1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the relationship between exorcism, envy, and witchcraft in an African social setting, the reasons for their escalation and ways to combat them. An African worldview that constructs and shapes the trajectory of envy in society is examined within the theoretical framework of African epistemology, its principles of egalitarianism, and the function of exorcism.

The starting point is identifying how some African people come to know the truth and their justification of their knowledge, which is then used as a platform for envious persecution. The discussion proceeds by first examining the tenets of African epistemology as a justification for persecution and exorcism. This is followed by a consideration of the way that principles of egalitarianism could be applied negatively to justify violence in the name of corrective exorcism. Exorcism has many dimensions, such as psychology, theology, traditional religion, and sociology (Moore 1979). It posits the existence of spiritual forces (benevolent or malevolent) that sometimes trespass in places where they ought not to be by taking possession of people, who in turn cause harm to society (Moore 1979) and to the wellbeing of the person possessed and by extension to the community where the individual lives. Ending the supernatural possession is necessary as the community leaders have to ensure the wellbeing of the whole society either through rituals, use of force, or even persecution.

This chapter argues that exorcism can take another form where the exorcist needs to be exorcised of envy and the harmful beliefs that lead to the persecution of perceived foes and treating people with different qualities and possessions as somehow the same. Such maltreatment may take the form of hidden and undetected vengeance behaviour and uses the discourse of witchcraft accusations and persecution. There has not been much exploration in the literature of the methods of, and rationale for, exorcist violence. But the study of the phenomenon is crucial to account for certain crimes in society. Variables such as rumours, gossip, language and silencing, secrets/privacy and beliefs are analysed as propellers of the envy-driven persecution that justifies ‘cleansing’ by exorcism. As a practice supposed to rid a person of negative influences, exorcism may in fact turn into a persecuting machine that impedes development in society (Dombeck 1999). This study adopted a case study method and offers recommendations for the ‘exorcism’ of the evildoers themselves, namely the exorcists who are often perceived as community leaders.
2 African Epistemology

Is there such a thing as an African epistemology? The answer is that there is and it rotates on a different axis from the Western way of knowing. African people have their own way of conceptualising, interpreting and apprehending reality within the context of the African situation. The idea of an African epistemology is also based on African people’s understanding of the concepts of knowledge, truth, and rationality (Udefi 2014) without mediation from Western categories of knowing. African people are complete people capable of thinking through issues and were able to reach viable conclusions without external assistance before the colonial authorities set foot on the African continent. With the arrival of Western missionaries and the colonial dispensation, African knowledge systems were disregarded, overridden, pushed into silence (Spewak 2017, 423–440; Wray 2010, 181–184) and regarded as unscientific and delusional. The arrival of the colonial powers did not advance the African quest for knowledge but instead negated it. African ways of knowing were driven underground and operated at the level of privacy and in secrecy (Fallis 2013).

Like its counterpart, Western epistemology, African epistemology has its own challenges and false beliefs that are motivated by hidden motives (Ani 2013, 295–320). As a human construct and product, any epistemological system is limited in its grasp of reality and becomes further blurred by human subjectivity. Subjectivity remains the silent enemy of all good intentions in every community. Not everything people believe to be true is true, and people may also sincerely hold false beliefs. Because of total depravity of the sin (Jer 17:9) that humans harbour, their objectivity is tainted by forces such as envy and jealousy, which to be exorcised. People kill other humans for reasons that cannot be explained in wholly rational terms, but that does not mean they are less human. Sometimes these atrocities are committed for the sake of corrective actions to get rid of evil in victims who are innocent but detrimental to societal development.

