Virgin Mary, and to experience a living encounter with them” (De Craemer 1977, 68). This encounter generally occurs through contact in a dream. The first stage is significant because it is the only stage which a person may enter without the full cooperation of his or her partner. The preparation for the entrance into the first way “typically takes from one to two years” (ibid.) Considering that, in one case, the Jamaa were said to meet at least twice a week officially, not including numerous informal meetings said to be quite frequent (Fabian 1971), those who progressed in the Jamaa spent a huge amount of time in contact with each other and hearing the mafundisho, which could be delivered by a priest, baba, or mama of the Jamaa.

“The goal of the second way... is the total union, affective and spiritual, between the husband and wife being initiated...This state of being one comes to pass through the couple's mutual encounter with Christ and Mary” (ibid. 69). Fabian describes this total union as “now taking the roles of Yezu Kristo [Jesus Christ] and Birika Maria [The Virgin Mary]”, then goes on to claim without documentation of this fact, “it is obvious that the logic of the rite calls for ritual intercourse between husband and wife...which elevates their everyday marriage to the level of Jamaa” (1971, 170). This is a logical progression from the first phase, which entails knowledge of a divine type of individual, to the second, which is knowledge of a divine form of relationship.

“After a baba and mama have made individual contact with Christ and Mary [the first way -NS], and have met each other in depth [the second way -NS], they are ready to offer these two sorts of encounter to God. This offering, mediated by a Jamaa priest who knows them intimately, constitutes the third way” (De Craemer 1977, 71-72). Fabian
again takes a more suggestive tack in his description: “Husband and wife, now in the roles of Mary and Joseph, are to give birth to Jesus Christ, represented by the priest” (1971, 170). Tempels explanation of the third way follows:

so the baba, in order to commune more intimately with his priest, wishes to give him by the force of the spirit his mama, in order that he and the priest be ONE, in love for the Virgin and in love for their mama. The mama will wish to be able to commune with the Blessed Virgin in her love for Christ, through her love for her baba, and equally, through her love for the priest who receives her. By the grace of God, priest and baba and mama will become ONE. And that is the third way, the third degree, or the third thought... (De Craemer 1977, 72).

This practice changed slightly depending on the priest administering it. One verbatim account of an initiation states: “But we still have something more to accomplish...As [Christ] was ONE with all of you, with Mary, with the people, so you must go and be ONE with them...In the same manner Christ wishes that from now on I myself as a priest be ONE with you” (ibid. 73). This is indicative of Fabian's point.

The stages of initiation correspond to patterns of social action and shifts in orientation. It is important here to remember just how intensive in duration the transformation to a fully initiated Jamaa couple is. Another salient feature is that Jamaa as a couple's religion forces a paired interaction, causing the development of the Jamaa system of thought in all spheres of life where the husband and wife interact.

Given these hierarchical progressions, and the intimate contact required in the notion of encounter, the structural form that the religion took in its spread should follow commonsensically as well. “In the early stages... Tempels...personally initiated candidates into all the ways, and determined when and if they were ready for each passage. However, as the Jamaa grew in numbers, and became more geographically
dispersed, it was more difficult for Tempels to be solely responsible for the initiation process” (ibid. 71). When Tempels left the Congo permanently, he conceded that initiated baba and mama could initiate others into the first and second ways. Because the priest was integral to the third, only priests could administer this initiation (ibid.).

The increased social distance from people familiar with the Catholic church's teachings, alongside their empowerment to determine initiation through the first two levels of Jamaa, would have profound effects on the persistent “aberrations” that arose, especially when encounter, a tremendously variable practice, held such a central point in the ideology. The emphasis on encounter as the only means to Jamaa seemingly revealed in Bantu beliefs a latent expression of Catholicism that was consonant with what the Church found to be valuable. This sometimes divorced the need for church intervention in spiritual affairs, as alluded to earlier in the idea of the super-Jamaa (De Craemer 1977).

The idea of revelation and latent spiritual worth in Africans themselves is vivid in a mythologization of the origin of Jamaa. Fabian offers a “generalized version”:

In [the 1950s] a group of seven bababa and seven bamama (i.e. seven married couples) got together at Ruwe and began to unite their thoughts about the essence of their Christian faith and their marriage. They came to an understanding and thus “rediscovered” the thought of the Jamaa, which had been lost among men, ...At the same time there happened to be a priest at Ruwe who was not like other missionaries: baba Placide. He was received by the...fathers and mothers of the beginning; they exchanged their thoughts, their deepest feelings, and were united in love. This was the beginning of the Jamaa (Fabian 1971, 46).

