

A response to Innocent Enweh on Interpretative Rehabilitation of Afro-communalism

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Abstract

In a 2020 article published in volume 9, number 1 of [Filosofia Theoretica], Martin F. Asiegbu and Anthony Chinaemerem Ajah questioned the continued relevance of Afro-communalism. They argued that nothing about communalism makes it African. They also demonstrated how the brand of communalism presented as ‘African’, is too reductive, emphasizes conformism and therefore is against the individual and counter-productive for entire societies in Africa. For the above reasons, they summed that communalism with ‘Afro-’ is irrelevant and needs to end. In a 2021 article published in the same journal in response to the initial submission by Asiegbu and Ajah, Enweh held that their take on Afro-communalism was too harsh. He marshalled out five “issues and difficulties” regarding their critique of the concept. Although Enweh’s critique is a worthwhile invitation to a conversation, which clarifies and complements, his proposal for an interpretative rehabilitation of Afro-communalism in the 21st century is surely wrongheaded. To respond to Enweh, a review of his critique of Asiegbu and Ajah will foreground the attempt to clarify some parts of Asiegbu and Ajah’s initial position. We will assess Enweh’s arguments in terms of the relevance of the rehabilitation he suggested and question the meaning of what Enweh termed the “amity of ethnic nationalities.” We will argue that Enweh was unable to provide sufficient grounds to show that Asiegbu and Ajah’s critique of Afro-communalism was “uninformed... [and] harsh.” We will also demonstrate that his critique of their views was indefensible just as he was unable to explain what he meant by the alternative model he claimed to introduce in the discussion.

Keywords: Afro-communalism, Solipsistic individualism and anarchy, Amity-of-ethnic nationalities, Egalitarian society, Eristic denial of facts.

Introduction

In a 2020 article published in volume 9, number 1 of [Filosofia Theoretica], Martin F. Asiegbu and Anthony Chinaemerem Ajah questioned the continued relevance of Afro-communalism. They strongly argued that nothing about communalism makes it African. They also demonstrated how the brand of communalism presented as ‘African’, is too reductive, emphasizes conformism and therefore is against the individual and counter-productive for entire societies in Africa. For the above reasons, they argued that communalism with ‘Afro-’ is irrelevant and needs to end. From a developmental perspective, Asiegbu and Ajah noted that communities in the 21st century global society thrive largely as due to the non-conformist, creative strivings of their individual members. They then wondered why proponents of Afro-communalism are insisting on an idea that is counter-productive (p. 31) to the African continent.

Despite these and other points, Enweh in his 2021 article in the same journal, accused Asiegbu and Ajah’s contribution of “extolling solipsistic individualism which makes the individual an anarchic unit” (p. 103). The purpose of his response to their contribution was “to show that an interpretative rehabilitation of Afro-communalism is opportune for elaborating a form of egalitarian society that would be responsive to the exigencies of African social-economic condition in a globalized world” (p. 103). Another reason was to use the response “as the corner stone of defence of continuous research on Afro-communalism” (p. 104). To achieve these, he marshalled five of what he termed “issues and difficulties” in Asiegbu and Ajah’s contribution. These are: (a) “solipsistic individualism and anarchism”(p. 106), (b) “eristic denial of facts” (p. 107), (c) “the problem of conceptual clarity” (p. 110), (d) “uncritical assumption” (p. 110), and (e) “anachronism” (p. 111). He summed that their objections to Afro-communalism were “uninformed... [and] harsh”, and that their contention has already been overtaken. It is anachronistic and falls short of relevance. Enweh concluded that both in its philosophical and ideological forms, Afro-communalism has some contributions in Africa; individualism is alien to Africa, and thus, there is need to continue reflections on Afro-communalism by rehabilitating it and re-grounding it in what he termed “amity”.