The individual is inevitably seen as requiring help from others to realise or satisfy his/her basic needs. The value of collective action, mutual aid and interdependence is, therefore, stressed to ensure an individual’s – and ultimately social – welfare, and for the successful achievement of the most difficult undertakings. Communalism, therefore, insists that the good of all determines the good of each individual, and that an individual finds the highest benefit – materially, morally and spiritually – in relationships with others and in working for the good of all. The promotion of communal life in African settings is in a sense the recognition of the existence of conflicts and tensions that normally emerge in individual competition, the desire to satisfy one’s own needs at the expense of others, the pursuit of a selfish agenda by individuals, and the frustrations that arise when a person works on his/her own. In an attempt to improve relations, minimise competition and reduce tensions and frustration, a communal approach is adopted aimed not at eliminating individuality but at regulating it (Gyekye 1987, 88). Misbehaviour or anti-social conduct
on the part of an individual would have catastrophic effects on communal harmony. Avoidance of such disruptive behaviour is sometimes the reason behind the curtailment of individualism and independence. But this curtailment of individualism often has a negative impact on development and leads to hegemony. An individual may be prevented from developing his/her skills, as is the case in Western cultures. But total control of the individual exercise of independence has negative effects, as new initiatives may not be tolerated, especially if this intolerance is further motivated by jealousy or suspicion of witchcraft.

3 Theory of Egalitarianism

Egalitarianism entails the levelling and equalizing of power relations – whether in the form of intellectual influence in society or possession. Egalitarianism as a concept comes from a political philosophy that endorses the principle of the equality of people in their social setting (Arneson 2013). It argues that people should get the same, be treated the same, be treated as equals, relate as equals, or enjoy equal social status (Wolff 2010, 335–350). Egalitarian doctrines tend to be based on the idea that all humans are equal in fundamental worth or moral status. The term egalitarianism resonates with the Christian notion that God has created all people equal and loves all human souls equally. Egalitarianism postulates that asymmetrical relationships in society should be adjusted to become more symmetrical. The ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ should share the available resources in such a way that an equilibrium is achieved. As a social theory on the equality of people, it is an idealist philosophy, but it has a darker flipside. Where activism for equality is premised on envy disguised as seeking egalitarianism, the project could be more dubious. In such circumstances the underlying motive for promoting egalitarianism could be envious persecution that is mainly aimed at social control by self-appointed demagogues in the community who want people to toe the line and to punish those who overstep certain boundaries (Kgatla 2000, 203).

In his chapter titled ‘Fairness, Respect and Egalitarian Ethos Revisited’, Wolff (2010, 335–350) argues that egalitarianism is a many-splendored thing. In some cases, however, it fails to devote sufficient attention to issues of respect and self-respect. Although egalitarianism may be animated by a vision of the good society, it could also be argued that there are other good ways of living together (Wolff 2010). Wolff (2010, 8) advances a notion of egalitarianism that is fair and respectful and includes what he calls the element of responsibility. He asserts that individuals should only be entitled to help when their plight is beyond their control (Wolff 2010, 9). It is unethical for an individual to refuse to work (out of laziness) but then also expect welfare that is sponsored by the drive towards equalisation in terms of meeting material needs. This notion is in line with what Paul says in 2Thess 3:1: ‘He who does not work, neither shall he eat’. Those who are not employed through their own choice should not be morally entitled to social benefits and they have no grounds to
envy those who are working to earn their living. But these structural impediments and exclusions should be exposed for what they are. Exclusion and suppression of individuals because of their abilities is anti-developmental.

The victims here include all people who do not comply with the law of negative egalitarianism. By negative egalitarianism I mean a principle by which all people are expected to be the same or identical. This illusion advocates for a situation in which people are expected to think the same and have the same views about issues. Their children must have the same education, achieve the same qualifications at a tertiary education level, drive the same cars, have the same intellect, have the same values, and consequently participate in the same mediocrity. More often than not, this equalising thinking is the trigger for envy and identifies those people who transgress the norm as the enemies of the people (Kgatla 2000, 203). Such instruments of social control are self-destructive in that they prevent any form of development in the society in the name of egalitarianism. Admired and exemplary people in society may be reduced to objects of pity (Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998, 12). Through ostracism, feuds and homicide, people are prevented from excelling in anything desirable or constructive (Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998). This insistence on the preservation of popular obedience and loyalty to the people obsessed with envy is regarded as the essential bulwark against anarchy and social disintegration (Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998). In such an environment, social tools such as rumours, gossip, and innuendo can divert wholly good purposes. What follows below is an analysis of the way that undetected envious possession can play itself out.

