25 WITCHCRAFT

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Witchcraft, along with equivalent indigenous terms, describes forms of interpersonal violence. These are distinct from but equivalent to physical violence in their effects. Perpetrated in secret by invisible means and evident primarily in manifestations of misfortune (which can take virtually any form), witchcraft—which can also be described as occult assault—is nonetheless considered to be every bit as real as any other form of violence. Serious illness and untimely deaths, particularly, provoke speculation about witchcraft. Witchcraft, it should be noted, is but one of many ways in which invisible evil forces are said to cause harm.

The matters to which the term "witchcraft" refers are dynamic; the ideas, discourses, idioms, and narratives used to account for them are constantly in flux. When approaching these issues, therefore, it is most important not to presume that we are searching for some sort of stable, static, "system of belief" applicable to "Africans," or some particular subset thereof, which can be compared with other putative systems or for which a history can be described. Indeed, for reasons explained by Rodney Needham several decades ago, we should be extremely careful when deploying the term "belief" in regard to these issues, for when people speak of witchcraft, they are primarily telling stories not outlining propositions, and stories have very different conditions of believability from propositions.

The history of scholarship on witchcraft in Africa has been shaped by a combination of Western fascination with the fact that people still believe in witches, when such superstition was thought long dead in the West, and the need to counter Western prejudice about Africans. Early European travelers and missionaries in Africa tended to write or talk about witchcraft, along with rituals and procedures for its control, as yet more evidence for

the prevailing prejudice that Africans were primitive people marked by savagery, awaiting only the "civilizing mission" of colonialism and Christianity. Missionaries tended to treat witchcraft as part of a general pattern of paganism that would surely retreat in the face of the Gospel, thus underlining the imperative of evangelization. Colonial authorities and settlers frequently cited African talk of witchcraft in justifying the need for white rule. Despite more than a century of scholarly research showing otherwise, the presumption that "belief in witchcraft" indicates some sort of premodern backwardness remains firmly entrenched among outsiders encountering African preoccupations with witchcraft. Nonetheless, students of Africa, whatever their focus, can hardly avoid consideration of witchcraft—since the sense of insecurity the term indicates permeates virtually every aspect of life. Given the history of Western prejudice and racism, however, students of Africa must be circumspect, careful, and respectful when conducting research and discussing these issues.

Historical Treatment of Witchcraft

The first extended scholarly study of the subject was by E. E. Evans-Pritchard, in the south of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan in the late 1920s and early 1930s. In *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, a book which remains the keystone for all studies of the subject, Evans-Pritchard set out to show how, while witches, as the Azande conceived them, cannot exist, their ideas about witches and witchcraft were by no means absurd. Rather than a failure to understand the basic realities of the empirical world, Evans-Pritchard argued that Azande talk about witchcraft was, in its own terms, an entirely reasonable way of making sense of fundamental existential questions about the meaning of misfortune. In what was to become his signature exemplum, he showed how the Azande he worked with were well aware that termites eating out the supports of a granary could cause the structure to fail and collapse on people resting in its shade. Such knowledge, however, failed to answer the questions, *Why me? Why now?* For these questions, suppositions about chance were quite unsatisfactory whereas witchcraft supplied a viable hypothesis: *someone* has caused it to fall on me; the question is, *Who?* Evans-Pritchard strove to show how the Azande worldview was internally consistent and reasonable, given their circumstances. The Zande philosophical system, he suggested, largely implicit though it was, could be described and translated by the anthropologist into terms understandable by outsiders. The conviction, pioneered by

Evans-Pritchard, that African talk of witchcraft should not be treated as a form of "primitive mentality" indicative of "prelogical thought," as argued by Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, has remained the foundation of all serious studies of the subject since. (Indeed, Evans-Pritchard's work spurred a long-running debate about the nature of rationality and scientific explanation.)

In the middle decades of the twentieth century discussions of witchcraft became a staple of Africanist anthropology, dominated as it was by British social anthropologists. While some earlier anthropologists, notably Audrey Richards in the 1930s, and, some would argue, those associated with the Rhodes-Livingston Institute in the 1940s and 1950s, had attended to the impact of social change attendant on colonialism and urbanization, for the most part anthropologists were disinclined to study colonial power relations in favor of reconstructing putative "belief systems" of "Native tribes." A number of colonial administrators, however, such as Frank Melland in Northern Rhodesia and C. Clifton Roberts in the Nyasaland Protectorate grappled with the difficult question of how to align "modern" colonial law and administration with the fact that Africans feared, and felt a strong need to deal with, witchcraft.