In this contribution to the conversation, we defend the core of Asiegbu and Ajah’s initial position. We assess Enweh’s arguments in terms of the relevance of the rehabilitation he appealed for. We also question what he termed ‘amity of ethnic nationalities.’ We do not aim here to engage in the wider discussion on Afro-communalism, nor in what is presented as its variant, namely, Afro-communitarianism (CHIMAKONAM and NWEKE 2018, pp. 78-99). Doing this may lead to digressions that may leave the main issues in this conversation unattended to. Our intention is also not to project any special way of engaging in a discussion on issues relating to Africa. Instead, we limit our contribution to a direct and relatively brief response to the specific contents of Enweh’s response to Asiegbu and Ajah’s critique of Afro-communalism. To achieve this aim, we divided this paper into two. In the first section, we will highlight the main arguments that Enweh marshalled out against the submissions of Asiegbu and Ajah. We will respond to each based on our reading of the latter’s submissions. In

the second section, we will explore the relevance of a project of rehabilitating Afro-communalism as Enweh suggested. So, let us respond to the issues he raised.

Clarifying the issues, and easing the difficulties

Before joining issues with Enweh, we deem it necessary to correct his mistaken representation of our topic. Else thinkers will misunderstand the subject of the paper as “communism,” instead of Afro-communalism (p. 31), just as some thinkers will object to Chimakonam’s work, [Ezumezu: A system of Logic for African Philosophy and Studies] being published in 2018 (p. 112) and also in 2019 (p. 115).

In this section, we will clarify what Enweh described as five issues, and will ease what he described as difficulties, in the initial contribution by Asiegbu and Ajah. We will do this in the order in which he presented them.

(a) Solipsistic individualism and anarchism

Enweh’s position, in this regard, started with an appropriate reference to Aristotle’s (non-African) ethics. He cited Aristotle in these words “the virtuous man’s conduct is often guided by the interests of his friends and of his country, and that he will, if necessary, lay down his life in their behalf” (see p. 106). Enweh held that Asiegbu and Ajah commended self-love “for the sake of “expanding one’s positive possibilities””. He further held that these authors endorsed individualism that is devoid of egalitarian principle whereas this form of individualism is solipsistic, disregards norms of social relations, and leads to anarchy. Individualism would be anarchic if it is fundamentally based on ethical egoism. This obtains where people are completely looking out for their own interest, without any sense of enlightened personal interest. This is because, sometimes, one does community work, not because of one’s love for the community but because one is, thereby, protecting one’s personal interest in which there are no ties to the community. No one, certainly, defends such a type of individualism, much less in this work.

Let us clarify this and ease the difficulties here. First, Asiegbu and Ajah had noted that “[W]e use the term ‘individualism’ as a belief that individuals should be free to prioritise their interests, be free to be independent, but remain accountable to society.” (p. 32) These words remain enough to indicate that their conception of individualism is nowhere close to the descriptions and negative impositions from Enweh. Merriam-Websters Dictionary (2022, online) defines solipsism as a theory holding that the self can know nothing but its own modifications, and that the self is the only existent thing. The qualifier ‘solipsistic’ means “of, relating to, or characterized by extreme egocentricity.” It is strange to hold that Asiegbu and Ajah’s call for free and accountable interest and independence of the individual from the burdens of community belonging, imply any of these connotations that solipsism imply. Their argument that individuals seek their personal freedom and independence does not imply solipsism nor anarchy, as Enweh misrepresented their position. Really, Enweh may, after all, be wholly focused on the enrichment of Afro-communalism – a wholesome engagement. For this reason, he is arguing for rehabilitating Afro-communalism. However, a careful reading of those authors shows that what they sought to do was to explore the gains in being deviant; the gains of imagining in such a manner that

transcends what is taken for granted in the type of communalist societies that Afro-communalists described (see MENKITI 1984; GYEKYE 1992) – and being non-conformists while remaining accountable to their society.