4 Variables in Envious Persecution

Variables such as rumours, gossip, language and silencing, and beliefs play a significant role in envious persecutions. They act to prepare, control, and direct the extent to which the persecutions may evolve. Rumours in the escalation of persecution are generated where the boundaries between what is real and unreal, false, and true become blurred (Ellis and ter Haar 2004, 27). Rumours are speculative by definition and attempt to provide people with a theory or explanation of what really happened and the agency behind why it happened. They are attempts at understanding something inexplicable by attributing causes to what had happened in order to construct an unseen world of cause and effect (Ellis and ter Haar 2004, 36). Rumours contribute to a system where loose facts are appropriated into a coherent whole to provide a viable explanation that may soothe people’s souls into accepting even something awful.

Gossip is talk about absent third parties that is aimed at ruining their reputations (Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998, 12). Nycyk (2015, 18–32) describes gossip as the spreading of harmful information about others with the view to persuading listeners or readers of the gossip to change their perception of the person or thing being gossiped about. It is a power tactic that is used to shape the thinking of others negatively. Gossip may result in the stigmatisation and shaming of the targeted person(s) where
their identity and reputation are judged negatively, especially where there is competition for honour and respect.

Envious persecution, as socially constructed between the persons who experience it, is shaped by cultural, historical, and political factors to serve the purpose of the powerful (Darlaston-Jones 2016, 19). In such a space some injustices such as silencing and exclusion may be committed by using aspects of language that prevent others from fully expressing or defending themselves in cases where they are falsely accused (Spewak 2017, 425–440). In a country where rights of the weak are not fully protected and advantage may be taken of them on the basis of belief or religion, language is used to defend and justify such oppressive behaviour (Spewak 2017). Silencing with a view to exclusion may be used to offend or embarrass or mute the voices of those who are the target of persecution or make their actions offensive to those who must police human rights. A woman reporting a rape case at a police station may be asked embarrassing questions to prevent or inhibit her from telling the full story of what had happened. The purpose is to make her case not admissible before a court.

Fallis (2013) argues that protecting one’s own privacy is natural to every human being in order to protect themselves from invasion by outside forces seeking control over something dear to them. Blaauw (2013) concurs with Fallis (2013) that allowing others to acquire knowledge of something in another’s life may lead to harming the other. But often when persecutors identify someone for persecution, they insist that the secret of such a person should be revealed in order for them to assess whether that person has a secret, which then implies they are evil. More often than not such insistence is maliciously inspired, and the privacy of the victim is violated with the sole purpose of looting, persecuting and eventually even killing such a person. The protection of one’s privacy is a fundamental and inalienable human right.

5 Professional Jealousy and Envy

Ashley (2009) defines professional jealousy as ‘envy-turned-bad’. It is a normal and sometimes even positive thing to envy someone else and want to be like him or her. But in general envy starts with an unflattering social comparison that leads to a perception of inferiority (Smith 2004, 42). Envy arises when someone else’s advantage is perceived as unfair and threatening (Smith 2004, 46). According to Ashley (2009), envying a person who does something wonderful is normal, but when some people fail to get what they want while other people get more than they need, four fundamental questions present themselves: 1) Do they want what the successful person has? 2) Are they willing to work hard to achieve the same success? 3) Do they have the necessary skills to reach that goal? 4) How do they deal with their own failures? More often than not, negative responses to these questions gives rise to jealousy. Professional jealousy stems from a fear of failure when workers are not team orientated. In situations in which ministers are working in silos and have amassed imagined powers, they often feel disorientated (Bednarz 2012).
5.1 Ladder of Escalation of Disputes that Leads to Persecution

In this section I first analyse theories of envy in communities by providing a model that explains how envy can lead to the persecution of the people envied (see Figure 1). The ladder of the escalation of persecution is used as a model to explain how envy is precipitated and then leads to a seemingly logical conclusion that it is necessary or justifiable to inflict pain or death on victims. One event in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament are used to illustrate this point.