Using the idea that this rediscovery of latent knowledge can reveal truths capable of bringing people closer to god-ness, we can make intelligible the observed tendency for the Jamaa to look beyond the final stage of initiation for another stage that will bring greater “vital force”. M. Ndala, a leader of the Lubumbashi Jamaa, told Fabian
that most of the so-called Jamaa people do not understand that only one thing counts: to have Christ in the heart...most look for some secret knowledge in the Jamaa. They are eager to climb the ladder of initiation. Once they have reached the third stage, they do not know where to go from there. Many lose interest; others try to...transcend, surpass Christianity (1971, 98).

This need to “move on” is, again, intelligible if in “Bantu thought” there is no ultimate separation between humankind and the potential for divinity. The transcendence of god in Christianity that places divinity out of human reach thus looks like a premature stop. The final stage of initiation goes from an attainable ideal to an abandonment of Divinity and compromise of divine order and individual divine-ness.

The unique expression of Catholicism found in Jamaa was not, however, simply an expression of latent Bantu beliefs; if it were, the Church would not have felt compelled to teach them anything. It was instead a meaningful synthesis of Bantu principles and Catholic principles, extending the effective truth of certain components of both systems far enough for them to overlap in experience. This was not always well received by the church, but the extension and use of these concepts in a socially different way provoked much discussion within the Church over the principles and systematization of the Catholic belief system (De Craemer 1971).

I will restate what I have said in terms of the theoretical argument laid out in the first two chapters. “Bantu thought”, diverse systems of thought connected loosely by trading networks across Central Africa, was systematically destabilized for years through economic development, exploitation, ethnic mixing, and urbanization. This destabilization occurred through the disruption of what I termed in the first chapter to be socially objective constraints. The social behavior that made specific Bantu systems of
thought applicable and socially real was undermined by changing conditions of their world. This disruption was achieved through the imposition of both concrete limitation, like murder and destruction of villages, and social limitation, like the prohibitions against polygamy.

As attested in *Bantu Philosophy*, this disruption was not sufficient to create what the European powers vainly hoped: *a tabula rasa* capable of assimilating the Western modes of thought and action. Instead, these systems of thought, lacking or severely deprived of the social forms that could ensure their reproduction for future generations, lived on and continued to adapt. These surviving systems of thought were grasped to a great a degree of effective truth by an observant priest, Placide Tempels, who later used these effective truths in adapting a system of thought to the particular social circumstances of UM's mining camps. This adaptation took advantage of both the greatest aspirations and fears of the African laborers, thus resolving many felt problems and stresses caused by their heterogeneous systems of thought in a way that brought them peace and direction.

Those anxieties stemmed from the idea that particular affiliations and lineages were essential to an individual's vital force, an individual's being. Their experience of work and life at UM camps contributed to the change of their individual systems of thought, causing significant divergences from their traditional societies and causing them to feel disconnected from their vital force. The Jamaa thus provided those individuals in a position of profound ontological crisis with something they could understand, albeit in a slightly different form. It gave them affiliations and hierarchies that made sense of their
social role by transcending particular lineages of diverse groups and integrating them into an ethnically neutral, spiritual lineage. This integrated not only their African neighbors but also participating whites into that lineage providing a meaningful place in the social order for all human individuals.

The fact that the religion relied so heavily on “encounter” also ensured that it would be more individualized, allowing a greater flexibility that facilitated its expansion at the same time that it facilitated its deviation. Because this religion reduced intertribal conflict and provoked behavior mostly in line with Catholicism, it was not only accepted, but encouraged by the UM authorities. Thus, the social base and freedom for practice of the religion was extremely strong.

The Jamaa was so successful not because it was new, but because it arose from something old. Tempels, through his priestly ethnographic work and teaching, was brought close to the effective truths of the Bantu people he knew. This familiarity allowed him to use terms of Bantu thought to articulate ideas consonant with both his understanding of Christianity and Bantu beliefs. This does not mean that Bantu or Christian thought in the Jamaa did not change; the practice of Jamaa actively transformed certain traditions and promoted pluralism. This change happened on the back of “the three ways” of initiation into the order, the mafundisho, and the informal interactions among members in terms of the mafundisho and whatever else they had learned.