Two broad approaches to witchcraft dominated the field of African studies in the mid-twentieth century. The first, emphasizing the sociology of knowledge, attempted to catalogue for other groups what Evans-Pritchard had done for the Azande, while seeking, further, to trace connections between the "social structure" of African societies and patterns of witchcraft "beliefs." Monica Wilson, for example, famously argued that witchcraft beliefs represented the "standardized nightmare" of a society, equivalent to the "reds under the bed" fantasies of McCarthyite investigators in the United States at the time. Among the Nyakyusa, where people lived not with kin but cattle-owning neighbors from whose wealth they were excluded, other than to dine occasionally on a beast at a feast, Wilson argued that witchcraft stories tended to involve accounts of prodigious feasting on that most illicit resource: human flesh. Among the Pondo, on the other hand, where complicated kinship rules prohibiting marriage between even quite distant relatives—any member of your mother's or grandmother's clans, possibly numbering in the thousands, most of whom are strangers—kept people in a state of anxiety about incest, witchcraft stories primarily conjured scenes of erotic transgression.

The second preoccupation of midcentury modernist anthropologists involved tracing the micro-politics of witchcraft accusations in particular societies—figuring out who accuses whom, when, where, how, and

why—so as to ascertain the functions such accusations performed in maintaining social order or facilitating social change. Witchcraft accusations could then be read as, in the words of Max Marwick, a sort of "social strain gauge" to identify the real underlying conflicts, typically within kinship groups, that marked a particular kind of society. As Victor Turner first pointed out, however, most of these studies were predicated on a static image of their subjects when in reality the societies in question were highly dynamic, changing in ways that could only be understood by studying them closely over time, rendering pointless any efforts to generalize from patterns of accusation in particular places at particular times.

By the late 1960s, as the wave of Independence swept through colonial Africa, anthropological interest in witchcraft declined. The new states of Africa were embarking on ambitious modernizing schemes, with political elites recycling the great twentieth-century modernist narratives of capitalism, socialism, and nationalism. Attention by outsiders to the implicit backwardness inherent in talk of witchcraft came to seem not only impolite, but also irrelevant. African scholars were also disinclined to waste time on such matters. Africanists in other disciplines, while occasionally recognizing the salience of matters such as witchcraft, were able to ignore such issues because they fell under the purview of anthropology. African talk of witchcraft was generally presumed to be a steadily disappearing trace of a tradition-bound past. Urbanization, moreover, meant that presumptions about stable "belief systems" identifying bounded "cultures" such as informed earlier anthropology became increasingly harder to sustain.

In the late 1980s, however, Africanist anthropologists began to realize they could no longer ignore the persistent talk of witchcraft they were encountering in their fieldwork. Nor could they ignore the legacy of colonialism in the contexts within which they worked. At the same time, dynamic religious movements were sweeping the continent, particularly robust forms of global Pentecostalism, which were, and remain, preoccupied with countering evil forces such as witchcraft. Witchcraft came to be understood not as a remnant of the belief systems of past cultures but as part of the complex ways Africans were creating modern societies as well as ways of understanding "modern" changes in their social worlds, connected as these were to the rest of the world. The seminal texts in this field were Peter Geschiere's *The Modernity of Witchcraft* and the collection edited by Jean and John Comaroff, *Modernity and Its Malcontents*. These and other authors have worked to show, among other things, how witchcraft

discourses circulate among the global flows of ideas, people, commodities, and capital in the worlds of late capitalism.

Since the 1990s, African studies has seen a proliferation of writing on witchcraft in Africa covering a wide range of topics and approaches. The issue is no longer considered the sole province of anthropology but has become rather a central concern of students of economics and development, law and human rights, public health (particularly in the wake of the HIV/AIDS epidemic), religion, politics, and violence—to name but a few.

Some critics have argued that this renewed scholarly interest in witchcraft has led to an overemphasis on the occult, contributing, yet again, to a sense that Africa is rife with ignorance and superstition. Some African scholars, from both religious (Bongmba 2001; Ngong 2012) and secular perspectives (Igwe 2004), have also been critical of this work as impeding the proper modernization of African societies. Nonetheless, the impact of recent scholarship has meant that students of Africa now have to take into account dimensions of social life that are not ordinarily, or easily, accounted for in the social scientific disciplines as they have emerged in the Global North.