![Ladder of Escalation of Disputes that Leads to Persecution](image)

Figure 1: Foundations of Envious Persecutions, © Thias Kgatla.

In their research on witchcraft accusations and persecution in South Africa, Kgatla et al. (2003) came up with a model that explains how the escalation of disputes often leads to persecution. The model in Figure 1 is adapted from their model and used here to explain the phenomenon. The ladder starts at the bottom (level 1) and in some cases skips or even elaborates on some of the stages up to level 5. The model is universal and not limited to South Africa. Two biblical examples are used to explain how the model works: Gen 37 and Mark 15. Gen 37 and Mark 15 portray the lives of Joseph and Jesus Christ as targets of envy and describe how this envy evolved through simmering dissatisfactions, negative discourse (gossip or backbiting), victim naming, public support, annihilation of opposition and execution. The execution may take different paths depending on the circumstances. In rural communities, for example, the death penalty may be executed by mobs, while in communities where there are established civil laws, the alleged victims of persecution might be hurt physically or emotionally (as in urban areas).

In order to explain the model of persecution shown in Figure 1, I will now discuss each stage starting from the bottom to the top to elucidate the theory with examples. The work of Hagedorn and Neyrey (1998) is used to illustrate the model. Ha-
5.2 Gossip Discourse

Landman (2009, 37–44) describes discourse as a grand narrative which, when a majority believes in it, starts to regulate behaviour and perceptions. Whether it is true or not, discourse has the power of legitimising how people see life. Its grave consequences include stereotyping its victims and shaping people’s view of the world, while regulating a way of thinking about the matter at hand (Kgatla et al. 2003, 11). Discourse has a way of speaking about events while providing clarity on how to deal with competitors and rivals (Kgatla et al. 2003). Through ‘whispering’, discourse gathers its adherents, who may later become a large following (Kgatla et al. 2003). In communities, gossip discourse helps to identify the alleged ‘evil doer’, who should either be eliminated or ostracised from the community.

5.3 Identification of Victim and Legitimation of Persecution

The main purpose of persecution is to identify or legitimise accusation of the victim (s) (Kgatla et al. 2003, 13). Envious individuals accuse a person of wrongdoing without proof and the methods of identification and legitimisation are established. All steps that would be taken on the route to the persecution of victims are crucial as one step feeds into the other (Kgatla 2000, 84). The purpose of envious persecution is mainly to assert social control by self-appointed demagogues in the community who want people to toe the line and punish those who overstep the mark (Kgatla 2000, 203). The victims here include all people who do not comply with the law of negative egalitarianism (equalisation). This illusion advocates for a situation in which people are expected to think the same and have the same views about issues. More often than not, this kind of supposedly egalitarian thinking is the trigger of envy and identifies those people who transgress the norm as the enemies of the people (Kgatla 2000, 203). Such instruments of social control are self-destructive in that they prevent any form of development in the society in the name of egalitarianism. Admired and exemplary people in society are reduced to objects of pity (Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998, 12) through ostracism, exorcism and even homicide, stunting social development (Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998). The preservation of popular obedience and loyalty among people obsessed with envy is regarded as the essential bulwark against anarchy and social disintegration (Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998). The entire
The intention of persecution can lie dormant in the community for a long time until the opportune moment for accusations or complaints arises (Kgatla et al. 2003, 13). In some societies, the identification of the people who are targets of envy occurs through divination (diviner or a fortune-teller), a king or chief, a psychotherapist in the society, authoritative persons in the society or through public outcries. A misguided interpretation of the law by a leader may also serve as a sufficient source for conviction. Once authority has been obtained from persons perceived to be the sources of moral authority (such as a diviner, chief, prominent leader, or church leader), execution of judgement is the next step. The process of identifying the person envied does not proceed according to universal legal principles of people being presumed innocent until proven guilty the court of law; instead, the victim is guilty as charged before trial (Kgatla et al. 2003, 27). If a trial is held, it is a mere formality that confirms the desired preconceived outcome (Kgatla et al. 2003). Therefore, envy is a malady that corrodes healthy relationships and hampers authentic social development. If it is not detected at an early stage and dealt with, it may spread like a wildfire that is difficult to extinguish at a later stage.