The Jamaa, as the coalescence of a heterogeneous repertoire of concepts and normative, action system relationships serves as a good illustration of the overarching argument. When we trace the narrative, following interaction from the relatively
homogeneous, traditional situation of the Luba to their position in an ethnically heterogeneous urban environment with totally foreign socially objective constraints, that narrative takes us through the destabilization of and subsequent reorientation of their understandings.
Bibliography:


Lévi-Strauss C. (1966) *The Savage Mind* (La pensée sauvage) Weidenfeld & Nicolson,
While it might look like generality and expansion are inevitable from this account, it is possible and entirely well attested for thought systems to be principally against such expansion and diverse applicability. The reality expounded in this section, however, is the articulation of a principle general to thought system application. We will see that this principle derives primarily from the abstract basis of human communication and, consequently, experience.

If this generality and expansion are checked inherently from within the thought system in question (as one of its normative functions), we will see that they do not remain static, for the world and situations they encounter are never the same, but rather their changes remain insular, their application strained, and much effort goes into the maintenance and attempted monitoring of them. We will also see that these systems, by their nature, apply less broadly, and thus elicit less profound and sweeping social effects. When great social effect is produced by such a system, my defense would be that the system itself relies on forces beyond the persuasiveness or facilitation of cooperation of the thought system itself. Examples of terrorism are the clearest illustration of this.

This is seemingly contrary to a notion of culture as diffuse toolkit found in Ann Swidler’s Talk of Love, though it is in fact clarificatory. Individuals mobilize different thought systems and syncretisms in complex and overlapping ways. See the final chapter.

This second demand for normativity, while logically plausible, cannot arise except in a case of stubborn non-integration of an already cognitively developed individual articulating from within a incompatible thought system. It has been demonstrated repeatedly within the field of linguistics that communication is absolutely foundational for fully “human” cognition in the first place (Hauser, et al.
Mark Gould has previously raised the objection that I am conflating two types of normative order, one of sense and nonsense, essentially non-moral normativity, and good and bad, an essentially moral and emotionally committed normativity. I concede that this is an important substantive distinction, but I will elaborate in my chapter on the action system of thought exactly why I feel that can be analytically accounted for without requiring two distinctly articulated normative structures.

This is an statement about conceptual content, not structure. There is an argument within linguistics that the structure of language that children assimilate is limited biologically; this argument arises from the fact that the possible syntactic structures for the limited experience of speech for children vastly overpredicts acceptable use, whereas children do not approach this level of overprediction. Children can assimilate “proper” language use at a rate that is impossible if there is no a priori cognitive structure limiting the variations constraining that assimilation. (Hauser, et. al. 2002)

Though it has been demonstrated that it is biologically impossible to develop language without social intervention and that it is impossible to develop it after a certain point in human development, my argument does not rely on this: it is enough to say that individual's producing conceptual worlds in this way would be in any way intelligible to others only through the greatest efforts in translation.

“If...there are utterances whose role is...‘to execute an action’, this is because the power of words reside in the fact that...the authorized spokesperson is only able to use words to act on other agents, and through their action, on things themselves” (Bourdieu 1991, 111).

“Symbolic power – as a power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world and thus the world itself, an almost magical power which enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force (whether physical or economic), by virtue of the specific effect of mobilization – is a power that can be exercised only if it is recognized, that is, misrecognized as arbitrary” (ibid., 170).

Finally, “What Nietzsche is suggesting is that in order [for the Catholic minister] to consecrate himself as a necessary interpreter, the intermediary must produce the need for his own product. And in order to do that, he must produce the difficulty that he alone can solve” (ibid. 210). These all refer to the social complicity in certain types of interactions. This is what we will later call social constraints or socially manifest phenomena.

Indeed, concepts cannot be openly dismissed if we take what Durkheim has said seriously. What would it mean to “negate” a nexus of experience? Meaningful distinctions that were made cannot be “unnamed”, causing those distinctions in experience to disappear; a similar, “more important” nexus must be incorporated into a recharacterization of the relationship of those experiences.