What is clear is that either Enweh was too zealous in his defence of a brand of engagement in African studies to the detriment of a careful understanding and acceptance of the definition provided by the authors, or he intentionally decided to misconstrue their basic concepts to justify his critique of their position. Either way, weakens rather than strengthens his defense of Afro-communalism. Enweh appealed to non-Africans to buttress an idea he claimed is uniquely/authentically African and worthy of continuous engagement. So, if Afro-communalism is authentically African, it remains to be explained why Enweh needed Aristotle's description of 'the virtuous man' as conducting his affairs with interest of his friends and country at heart. This description of the virtuous man was from Aristotle who is reductively grouped under the same so-called Western ethics that is too individualistic, whereas the authentic African ethics is communalistic.

Enweh wrote that Western individualism "does not have to be made to replace authentic African cultural attitude, insofar as the latter is anchored on a viable ontological foundation and a universally acceptable ethical principle" (p.104). When Afrocentrists like Enweh write in words such as 'universally acceptable... principle', they try to show signs of openness to broad engagement. However, they do rather weaken the validity of their claim to a unique, authentic, 'Afro-' version of what they are advancing. It is a strategy common with Afrocentrists. While we recognize what is ill-considered here, we shall not pursue the issue further. And so, let us cede the point to Enweh.

(b) Eristic denial of facts

Next, Enweh accused Asiegbu and Ajah of engaging in denial of facts. To do this, he referred again to two non-Africans, Hoffman and Graham, to hint how human nature is both absolute and relative. Regarding the aspect of relativity of human nature, Enweh referred to studies that showed how Western Europe, the US, Canada and Australia, are identified as culturally individualistic, while China and Japan are collectivist. He admitted some variations in conclusions about whether Japan is dominantly collectivist or individualistic. Based on his reference to some studies, Enweh worried that Asiegbu and Ajah made "no reference to any scientific study to back up our basic claims", but that they "appear to argue against facts for argument's sake" (p.108). In his view, these authors were silent on the role of egalitarian principle as a foundation of Afro-communalism. This silence, in his view, accounts for their critique of the tension between rights and duties in Afro-communalist contexts (CHIMAKONAM and NWEKE 2018). After appealing to the views of other Afro-communalists, he summed that "communalism could be said to be a universal human experience because man [sic] is a social animal. But by prefixing "communalism" with... "Afro," one means by that a distinct form or type of communalism/collectivism; communalism that is characteristically African." To further buttress his points about how Asiegbu and Ajah denied facts, Enweh noted that "Afro-communalism in its ideological form contributed to decolonization of Africa. Besides scoring a political point, intellectually, it has

been the source of important literary productions... A survey of the impact of extended family, clan, tribal and ethnic relations in rural and urban life would surprise one who disparages it... Afro-communalism takes various dimensions that are currently impactful and cannot be denied just for the sake of argument” (p.109). He acknowledged that it is not all success regarding Afro-communalism. Taiwo (2016, 81-100) enumerated a number of false and inappropriate types of Afro-communalism. So, Enweh admitted that “reformulating the basis of Afro-communalism could help in eradicating its important failures.” What are these important failures? One would not expect Enweh and others like him to explore these. We shall take that up later as a validation of our reading of the argument Asiegbu and Ajah defended in their initial contribution as well as ours here.

(c) Problem of conceptual clarity

The third difficulty in Asiegbu and Ajah’s contribution, according to Enweh, is lack of conceptual clarity. Specifically, he argued that their total renunciation of Afro-communalism suggests that they are not quite clear on the nature of the reality and the levels of articulation of Afro-communalism. He added that they misconstrued individualism in their presentation. According to him, Asiegbu and Ajah’s inclusion of accountability as a feature of [the individualism they highlighted] is wrong: “The individualist emphasizes individual rights, not responsibility” (p.110). By taking this position, he meant to show that they also misconstrued the concept of individualism.