5.5 Annihilation of Opposition

If support for persecution is deemed insufficient, attempts are made to remove any doubts because a doubting community is not a supportive community. The exercise involves repudiating people with a different worldview and opting instead for like-minded people who would support the agenda of punishing the perceived enemies (Glad, Strömberg, and Westerlund 2010). It is therefore crucial that they annihilate any opposition to their envisaged programme. After persecuting envied persons, the persecutors would not like to live with dissonant feelings or remorse for what
they have done. They do everything in their power to gloss over and justify their deeds in the name of protecting the people against evil individuals (Kgatla et al. 2003, 21). I now turn to the two biblical narratives that address the phenomenon of envy (Gen 37 and Mark 15).

5.5.1 Gen 37:3 and the Anatomy of Envy

Gen 37–50 explain how envy developed between Joseph and his brothers. In Gen 37:3 we read the story of Jacob and his preferential treatment of his son Joseph. Jacob’s favouritism was demonstrated by his gift of the famous coat he gave to Joseph and this favouritism was reinforced by the unkind reports Joseph brought to his father about his brothers. Joseph was also a half-brother to Jacob’s other ten sons and he earned the birth-right after Reuben, the eldest son, fell out of grace with Jacob because of his evil deed. Furthermore, Joseph had dreams that demonstrated that he had authority over his brothers, and they hated him for that (Deffinbaugh 2004). The animosity of Joseph’s brothers towards him generated a bitterness that would lead to fierce persecution. Joseph’s brothers waited until an opportune occasion to enact their persecution. Eventually the moment presented itself where Joseph’s brothers could carry out their plans to eliminate him from their family. When his father sent him to look into his brothers, they captured him and plotted against him to put him to death.

5.5.2 Mark 15 and the Anatomy of Envy

Hagedorn and Neyrey (1998) argue that Pilate perceived that the accusers of Jesus Christ were acting out of envy when they handed Jesus over to him. High priests and religious leaders of the time were competing with Jesus for fame and civic honour. Hagedorn and Neyrey (1998) note that such honour was one of the pivotal values of ancient Israel. Honour determined people’s worth, standing and reputation in the eyes of the broader public and the religious leaders of the time competed intensely for honour. Honour was perceived as a ‘limited good for which they fought’. According to the Pulpit Bible Commentary of Mark 15:10, religious leaders of the time of Jesus saw that Jesus was gaining great and increasing influence over the people by the sublime beauty of his character, by the fame of his miracles, and by the power of his words. Hence, they concluded that unless he was arrested and put out of the way, their own influence would soon be jeopardised (Rigney 2014).

The chief priests were distressed at Jesus’ success and His mere presence was destroying their prestige as He invaded their space of honour (Hagedorn and Neyrey 1998, 17). Jesus’ recognition by the crowd was expanding at the expense of the chief priests. Jesus’ honour and recognition were further dramatized by his entry into Jerusalem that enticed the people to sing Hosanna on Palm Sunday. This com-
pletely devastated the profiles of religious elites. They envied Him but they could not reach His standard. The solution to their distress was to eliminate Him. The honour of Jesus was publicly acknowledged wherever He went, and chief priests and scribes were no match for Him. They hid their envy behind a façade of care and compassion for others. In John 11:48 the religious leaders say: ‘If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation’. In the same vein, the chief priest, Caiaphas, reiterated that it was better for one person to die for the people rather than for the whole nation to perish (Rigney 2014).