Systems of thought may themselves be conceptual objects of larger systems. Reflection on “method” is always of this character, Reflection, as a system, takes methods and orienting principles of methods, as its object. This realization itself subsumes the act of reflection as a conceptual object within a statement. This recursion is not malicious; it is human cognition.

This is what Durkheim had in mind when he wrote about Organic Solidarity in The Division of Labor in Society. If he didn't have this in mind, a charitable reading can put it there for my use.

While this is an ancillary point for my actual argument, Mark Gould is concerned that my work is close to effacing important differences between religion and science. To this I write this digression on the nature of science and the reason that we should not be worried about effacing that difference by acknowledging that science, too, depends on the use and evaluation of socially constructed distinctions.

Natural science is concerned with the evaluation of the “asocial” elements of reality; it is dedicated to systematically reconstituting the social normativity that constrains the development and implementation of concepts. If we take seriously the idea that experience is mediated by human thought, it is impossible for science to escape that human condition of thinking socially to articulate some sort of greater, asocial truth. The character of science is most essentially one of logics and derived concepts assimilated to an overarching logic that is willing and ready to discard them or incorporate them into a systemic change if they seem to produce “incongruities”. Kuhn's fundamental mistake in The Structure of
Scientific Revolutions is that the field of science is actually articulated at two levels: paradigmatic variations, the focus of Kuhn's work, were subsumed in a larger action system ethic that believed simply that explanations must have socially independent effects. This action system principle guided the work of scientists when they encountered increasing "crises" at the boundaries of normal explanation when they articulated new solutions that escaped previous orders; religion often does not permit such innovation and deviation. This systematic flexibility is the social thread that connects the paradigms of science where Kuhn sees little commonality. Science, in this social-historical account, is defined by a form that evaluates form and content within it. Re situating the argument in this way does not discount or even call into question the commonsensical conclusion that science continues to proliferate conceptual distinctions and courses of action that have profound, noticeable effects on a world that seems to be ultimately independent of the concepts we use to describe it.

There is an important question about the origin of resources for science to transcend old practices; this question will be worked on as Chapter 1 continues.

The other important point to make here is that this willingness to reevaluate the conceptual system that orients it speaks to the reason John McDowell found his philosophy to be a satisfactory explanation for why knowledge progresses. Lévi-Strauss captured this when he wrote

"It is therefore better, instead of contrasting magic and science, to compare them as two parallel modes of acquiring knowledge. Their theoretical and practical results differ in value, for it is true that science is more successful than magic from this point of view, although magic foreshadows science in that it is sometimes also successful. Both science and magic however require the same sort of mental operations and they differ not so much in kind as in the different types of phenomena to which they are applied.’’ (Lévi-Strauss 1962, 13)

If the inhuman world is truly concept independent, but we allow that concepts can reveal content of the world that we evaluate through action and experience, then by evaluating these concepts and their relationships to each other we converge toward a greater understanding. It is the functional equivalent of stumbling around a room with the lights off: eventually, you will have tripped over enough things to know approximately what is there and the features of it that you can observe with your limited faculties of stumbling. There are more systematic ways than stumbling, of course. To extend the analogy, modern science is directed towards the content of the room, and religion is increasingly directed to the unobservable, unverifiable content of the room. The reasoning for this and for religion's conflicts with science are fruitful subjects for this work, but the scope is beyond us at this point.

xii See Introduction and discussion of Mechanical vs. Organic Solidarity in Durkheim.

xiii “Concepts thus appear like operators opening up the set being worked with and signification like the operator of its reorganization…” (Lévi-Strauss 1962). If we interpret “signification” here to mean the final structure of a given “utterance” of culture, then the categories he uses here can be laid into what I have said here. Concepts segment experience into workable pieces, while the ultimate arrangement of those concepts into some sort of represented order (the signification) reinforces or extends existing understandings of order.

xiv This idea is even found elliptically in Kuhn “What makes the integrity of perception worth emphasizing is, of course, that so much past experience is embodied in the neural apparatus that transforms stimuli to sensations. An appropriately programmed perceptual mechanism has survival value. To say that the members of different groups may have different perceptions when confronted with the same stimuli is not to imply that they may have just any perceptions at all. In many environments a group that could not tell wolves from dogs could not endure” (1979, 195).