These positions of Enweh are rather worrisome. Let us begin with his comments on these authors’ articulation of individualism. It seems clear that Enweh just made this up to add to his list of “issues and difficulties” (p. 106). Asiegbu and Ajah started their use of the concept individualism by explaining how they were using it. And to ensure the defensibility of their position, they clarified the place of responsibility within the framework of their conception of the individual. Enweh preferred to assess their position based on his misgivings about individualism rather than what these authors presented in the text he tried to engage with. By taking this approach, he shifted his focus from the authors’ submissions in the text under assessment, to his presuppositions and unclarified rejection of individualism for the sake of doing so. Thus, we submit that Asiegbu and Ajah are not the ones whose lack of clarity regarding concepts constituted a problem in their contribution. It is Enweh.

(d) Uncritical assumption

Enweh assessed Asiegbu and Ajah as not submitting some of their assumptions to appropriate criticism. This, in his view, is the fourth difficulty in the authors’ text. According to him, their assumption that non-conformism is valuable and transformative was not properly assessed. He referred to a 1969 study which submitted that non-conformists in the study focus were more of dropouts than successful. Enweh also added to Asiegbu and Ajah’s list of uncritical assumptions, their emphasis on the rights of individuals. He held that while these authors insisted on the rights, they didn’t carefully examine “the nature and kinds of rights to which the individual could lay claim to”. Because they didn’t do this, they were, in Enweh’s view, “headed to a contradiction” (p.110). By suggesting the value of

non-conformism, he held that these authors erroneously identified individualism with anarchism. According to him, they were unable “to gain insight into the possible ideological and utopian role of Afro-communalism as philosophy” (p.111). Enweh held that “It is... to say the least,” unfair on the part of the authors he was responding to, “to dismiss Afro-communalism in its entirety as irrelevant” (p.111).

Enweh’s reference to Wittaker and Watts’ 1969 study of “membership of a particular subculture of non-conformist youth” (p110), as a basis for countering Asiegbu and Ajah’s submission that non-conformism can be transformative and deserves to be explored, is weak and inconsequential to their submission. First, it is based on a very old study that predates massive developments in brain studies, personal growth, entrepreneurship, and development of business ideas. Second, it failed to take into crucial consideration several non-conformists that transformed means of human interactions, idea of work, ICT, how to understand human life and cure human diseases, and so on. Within these realms, we find names such as Bill Gates, Elon Musk, Steve Jobs, who have done things in manners completely different from the generally accepted ways of doing things during their time. Many of the results of their engagements are obvious, monumental, and exceptionally life-enhancing. The innovations that their names represent confirm the possible values of non-conformist dispositions that Asiegbu and Ajah espoused in their first contribution. Enweh will be unable to defensibly argue that these nonconformists were unsuccessful. Again, let us clarify. Our reading of Asiegbu and Ajah shows that by non-conformism these authors did not mean morally weak and unprincipled deviation from moral and social norms which will definitely harm others. Rather, they mean a consistent readiness by individuals to explore their creative imagination of good alternatives that can improve what is widely accepted, without upturning social balance – or even upturning such balance without lingering destructive consequences.

(e) Problem of anachronism

The last problem Enweh highlighted in respect to Asiegbu and Ajah’s contribution was that of anachronism. To explain what he meant, Enweh dragged in Innocent Asouzu as one who had explored the type of thing Afro-communalism represents. According to Enweh, Chimakonam has also moved the discussion on Afro-communalism “a step further”. Based on his references to Asouzu (2007), Matolino (2018), and Chimakonam (2018), Enweh submitted that “[I]t is therefore surprising that after this progress in the re-articulation of Afro-communalism, Asiegbu and Ajah would return to a problem that has already been overtaken. Their contention is anachronistic and falls short of relevance” (p.112).