5.6 The Stages of Envy in Mark 15

The teachings, miracles and fame of Jesus overwhelm the chief priests and the elite of their time. Envy ensues because the praise and the acclaim of the crowds are for Jesus, while the high priests’ popularity wanes. Ways are sought to discredit Jesus but when these fail, they opt to put Him to death.

Slanderous gossip is spread. They argue that ‘He is possessed by Beelzebul, and by the prince of demons he casts out demons’ (Mark 3:22). Pharisees would even tell those who were healed by Jesus to deny that he did in fact heal them (John 9:1–41).

Pharisees and some of the scribes send people to Jesus to entrap him in his talk (Mark 12:13). As he did his work publicly, he could be identified by the crowd that was following him.

In their entire campaign and attempt to discredit Jesus, the religious leaders of the time aimed to get public support. They sent rumours around that Jesus is disrespectful to the law of Moses and he is eating with sinners. They spare no effort to do harm to his reputation.

As the fame and the work of Jesus spread by leaps and bounds, the Pharisees and chief priests try everything in their power to regain the support of the masses until they are forced to kill Jesus. Envy remains a predictable, regular, and important element in pulling down Jesus, who is growing in fame and reputation.

Arbitrary arrest, trial and death remain the common outcomes of envy. The Jewish leaders’ motives are based on love of fame and entitlement to mass praises, although their motives coincide with the overall plan of God of delivering His Son for the redemption of His people (Rigney 2014).

5.7 The Execution of the Sentence Is Abrupt and without Due Process

In the case of envy trials, as is often the case in witchcraft cases, the judges (juries) are not crimen exceptum (exceptional criminal judges) (Kgatla et al. 2003, 29), but activists who are propelled by envy. Often poverty, envy, frustrated aspirations and lost
fame or limited opportunities for achieving fame are the hidden motives for why a person regarded by society as successful is attacked on dubious grounds. The end goal of envious persecution is to eliminate any possibility of fairness to the other (Smith 2004, 46). It is an injustice that is flavoured by resentment towards a person who is viewed as not deserving his / her advantage over others (Smith 2004). Hostility and revulsion are defining elements of the envy; it is a defensive response to the achievements of those we reckon do not deserve the achievement or success. Depending on the epistemological lens through which cultural constructions have been shaped, the degradation of the culprit may take the form of persecution, scandalous attacks or harbouring of painful emotions that may erupt in other circumstances. If not managed, envy may hamper societal development, while masquerading as community welfare operations and even protection.

5.8 Four Axioms for the Process of Exorcism of the Exorcists

Egalitarianism often loses its utilitarian value of promoting equitable communal living to disputes that are often unexplained. Envy that is operationalized through witchcraft beliefs and persecution hides behind religious beliefs while justifying extreme violence. Wading off the demons of jealousy from the very people who are the leaders in exorcism practices may prove unattainable. The following are some guidelines for such ‘exorcism from below’.

5.8.1 Knowledge of, and Respect for, Peoples’ Fundamental Right to Hold Different Views, Values and Beliefs

The right to differ from others and still remain their friend is one of the basic requirements for the peaceful coexistence of human beings. In a healthy society, people venture outside of their personal boundaries to reach out to their neighbours in a spirit of acceptance. To achieve such objectives, a new educational plan to cultivate a willingness to give oneself to others by realigning one’s personal identity in a way to give space to others, regardless their sex and age, should be designed (Kgatla 2007, 280–290).