xv This raises problems in that my analysis may avoid “functional” elements of systems of thought in favor of a system constructed purely of hierarchies of conceptual nexuses. We will attempt to avoid this omission, and to introduce “functional” operators in an understanding of what the action system does to elaborated concepts. To attempt to characterize this problem: if, for instance, there was an “and” operator at a conceptual level that conjoined concepts in a structured way, and the framework I put forward destroyed this important feature, we would have suffered a significant loss.

xvi In reducing logical relationships among concepts that segment experience to a concept that can express them in shorthand, I am aware that I am again leaving out important “functional” elements of
thought, analogous to things like classifiers, conjugations, prepositions, etc. in language. At this stage it is difficult for me to guess about the exact content, and if they are ultimately expressible in a single concept that orders experience of them, it may suffice to leave it at this level of indeterminacy for now.

xvii I will talk about emotional commitment to systems of thought if possible at a later point. For now I will say that the mechanism for emotional commitment depends both on social conventions of emotion, the degree of motivation, and effective truth.

xviii One minor example of this form of change in symbolically objective constraints in Central Africa is that in the Belgian Congo, urban town-dwellers' housing permits “required employment and a monogamous marriage. Polygynous men were refused residence even though accompanied by one wife....” (Birmingham & Martin 1983, 18) and that in Northern Rhodesia, “Officials from the Lozi area went periodically to Livingstone to remove 'unauthorized' women back to the villages by force” (ibid.)

xix The manual includes an assertion to not use ‘abnormal pressure’ to recruit workers. This is an interesting development given the history of the Congo preceding that point, but it is not relevant to our aim here. Rather than deal with the form of recruiting itself, I am interested exclusively in its practice and effect in the camps where Jamaa took hold (or failed to).

xx I have struggled to discern in all this research whether or not the Baluba and Luba are distinct or if the prefix “ba” is something grammatical, perhaps like “the”. Kongo and BaKongo has caused me similar problems and may point to a general prefix. A later footnote will point to the fact that ba- pluralizes at least two words in the language. I have come, via that insight and as a result of my difficulties finding out, to think that there is no distinction between Luba and Baluba.

xxi Booth mentions several practices treating this threat as real: people traveling in groups, protecting their children, arriving armed to the palace of the dead. This points to the notion of lineage as the source of order itself, which appears again and again.

xxii “Man is not the ultimate judge of his deeds. He does not find the justification of his acts and omissions in himself. Transcending the free will of man is a higher force that knows, assesses and judges human acts. Against the decisions and acts of the supreme human power, appeal can always be made to the transcendental power, from whom man has received his power of judgment, with the obligation to give account of his use of it.” (Tempels 1959, p. 53 or [p. 75])

“A Bantu one day explained to one of my colleagues that the ‘muntu’ is rather what you call in English the ‘person’ and not what you connote by ‘the man’. ‘Muntu’ signifies, then, vital force, endowed with intelligence and will. This interpretation gives a logical meaning to the statement which I one day received from a Bantu: ‘God is a great muntu’ (‘Vidye i muntu mukatampe’). This meant ‘God is the great Person’; that is to say, the great, powerful and reasonable living force.” (Tempels 1959, p. 27 or [p. 37])

“The language of the Bantu would cause one to think that they identify the founders of the clan with God himself. It so happens that they call both by the same name. There is, however, no identification, but a simple comparison, a practice analogous to that in which a Chief's deputy is treated as the Chief himself, since he is his sensory manifestation and his speech is often the word of him who sent him” (ibid. 30 [or 42]).

Tempels tenacious characterization of God as transcendent and unreachable by humans seems to underlie all these passages, especially insofar as it implicitly divorces man from the earthly divine lineage. It seems to be possible, from these articulations alone, that God and man are of the same substance for “Bantu Philosophy”. We will see that this notion of God's transcendence is called into question by certain deviations that occurred within the Jamaa, whereby individuals actively attempted to make themselves part of a divine lineage and assumed properties of divinity – directly contradicting Tempels’ assertions.

xxiii Tempels was highly influenced before priesthood by a clergy member and teacher at his secondary school who “broke through some of the puritanical religious norms that dominated the school in his era, by encouraging students to learn how to be ‘social’: how to meet and relate to girls of their own age, how to go out and enjoy a drink with the boys, etc.” (De Craemer 1977, 13) “There is a striking similarity between Tempels’s relationship to his students and the one he experienced... in Abbé H.’s class” (ibid.). Tempels wrote “all of us...have not reached their ‘soul’...because we have not understood the Bantu 'soul', we have not made a methodical effort for them to have a more pure and intense life” (24). On Tempels tradition: “Franciscan theology is christocentric. It not only accords a greater primacy to Christ than other schools of
Christian theology, but it also emphasizes his human nature and humanity” (81).