Let us clarify terms again. The MiriamWebsters Dictionary (2022, online) defined anachronism as an error in chronology; something, especially one from a former age that is incongruous in the present. Based on this clarification, it strange how Asiegbu and Ajah’s questioning of the relevance of Afro-communalism is anachronistic. By pondering on some ideas, especially contrary ones, philosophers rethink and shatter old beliefs and policies informed by anachronistic and wrongheaded traditions. In this regard, Asiegbu and Ajah consider Afro-communalism strictly anachronistic in the sense that it is no longer a viable system

of philosophy that should regulate human actions in the contemporary world. This idea of anachronism is in tandem with the definition of the term by Wiredu (1980). The perception of Afro-communalism does not entail that it was never useful. Rather, we uphold the view that Afro-communalism is no longer useful. In addition to the previous proposition, it is plausible to posit that the anachronistic nature of Afro-communalism informs Enweh's argument for interpretative rehabilitation. Hence, Enweh's call for rehabilitation of Afro-communalism suggests that all is not well with Afro-communalism. In all, we see no sound and defensible argument from Enweh to show that Asiegbu and Ajah's arguments amounted to difficulties.

So, we move to our second task in this response: What exactly did Enweh mean by 'rehabilitating Afro-communalism'? How relevant is such recommendation whereas according to him, others have taken the debate further for which reason he submitted that the problem has been overtaken, and Asiegbu and Ajah's contention are short of relevance? If it is already overtaken and/or so useful, why recommend a rehabilitation?

On the relevance of rehabilitating Afro-communalism

After submitting that Asiegbu and Ajah's central position falls short of relevance, Enweh argued for rehabilitating African Communalism. Let us assess that recommendation. To initiate this aspect of his task, Enweh reiterated that: "[W]hile Afro-communalism [sic] has registered some success by way of bringing about decolonization, it remains a serious task to realize its project of emancipation" (p.112). It is historically wrong to argue that Afro-communalism 'brought about' the end of colonialism in Africa. Yet, in that statement, an important question is what Enweh - and Nkrumah whom he cited severally (see p.104; p.108; p.112) - meant by Afro-communalism realizing its project of emancipation. Most African countries that experienced colonialism are over 60+ years old as independent states. What possibly is the purpose of the emancipation Enweh expects Afro-communalism to achieve?

Enweh maintains that Afro-communalism is good because it helped Africans drive away the colonialists (ENWEH 2021, p. 104). This is what he means also when he says that "in its ideological form, (Afro-communalism) contributed to decolonization of Africa ..." (p. 109). One would ask, by means of what, or better, in which way did Afro-communalism oust the colonialists? The independence fighters were die-hard capitalists. This is true of Nnamdi Azikiwe [Azikiwe, ODESSEY] and Awolowo. Azikiwe pursued his "Pilot" publication as a capitalist. The arguments, which the independence fighters employed to defeat colonialism, were arguments of freedom and individualism, and self-determination. They employed them to inform the colonialists that if their ideology taught them freedom, human rights, and self-determination, why then would they deny Africans these same things [AZIKIWE SPEECHES]? And so, African independence fighters turned Western ideology on its head to succeed. They made use of the logic of freedom, human rights, self-determination. Certainly, they never made use of any argument from Afro-communalism. The nationalists, who attempted to prove that African identity was different from the European own, tried developing their ideology to reach their goal. They insisted on the

indispensable character of African traditional culture. The nationalists suggested the partnership between state leaders and traditional African leaders. Ghana tried it out and it eventually failed. Many independent African states never gave it a thought. The traditional chiefs, thus, were not subsumed in the Constitutions of various countries. The nationalists did not also desire to appeal to scientific Marxism because it was Western. The nationalists insisted on the contribution of African culture. All things considered, the state and traditional chieftaincy parted ways. Enweh, therefore, has to prove how Afro-communalism was a key to the realization of end of colonialism.