The Nature and Implications of Witchcraft

Invoking witchcraft in accounting for misfortune is a way of interpreting suffering as a form of harm deliberately inflicted on a victim by another person, usually someone in an intimate relationship with the victim, such as a relative, friend, or neighbor. Witchcraft is also said to be an illicit means for accumulating wealth and power at the expense of others, just as physical violence serves similar purposes in robbery and domination. Virtually every community knows someone named, usually quietly in circuits of gossip, as a "witch."

While anyone with a sufficient grudge might be capable of witchcraft, some people are deemed so addicted to evil, so hungry for death and misfortune, that they seem like a different kind of being: a Witch. In most African languages a distinction can be found between witchcraft as a form of action and the witch as a distinct kind of being—at once human, though with superhuman powers, and subhuman in having forfeited membership in the human community through their unspeakably evil desires. The distinction is analogous to the distinction we make when speaking of physical violence: that everyone is capable of acts of violence, while only a few are innately violent or habitual killers.

In his classic work on Azande notions of witchcraft, Evans-Pritchard introduced a distinction he claimed the Azande made between what he translated as "witchcraft," being an inherent capacity of certain persons, and "sorcery," meaning the manipulation of substances to cause harm, which in principle was open to anyone. For decades, the investigation of this distinction preoccupied anthropologists of Africa as they sought to determine whether or not the people they studied applied a similar distinction. While the distinction between witch and sorcerer can at times be useful, I would argue it is less useful than the simpler distinction, outlined above, between the witch as a kind of being and witchcraft as a form of doing. Most of what anthropologists have documented in terms of the witch/sorcerer distinction can be better understood by reference to being and doing.

At the heart of stories about witchcraft in Africa are accounts of how one otherwise ordinary person acquires the power to cause harm to another by extraordinary means. There are four basic answers to the question of where the power of witchcraft comes from. These include the following: innate capacity, usually inherited, sometimes, though not necessarily, with physical manifestations; special knowledge of substances and rituals learned from others (often, but not necessarily, kin); secret relations with invisible beings bestowing power (these days, as in early modern Europe, most usually the devil); and magical substances purchased or otherwise acquired from experts (which traditional healers and herbalists are often, despite protestations to the contrary, presumed to possess). When speaking of witchcraft, people frequently disagree over the source of the invisible evil power. The occult dimensions of any particular event or misfortune are always open for debate. The general possibility of such acts occurring, however, is rarely disputed. The existence of witches, similarly, is generally taken for granted.

Witchcraft signifies a disruption of relations among human persons. As mentioned at the outset, however, the term, with all its vernacular equivalents, refers to but one subset of interactions involving invisible forces shaping human life. When encountering African stories of witchcraft, then, outsiders should realize that such talk refers to relations among persons and invisible entities of a much more complex and dynamic nature than is typically presumed by Western modernist discourses, such as those underpinning the social sciences. These interactions involve relations as follows: among persons (including some with mysterious supernatural capacities); between persons and invisible beings resembling persons in possessing agency and intention (such as ancestors, spirits,

deities, and demons—to name but a few); between persons and invisible agencies inherent in certain substances, images, objects, and texts (which can sometimes be aids in healing as well as harming); between persons and invisible entities resembling animals (including both real and imaginary creatures); and among all of the above. Life, for most people, is dependent on the successful management of all these relations, and more, in such a way as to create harmony and security. For most people, human life depends upon the good favor of invisible beings—ultimately, these days, the one known as God. It is not merely a matter of relations among humans, as social science would have it.

As with physical violence, certain categories of people are widely presumed more likely than others to use witchcraft to perpetrate malicious acts, either from necessity, due to an inability to use other means of causing harm, or from a desire—born usually from impotence—to keep one's malfeasance secret in order to avoid retaliation. Older women, for example, who tend to use physical violence infrequently, are commonly said to be more prone to the use of witchcraft; young men, on the other hand, are generally thought to incline more toward using physical rather than occult violence. Thus when communities punish accused witches, the pattern is generally one of young men beating older women. When confronted with such events, it is important for outsiders to realize that the people who see themselves as meting out justice perceive the targets of anti-witchcraft violence as immensely powerful and dangerous, not the innocent, vulnerable, and marginalized little old ladies that outsiders imagine them to be.