“For ten years...my eyes fixed always on my manual, I tried all the methods, all the possible clichés to make the Christian religion understood, accepted, and practised. I scrupulously followed all the directives and, in spite of everything, the engine didn't start up.' Tempels reports that he was 'overcome by despair, because [he] felt that [he] had failed and that nothing had taken root'. This retrospectively self-denunciatory account of Tempels's first decade in the Congo has to be seen against the larger social and historical background of Belgian colonial policy of the era. The ideology on which it was based hinged on two major conceptions: the idea of 'civilizing' the Congolese and the principle of 'Dominer pour Servir' ('Dominate in order to serve')” (De Craemer 1977, 15).

Tempels went through a period of deep communication and openness with a woman referred to as Sister X. His spiritual openness with this woman and the ontological changes it wrought in him may be somewhat attributable to the fact that these encounters took place after his first attempts to fully understand the system of thought of the Congolese he worked with in Africa. This encounter with Sister X gave him “a new vision on the whole of Christianity, a new discovery of Christ, or perhaps, a first discovery of Christianity... [Tempels] became conscious that man is created for the other, that man came only to self-realization, to really being man, in encounter with the other.” (De Craemer 1977, 34) This form of encounter deepened the syncretism and cross pollination of ideas that Tempels himself was pushing for in his ministry. After his return to the Congo and the beginning of his teaching at Ruwe (which later became the beginning families of the Jamaa), Tempels wrote: “I am beginning to discover the same things, the same aspirations, the same thoughts, the same desire for full, total, intense life; for fecundity, paternity; for union with others. Yes, it seems to me that I am discovering in myself the same sentiments that you have!” (ibid. 36).

A powerful example of this: “One day, in the course of a long conversation about his work and about the relations between whites and Congolese, he came up with a surprising statement: the [UM] is really like the Jamaa. People of many [tribes] are together for a common purpose, as is the case with Jamaa groups. And it is [love] that keeps them together. In any case, he told me, this is what unites me with 'my white man'[a locally significant term denoting reciprocal relationship -NS]. If a white man had an accident in the mine, I would carry him in my arms and not be afraid of him because he is a white man.” (Fabian 1971, 51)

“Several directors went so far as to testify that, 'Thanks to the Jamaa, in our city [Kolwezi] we have never had any serious disturbances, disorders or conflicts” (De Craemer 1971, 109).

This challenge is compounded by “a traditional Bantu tendency...to feel that the more a thing is kept secret, the more it is valued” and the fact that “secrecy is the hallmark of the traditional Bantu associations that have initiation rites” (De Craemer 1977, 66).

“Tempel's disclaimers notwithstanding...numerous Jamists received the message that fundamental 'unity', 'being-one-thing'...achieved its full realization only when baba and mama became one through sexual intercourse, as they were convinced Christ and Mary had done. Uniting through physical relations made 'totally pure by the Love of God' is viewed by such Jamaa members as a sign of the highest, most spiritual form of love. Furthermore, they have taken this belief and applied it to figures and events in the Old and New Testaments of special importance in Jamaa teaching” (De Craemer 1977, 77).

Thankfully this illustrates that the ba- prefix is probably plural in Swahili. Thus Baluba and Luba have been treated appropriately as belonging to one lineage here.

Members of the Jamaa were even “imported” to troublesome regions in an attempt to reduce conflict. “...the end of colonial rule brought the mission to the edge of catastrophe. In this situation, in which Christianity was in danger of being discarded as the white man's religion, the emergence of a genuinely 'African' movement, such as the Jamaa...was greeted with great enthusiasm. Two Congolese priests...visited Jamaa groups in Katanga. As a result, several families were literally imported to Kinshasa in the hope that they would become the core of a similar Africanization of Christianity” (Fabian 1971, 100)