Enweh admitted that with the current structuring of contemporary societies, there is “tension in the socio-political life of African nations... [Among other things] the kinship/tribal model, which is prevalent in the rural areas... is too limited in its scope to impact on multi-ethnic societies.” (p.112). Elsewhere, he also admitted that “kinship, clan or tribe as the basis for a relationship is too narrow for the nature of society we live in today, where people of diverse ethnic nationalities live together” (p.113). Instead of accepting the inadequacy and end of relevance of the kinship/tribal model, Enweh preferred to assign the merely polemic task of reinventing Afro-communalism to philosophers. He expects those he invited to the task to alter “the foundation of social relations while guarding its fundamental ethical principle.” For what purpose? What may serve as an answer to this question can be found in his idea of ‘authentic African attitude’ (p.104), or in his idea of doing so “[I]n the spirit of safeguarding and promoting African social attitude” (p.113).

If we interpret his use of ‘spirit’ above as ‘euphoria’, it may help to understand that Enweh didn’t really mean to assess the logical and practical relevance of Afro-communalism as Asiegbu and Ajah tried to do. He was more eager to retain a ‘spirit’, or an euphoria, or a psychologically satisfying wind. Besides, he was not interested in assessing the so-called African social attitude for continued relevance. His greater interest is in safeguarding it, as if it is whatever it is, once and for all. From this perspective, his call for a rehabilitation is empty and amounts to continued polemics.

Enweh returned to his critique of individualism, which he held, “is the bane of humanism” (p.113). He reiterated assigning individualism to the global West but thought it “very presumptuous to imagine that it is the culture of individualism that accounts for technological and scientific progress in the West” (p.113). He went ahead to describe Asiegbu and Ajah’s arguments for the good in individualism as “spurious” and “gratuitously made without evidence”. He insisted that “It is... erroneous to explain Africa’s underdevelopment, in any of its forms, by deriding Afro-communalism.” (p.113). Rather than deride it, the many people from various ethnic groups who were forcibly brought together during amalgamations, need to forge a relationship for their interest as people who share common historical experience: “In other words, amity should be the basis of relationship among the various ethnic groups.” Quite below a justified expectation of any reader of a rejoinder of his status, Enweh wrote that elaborating on what he meant by the term ‘amity’ was “too much for a paper that is simply intended to reopen a discussion on Afro-communalism by letting critics know that they have

no warrant to call for closure of dossier on a matter so vital and so close to the reality of the people's existential experience" (p.114).

One may give a helping hand to Enweh by teasing out some possible meanings of his term, "amity" Probably considered as an attempt to ease the encounter of different cultures and races with one another. It would surely entail friendly (l'amitié) relations and discourse among groups, ethnic nations or groups. His intended fashioning a means of resolving tensions locally and internationally. Within Africa, where close relations among African countries hold true, there has been numerous international upheavals, boundary disputes, conflicting commercial interests among states and expulsions of African migrant populations by other African states. It becomes difficult for the African states, in spite of attempts to the contrary, to relate à l'amitié (in a friendly way). But who is certain that this is what Enweh's amity of ethnic nationalities signify? Else he would have penned down volumes of such an idea with ease. Thus, the phrase, amity of ethnic nationalities remains inscrutable.

Conclusion

We set out in this paper to respond to Innocent Enweh's assessment of Asiegbu and Ajah's position that philosophical engagements on how Afro-communalism is unique to Africans, is no longer relevant. Enweh's assessment of their contribution warrants that we even ask more fundamental question: Is Afro-communalism really a fact or merely an interpretative conjecture of Afro-centrists? The opening sentence of Enweh's response to these authors warrants a consideration of this question. He started this way: "The intellectual revival of communalist culture was thanks to the challenges posed by colonization" (p.104). In the third sentence in the article, he also wrote that African socialism, as a form of Afro-communalism and "a political ideology succeeded in ousting out [sic] colonial regime, it was quite relevant at the time" (p.104). One may ask: So, without colonization and its challenges, as well as the desire to show how Africans differed from the colonizers, there was initially no need for this type of engagement? A 'YES' response to this last question implies that the engagement is irrelevant. Admitting this response will be fiercely countered by Afro-centrists. But that is what it is. Yet in the first sentence we just cited, Enweh admits this. That is, he admitted that it was the challenges of colonization that made it necessary to even articulate and revive communalism 'intellectually.' On his lecture of Taiwo (2016), Enweh would immediately embrace Taiwo's extensive analysis. But he would be stopped in his parts since reviving Afro-communalism would also mean that this revival is not in respect of its use as a form of social organization of lives and resources in concrete terms. It was merely as an intellectual engagement [period!]. Enweh also admits that its use as an ideology was limited to ousting the colonial regime. Hence, the clarification that 'it was quite relevant at the time.' So, one may add '... and no longer so [useful] in our time.'