Jealousy, envy, hatred, anger, and the desire for revenge are the main emotions said to motivate the use of witchcraft; the same motives are said to apply to the use of physical violence. Just as anyone can perpetrate physical violence, anyone so motivated, and with the motive to acquire the means, can perpetrate witchcraft. In this sense, anyone can do witchcraft, though that does not automatically make him or her a "witch." Just as physical violence can at times be deemed legitimate, so can the use of occult force. Generally speaking, however, the term "witchcraft" and its cognates is reserved for the illicit uses of such power.

Living in a World with Witchcraft

Stories about witches, in the sense of a distinct kind of being devoted to evil, vary in their particulars from place to place and change over time. Some witches, for example, are said to be addicted to the consumption

of human flesh; others are devoted to perverted forms of sex. Some are born; others are made. Despite the diversity of detail, however, such stories share certain common narrative patterns and their plausibility derives from common presuppositions about the nature of human experience, particularly in relation to possibilities of action in the realm of dreams. People who worry about witches tend not to draw a firm line between the realities of the waking world and terrors of the night. Events experienced in dreams are often thought to have real, physical, consequences on events unfolding in the light of day. That certain dreams can presage the future is largely taken for granted. And few deny the possibility of communication with invisible beings through the medium of dreams. When listening to stories of witches, then, it is important to investigate understandings of the ontological status of dreams.

Living in a world with witchcraft creates distinct problems of security and justice additional to those created by ordinary physical violence. These arise from the problem of knowing who is doing witchcraft and of what they are capable. Jealousy, the primary motive of witchcraft, is, by definition, an emotion predicated on secrecy—for once jealousy is openly acknowledged its power is diminished. The resulting emotion is something other than jealousy. Witchcraft, similarly, is action perpetrated in secret; were it performed in the open it would lose its power and be readily countermanded. The witch, moreover, will generally deny his or her true nature unless forced to confess. Furthermore, witchcraft is said to involve the deployment of invisible forces that are imperceptible to ordinary people.

People living in a world with witches, then, face an epistemological double bind: they can never know who does *not* have a motive, since jealousy will be hidden, nor do they know who has the means, or indeed, what those means are, since only the witch knows that. Furthermore, no one can say what a witch is *not* capable of. Social life in such contexts, therefore, must be premised upon a presumption of malice, which complicates the building of trust in social relations. Despite evident appearances of amity and comity in a community, the danger of witchcraft is always present and must be guarded against. Protection, then, is imperative. A great deal of time, energy, and money is devoted to the protection of individuals, families, and communities from occult assault. When protection fails, when harm is experienced, questions of who is to blame and what is to be done, in other words questions of justice, inevitably arise.

Protection against the dangers of witchcraft takes two basic forms: social and spiritual.

Since jealousy, resentment, and hatred can lead to illness, injury, death, or other misfortunes caused by witchcraft, efforts must be taken to manage interpersonal relations so as to minimize the potential for those feelings arising. Social conflicts, since they can spin out of control into multiple forms of metaphysical as well as physical violence, must be carefully managed and harmony sought at all costs. Managing such conflicts, then, places particular imperatives before authorities within families, kinship networks, communities, and nations.

However, since the means deployed in witchcraft are invisible, protection for human persons at risk ultimately depends on similarly invisible forces, particularly in the form of spiritual beings. Human security in a world of witches, then, depends on relations with invisible beings. Legions of spiritual entrepreneurs across the continent, of every variety of tradition and faith, promise mediation with invisible beings in pursuit of human security in a world of witches, making Africa the most dynamic continent for religious enthusiasm and nonmedical healing. Managing relations with invisible beings was historically, and continues to be for many people, a major role of social and political authorities. The ability of these authorities to perform these roles, however, has been compromised in many cases, if not completely undermined, by the histories of slavery, colonialism, capitalism, urbanization, and religious proselytizing on the continent.