5.8.2 A Comprehensive Understanding of Imago Dei

The first step in creating the right relationship with others is having a healthy relationship with oneself as a creature of God. The conflicting voices of love of neighbour and the misogyny, machismo, and sexism that men have used to inflate their sense of self should be resolved to create a way to creative coexistence. The daunting and conflicting feelings of bitterness, hate, jealousy, emptiness, and inferiority within people should be
addressed by transformational education rooted in the development of a new character that accepts other people for whom they are. The next step in transcending personal and societal prejudices is coming to the realisation that humanity was created in the image of God to live and let others live for the sake of the prosperity of humankind in its entirety. Living in peace with those who constitute the ‘other’ implies acceptance of them, irrespective who they are and what gender they are. Healthy interpersonal relationships can be built by developing values such as honesty, responsibility, accountability, and sincerity. An educational model based on these values should be implemented to create an anti-hegemonic society (Kgatla 2007, 289).

5.8.3 Demonstrating the Role and Function of Religion in Promoting and Constructing Conflict

Religion, by its very nature, promotes values, beliefs and attitudes that may either be conflictual or character enhancing. If negative elements of religion are instilled in learners from a tender age, they are less likely to transcend them when they are grown up. Religion can leave an indelible mark, which cannot be removed at a later stage, on people’s minds. Deconstructing polluted minds may prove impossible once ideas have been left to germinate in the minds of learners. Resources to fight the pandemic of patriarchal infection should be made available. Religious virtues such as love, justice, fairness, coexistence, and righteousness can be cemented in the minds of learners, if inculcated responsibly (Kgatla 2000).

5.8.4 Correcting and Resolving Political, Social, Economic, and Cultural Disputes and Conflicts

Many disputes and conflicts stemming from and creating prejudices in society emanate from fear of domination, competition for power, scarce resources, and inferiority complexes. Conversely, the desire for equality can also generate conflicts as people who have an innate talent for development may break the chain of slavery to assert themselves. In that way resistance to suppression (forced egalitarianism) may lead to a social and cultural explosion. Accusations of witchcraft may be used as a survival tool to address people’s vulnerabilities, but it may also lead to insurrection. The powerful may be reminded by the less powerful to stop dominating a space, the ‘haves’ made aware of the need for resources by the ‘have-nots’. This could be a matter of simple justice that the powerful do not want to confront. Education curricula tailored to addressing and correcting the imbalances between the rich and poor, men and women, arrogant and meek are imperative. Conflict-ridden communities would be able to attend to their problems if they were made aware of them and helped to find a way out of these problems, developing survival skills that would keep them on course towards a healthy civil society (Kgatla 2000).
6 Conclusion

The trajectory of this chapter has been the introduction to the task of dealing with ‘exorcism from below’, where the exorcists are themselves to be exorcised of the evil they perceive in others while it is resident within themselves. Here the discourse should be turned around and the ‘hunters become the hunted’; the exorcists become the exorcised. The study is anchored in the African epistemology of ‘live and let live’. A cautionary note is struck in pointing out that egalitarianism is not always value-free but may be embedded in prejudices that are life-threatening. A new balance of African communality should be adopted as the guiding star.

In the space in which these prejudices are operative, different forms of stereotyping, persecution and even death may remain unnoticed as the very sources where violence is brewed, and they need the antidote of exorcism from below. The study also reaffirmed that the understanding of exorcism should be retrieved from narrow religious and psychological confines. If viewed in totality, the methods to be employed for its eradication will be broad and comprehensive to address the whole of society. There is no ‘one size fits all’ or ‘quick fix’ when it comes to the form of exorcism discussed in this chapter. A few guidelines are suggested as ways of minimising the extent of the underlying threat of envy as externalised in witchcraft.

People need an environment that supports life: food, shelter, water, and security. In order to lead a stable life, they require resources such as land, money, livestock, water, roads, schools, employment and other necessities. They need an imaginative programme that will infuse their lives with hope and inform their vision. If these things are absent, the result is a deepening of poverty. Then distortion of social relationships, stress, and anxiety – all leading to social conflict – are bound to occur. Economic and political power, as well as cultural progress, should be restored since people want to be in control of their future and of their destiny. Early detection of societal prejudices that deny the value of life is essential if the demagogues are to be exorcised from prohibited from exercising their delinquent power.

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