Five things are obvious in Enweh's response to Asiegbu and Ajah's article. First, he admits that what he is arguing for its interpretative rehabilitation is no longer useful in concrete terms. It serves the intellectual engagement of some group of scholars on Africa. Second, he is arguing, not exactly for any usefulness of Afro-communalism, but merely for 'interpretative rehabilitation' as part of an

intellectually satisfying activity. This means that the relevance of what is being rehabilitated stops with the interpreters. Third, he admits that what he is defending had failed to achieve a so-called emancipation, for which reason, he claimed it is an incomplete project. And, instead of addressing why it failed and/or assessing Afro-communalism based on its practical/concrete usefulness in the here and now and the near future, he is calling for its rehabilitation. Fourth, he called up all his negative perceptions of individualism to ground Asiegbu and Ajah's reference to that view of approaching concrete persons. Fifth, he deferred articulation of what should have been the focus of his paper, namely, an explanation of what he meant by amity, how it is different for the many bandied concepts that project Afro-communalism, and therefore how exactly it justifies his insistence on the relevance of Afro-communalism. As a hint to the likelihood that the term 'amity' will be one of those neologisms in some of the misguided attempts to practice philosophy in Africa, Enweh gave no indication that amity will amount to anything different from the kinship/tribal model that defines Afro-communalism and which he admitted can no longer serve current human situations in Africa.

Despite Enweh's enthusiastic defence of Afro-communalism, he was unable to substantially counter Asiegbu and Ajah's positions that: (a) nothing about communalism makes it important to qualify it with 'Afro' as an indication that there is an African version of communalism; and (b) what is termed Afro-communalism has been unable to improve the understanding of reality and human existence in Africa. Enweh could not make any consequential point against these authors' positions apart from his misinterpretation of their use of individualism. Thus, we argue that the authors' positions can be retained. We also appeal to scholars on Africa to drop their passionate engagements on mere interpretations of cultural features of pre-colonial Africa. They need to rather focus on more challenging, self-reflexive, and development-enhancing needs of Africa and Africans. Africans need brutal assessment of themselves and their contributions to their world, not the heavy burden of polemically colourful generation of new concepts to say the same thing about unique and authentic Africa.

It remains strange why scholars in the most underdeveloped region of the world would be satisfied with intellectual engagements that neither improve their concrete existence nor clarify the world around them, but only satisfy some of their ideological preferences and psychological cravings. Preferences and cravings that suck them into and keep them entrapped in what Law (2011) described as intellectual black hole, without any hope of exit. So, while Enweh prepares to articulate his views in a follow-up article as he promised, we request him to consider answering one question in that follow-up: How exactly does Afro-communalism enable concrete Africans in concrete social urban contexts of co-existence with people from various ethnic groups, to make better sense of life and tolerate each other even as they claim to seek to live authentically? Until then, we submit that Enweh was unable to provide sufficient grounds to show that Asiegbu and Ajah's critique of Afro-communalism was 'uninformed... [and] harsh.' His critique of their views was indefensible just as he was unable to explain what he meant by the alternative model he claimed to introduce in the discussion.

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This issue honours our Assoc. Editor and a second-generation member of the Calabar (Conversational) School of Philosophy (CSP): **Prince. Prof Mesembe Ita Edet (1965-2023)**

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