Given the essential premise of stories of witchcraft, that misfortune is *harm* deliberately inflicted, remedying such misfortune requires identifying and neutralizing the powers of perpetrators. This sometimes involves open accusation, occasionally resulting in trials and punishment of accused witches. Persons so accused have sometimes been subjected to physical violence, even killed—mostly in eruptions of mob violence, typically in the absence of authorities capable of adjudicating accusations. It is important to stress, however, that anti-witchcraft violence is rare, an exception to the norm. By far the majority of cases in which people worry about witchcraft are resolved privately by means of healing and prayer, without open accusation. In tightly knit communities, gossip is frequently deployed against suspected witches, again without open accusations being made, in order to put suspects on notice that their activities are being monitored.

As with ordinary physical violence, not all uses of invisible force are necessarily deemed illegitimate. As it is used in African contexts, however, the word "witchcraft" is generally reserved exclusively to describe illegitimate

uses of such force. While there is no ambiguity about witchcraft, the distinction between what constitutes the legitimate or illegitimate use of occult power is open to debate in relation to particular cases. Many women, for example, see love magic as a legitimate, if regrettable, means by which men might be constrained to ignore the blandishments of other women and perform their duties as husbands and fathers. Men, on the other hand, tend to view it as an illegitimate assault on their free will and agency, a pernicious form of witchcraft.

Specialists in the arts of countermanding witchcraft, generically referred to in English as "traditional healers," while generally recognized as capable of possessing extraordinary powers in the service of the good, must constantly struggle to distinguish themselves from their nefarious alter egos. All healing traditions enshrine rituals designed to accord their members an aura of legitimacy. Nonetheless, the suspicion that a healer might also have access to the powers of witchcraft remains widespread. For this reason, most healers are extremely sensitive about being labeled with the colonial-era denomination "witchdoctor." From the healer's standpoint, this term implies the doctor is a witch—a highly offensive suggestion to one who considers himself a doctor who works against witchcraft.

The most dynamic religious movements in Africa over the past century or so have devoted considerable attention to the imperatives of combatting the evils of witchcraft and promoting the health and well-being that is undermined by evil invisible forces. Pentecostalism, for example, offers the faithful the prospect of enlisting the power of the Holy Spirit in combatting the evil forces besetting everyday life, not the least of which is witchcraft. As with traditional healers, however, successful preachers also have to reckon with the fact that many attribute their healing powers to invisible evil forces; a claim to heal by channeling the power of the Holy Spirit, for example, might just as well be evidence of a diabolic pact with Satan.

For many people in contemporary Africa, the fear of witchcraft is compounded by a sense of spiritual insecurity, a feeling of danger, doubt, and fear arising from awareness of the need to manage relations with powerful invisible forces shaping life coupled with uncertainty over how to do so. The proliferation of interpretive authorities, such as healers and preachers, often compounds this sense of spiritual insecurity.

When protective measures fail, when harm is suffered and when the evil forces cannot be repelled by means of rituals or prayers, and especially when a putative victim of witchcraft dies, questions of justice inevitably arise. Given the amount of misfortune people suspect might be caused by

witchcraft, the numbers of people openly accused, let alone punished, is small. When a person, or more usually a family, believes someone they care about has been killed by witchcraft a variety of avenues are available for seeking justice. Most commonly, justice is sought through the intercession of healers. Healers, typically, will claim to be able to determine the identity of the wrongdoer but will refuse to identify him or her, promising instead to use mystical means to right the wrong.

When anger boils over in a family or community over suspected witchcraft, the perpetrator might be named and perhaps directly confronted, shamed, or even punished. In the past, most African communities had established procedures for handling such accusations and resolving conflicts in ways designed to restore harmony to social relations. Sometimes these involved trials in which accused and accusers brought their stories before community assemblies. Sometimes poison ordeals were also involved, whereby invisible beings were called on to act through substances to identify and punish the witch. When they are made, accusations of witchcraft are extremely difficult to defuse, since proving the negative is necessary: *I am not a witch*. Accused witches, therefore, often find that their best hope is to confess while at the same time renouncing witchcraft, undergoing ritual purification, and begging forgiveness.

Witchcraft cases are heard in a wide variety of forums throughout the continent, sometimes within the formal legal system, often within so-called "traditional" or "customary" forums, and frequently within other nonlegal, or extralegal, forums such as a manager's office or a community leader's home. Where such forums are not available, the anger aroused by suspected witchcraft can lead to mob violence or acts of revenge punishing the putative perpetrators. Generally, however, people are wary of openly accusing others of witchcraft, not the least for the reason that witches are considered to be extremely dangerous and powerful people. Perhaps the most common form of revenge is the story surreptitiously shared of a particular person's perfidy. Within virtually every community, if you listen long enough, you will hear gossip about the people known to be witches. Usually, however, the fact that someone is known as a "witch" is not particular cause for concern—unless, and until, acts of witchcraft are suspected or detected.

During colonial times, authorities enacted laws preventing Africans from taking steps to control witchcraft. Most British colonies, for example, enacted ordinances modeled after the Witchcraft Act in force in England since 1736. In England, this law took issues of witchcraft away

from consideration by courts. In the colonies, law forbade holding trials of witches (which had been a central part of chiefly authority in much of the continent), prevented subjecting them to ordeals, outlawed the making of accusations, prohibited the raising of money to cleanse communities of witchcraft, and outlawed divination in quest of knowledge about witch-craft (a central feature of all traditional healing).

Such laws, needless to say, were incompletely and unevenly applied. Nonetheless, they offered colonial authorities a convenient mechanism, when needed, for limiting the powers of chiefs and other rulers to exer-cise capital punishment (a right monopolized, of course, by the colonial governor) or banishment (which created problems of vagrancy). They also offered the authorities an instrument to use when popular leaders created social movements in the name of healing and cleansing witchcraft that might become a challenge to the colonial order.

The fact that colonial law, at least on paper, prevented Africans from addressing what they considered the most heinous of crimes compromised respect for that law, and not just in respect of witchcraft. In postcolonial times, most African states have grappled with reforming law to take cog-nizance of the fact that most of their citizens consider witchcraft a real and present danger, a serious crime. Reformers have argued that colonial era laws be changed to recognize the reality of witchcraft and serve in dis-tinguishing true from false accusations. The record of legislative reform in this regard, however, is mixed. Even where statutes provide no basis for legal action, formal and informal courts still regularly deal with issues of witchcraft accusations, mostly resolving them without resort to violence.

In recent years, human rights activists and international organizations have become concerned about witchcraft accusations and anti-witchcraft activities in Africa. Since most of the people who find themselves accused of witchcraft are older and female, the humanitarian interest in accusa-tions dovetails with concerns about gender equality and violence against women. While laudable in their desire to protect people from hardship and violence, interventions to protect accused witches in the name of human rights share the colonial-era attitude of foreigners, convinced that witch-craft is imaginary, seeking to undermine local judicial processes while of-fering no solutions to the problems of security and justice that communi-ties worried about witchcraft see themselves as facing.

Conclusion

Most Africans, when asked about witchcraft, will profess some degree of ignorance. The standard answer to the question "what is witchcraft?" takes the form: witchcraft is real, but I don't know how it works. Even people who claim expertise in the subject, such as healers, will aver that only the witch really knows witchcraft. Judging from the tentative responses reported in the ethnographic literature over the past century or so, this state of "not-knowing" is not new.

Given this fact, it is somewhat surprising that the vast majority of outsiders writing about witchcraft in Africa have sought to delineate "systems of belief," sets of logically interrelated propositions—usually implied but not stated—to which members of specific cultural groups are said to accord credence, or which they presumably would were they to see the need to articulate them. Catalogues of such "beliefs" can be found for virtually every part of the continent.

Underpinning this effort has been a conviction that all human cultures possess coherent systems of belief, more or less reminiscent of the archetypal model in Western Christendom of the Nicene Creed, and that the work of the ethnographer is to uncover, document, and report on the key propositions of each particular system of belief. In recent decades, as the old ethnological project of documenting the cultures of the family of man fell out of fashion, the old impetus to document "beliefs" has lived on, most recently in the urge to discover indigenous notions that might assist (or, more usually, hinder in the form of "myths and misconceptions") the spread of AIDS awareness.

While definitive statements about the nature of witchcraft are scarce in Africa, stories about witches and witchcraft are plentiful. Rather than mine these stories for propositional "beliefs" constitutive of some putative philosophical system, I would urge students of witchcraft to examine the predicates that make such narratives plausible and the processes through which particular stories, in particular times and places, are adjudged true. From there, we must explore how the telling and retelling of such stories serve in the ordering of social relations, not only among the denizens of the world as we know it, but also within the complex dimensions of African power relations with entities both visible and invisible.

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